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# Secondary Schooling and Indigenous Pueblo Youth: Dynamics of Power

Natalie Martinez

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**SECONDARY SCHOOLING AND INDIGENOUS  
PUEBLO YOUTH:  
DYNAMICS OF POWER**

**BY**

**NATALIE C. MARTINEZ**

B.A., Psychology, University of New Mexico, 1994  
B.A., Education, College of Santa Fe, 1995  
M.A., Secondary Education, University of New Mexico, 1999

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**December, 2010**

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DEDICATION

For Sr'bayak'tyuwe, my future

and

K'ostyea, my past

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**ABSTRACT**

Research regarding secondary schooling of Pueblo youth in the southwestern United States is limited. Existing literature examines schooling through boarding school era historical depictions and anthropological studies of school experiences. Current Indigenous academic knowledge calls for rededication to self-determination and tribal control over education systems.

This research critically analyzes curricular implications and the operation of power in a New Mexico school district whose Indigenous students exceed one-third of the student population. This study demonstrates long-standing disempowerment of the constituents of this school district through existing hierarchical power structures. This research is based upon qualitative methodologies for gathering and analyzing data, including discourse analysis of legislative policy, secondary curriculum, textbooks and classroom materials. It also utilizes ethnographic data from interviews with students, school personnel and community members, and participant observations.

Through 22-months of fieldwork, this study examines responses to the research question: How does state power operate in the inception and implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy at a school district that serves a large population of Native high school youth? Themes emerged throughout the study such as the hidden curriculum embodied in the instruction and policy that affect Native high school students; reception and implementation of policy and curriculum within the school district; and historical factors within the district. The study also presents the foundations for response to imperatives of neo-liberalism throughout the district.

The research shows that despite the 2003 passage of state legislation (New Mexico Indian Education Act) regarding appropriate educational practices for American Indian students, the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind shape public schooling. Research participants desire a more direct, formal tie between school and culturally meaningful education, but see standardization and individualization for cultural relevance in competition.

This study reveals that every aspect of curriculum in the school district, from inception to implementation, is driven by the inexorable adherence to federal legislation. The data also reveal the implications of this study, which include the need for more local control and community empowerment to influence the curriculum, instruction, and policy within this school district. This research also documents emerging sites of resistance within the school district.

*Key words:* Indian education, secondary schooling, state power, Tribal Critical Race Theory, Critical Pedagogy, New Mexico Indian Education Act, No Child Left Behind Act, Rural education, curriculum studies, hidden curriculum

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

This chapter introduces a qualitative research study that analyzes the operation of power through the policy and legislation that govern the inception and implementation of curriculum within one school district in New Mexico. The school district in this study serves a large population of Indigenous youth from three distinct sovereign nations. Its scope includes only the two high schools in the district and highlights the experiences of one Pueblo nation within the school district.

This research critically examines one school district in the ways curriculum policy is shaped, received, understood, and acted upon as it addresses the tenets of a culturally appropriate curriculum for Indigenous school children. The tenets of cultural appropriateness appear in the objectives presented by the National Indian Education Association at the Native American Teacher Resiliency Camp(2006) as expectations or markers of culturally appropriate curriculum, but not as strict mandates for schools:

1. *Strengthens the self-concept* [Original italics] for Indian students by giving credence to their culture in the daily activities of the classroom.
2. *Increases students' motivation* in school and helps keep Indian students in school by making the school experience more relevant and meaningful;
3. Helps teachers and all students, Indian and non-Indian alike, *acquire knowledge, develop respect, and increase appreciation* for human and cultural diversity, as they begin to empathize with people from other groups and cultures. (p. 1, Workshop Packet)

Issues including the public discourse of culture and paradigm shifts in multicultural education are also addressed herein as they relate to public policy regarding school district curriculum and its implementation of pedagogy in the high school classroom. National and state reports on the state of Indian education from the New Mexico Public Education Division and the National Indian Education Association are included in the analysis as they impact the schools at a local level.

### **Background to the Study**

Volumes have been published about American Indian history and the history of Indian education in the United States. The problem with much of the historical canon and textbook literature prior to the 1990s is that these accounts relegate Indigenous people to a romanticized version of the past and an entirely assimilated or nonexistent version of the present.<sup>1</sup> Recent studies have considered factors of this invisibility, pointing out “that the views of most [non-Native] Americans about American Indians are formed and fostered by indirectly acquired information” such as those perpetuated by textbooks and media representations (Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008). Fryberg, et al.,

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<sup>1</sup> Since the 1990s, Indigenous authors have begun to challenge the canon of white-authored literature, history, and anthropological accounts of American Indian peoples. My predecessors offer research and work that break through previous limits on the contemporary existence of Indigenous Native peoples worldwide. It is through the struggles and academic works of scholars such as Gregory Cajete, Ward Churchill, Vine Deloria, Jr. (prolific since 1969 until his death in 2005), Tsianina Lomawaima, Glenabah Martinez, Michael Peacock, Grant Hingangaroa Smith, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, Daniel Wildcat, and numerous others that I am able to address the issues of Indigenous schooling in a contemporary light.

suggest that such representations are necessary to justify practices that usurp power from “non-existent” Native peoples: “the relative invisibility of American Indians in mainstream media gives inordinate communicative power to the few prevalent representations of American Indians in the media” (p. 208). In their *Walking a Mile: A First Step Toward Mutual Understanding*, Doble and Yarrow demonstrate the power of the historical canon in shaping non-Indians’ beliefs to “understand Indians as if they belong to the past, almost as if Indian history ends with Custer and Wounded Knee” (2007, p. 2). Moreover, despite recent changes toward more inclusive multicultural curricula regarding American Indians, “depictions are too often superficial, relegated to elementary school or laden with political correctness” (p. 9).

The United States has always battled the “Indian problem” and so the act of shelving the first peoples of this continent amidst the dusty, leather-bound annals of the past serves many purposes for the state of education by making a one-size-fits-all approach seem more plausible. The underlying purpose of assimilation into one dominant “American” culture is inherent in the practice of education. In his 2007 history, *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality*, Joel Spring describes the process of Americanized education through the use of “policies [that] have served the interests of those wanting to take advantage of others” (p. 1). Deculturalization, according to Spring, “is the educational process of destroying a people’s culture (cultural genocide) and replacing it with a new culture” (p. 7). The process of deculturalization is inherent in colonial ideologies toward school policies intended to eradicate languages, religious/spiritual beliefs, and cultural practices that do not fit the white, Anglo-Saxon

norm and a process that ultimately leads to assimilation. Throughout my years as a part of the public education system, as both student and teacher, in the southwestern United States, I have noted differences in my own acceptance or rejection of physical and cultural markers of my Pueblo Indigenous identity in response to various aspects of schooling and have reflected upon how those personal shifts in positionality have influenced my academic achievement and view of schooling.<sup>2</sup>

In my process towards transformation, I began my investigation by searching to uncover the factors that shape experiences in schooling through a historical lens from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to Indian boarding schools across the United States and Canada to the Pueblo Indian Day Schools in the southwest. Then as I realized similarities and patterns among the many Indian schools in curriculum and procedures, I began to seek theories that could help explain the ways the United States has chosen to deal with its “Indian problem”. My initial searches were shaped by the examination of federal Indian policy, Indian boarding schools and Indian day schools. I examined archived records of Indian students and teachers, as well as primary legal documents on Indian policy and the responses by various public personas regarding such policies. I researched oral histories through videotape footage and interviews with former boarding school

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<sup>2</sup> I use “Pueblo” throughout this research to represent some of the common threads of my Indigenous epistemology in a shared sense with other southwestern Indigenous peoples’ worldviews; it is not intended to essentialize or suggest one single Pueblo epistemology. I do not adopt “Pueblo” as a colonial marker,



students. I began to think critically about how the institutionalization of education has shaped the views of young, Indigenous students as they endeavored through years of modern schooling. As the larger notions of Indian education policy began to inform my consciousness, I felt the need to seek out a body of knowledge that would help make sense of my understanding of the phenomenon I had taken notice of as a young student engaged in the act of public schooling. What was it about schooling that influenced my eventual transformation from a begrudging acceptance of the status-quo toward my exercise of personal agency as an Indigenous scholar?

Various factors shape student experiences in school as raced, gendered, and classed individuals including structural inequalities and dominant ideologies that abound in the institution of schooling. In high schools that serve Indigenous youth, there is an additional layer of hidden curriculum that stems from the earliest attempts to eradicate Indianness through education in the United States. Teacher attitudes are formed by the conceptualization of schooling, which in turn informs pedagogy and influences praxis. Teachers and curriculum make up the largest portion of a student's daily lived experience in the school setting, thereby grounding the standard for perpetuating dominance through the mechanisms that exist at the foundational levels of schooling (Giroux, 2001).

In both subtle and overt ways, western notions have impacted my construction of the purpose of education. My personal chronology of perspective has ranged from

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rather I use it to reclaim colonizer language and rearticulate it into my identity, to represent certain shared ontological expressions.

unawareness, to immersion, to buy-in, then skepticism, and finally to open inquiry and resistance. Greg Cajete (1994) asserts in his seminal work, *Look to the Mountain*, that “we are continuously engaged in the art of making meaning and creating our world through the unique process of human learning” (p. 25). The insistence on imposing a system of schooling based solely on western culture serves not only to thwart the natural progression of learning described by Cajete, but also to further disenfranchise and marginalize those whose perspectives do not fit with the American curriculum, as described, for instance by Spring (2005):

The 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act...legislation erased the efforts by Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans to institute bilingual education in public schools. The efforts to create multicultural school systems were defeated as the new law mandated standardized tests and state standards to regulate the school curriculum to ensure that a single culture would dominate the schools. (p. 461)

So, despite years of separation between the original experiments at American public schooling and today’s classrooms, the fundamental rights of people to teach and learn in culturally meaningful and appropriate ways, illustrated by Cajete, is still contested by this hegemonic state.

My personal progression toward learning and understanding the dynamics of power in educational settings is foremost shaped by the value placed on formal education by my family. Beginning with my great-grandfather, who was the first person in my family to attend and complete formal “whiteman’s” schooling at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the emphasis on formal western schooling has shaped the educational expectations impressed upon the children in my family. My great-grandfather, Ko'styea (John Menaul Chaves) was taken to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania at the age of 12 and remained at this United States government boarding school until his early adulthood, after which he returned home to *K'awaika* in the New Mexico Territory. Through oral history and informal research, my family learned that John Chaves was optimistic regarding his educational experience at Carlisle Indian School. Though I cannot gauge his adherence to the achievement ideology of schooling, it would seem that he was indoctrinated into the meritocratic ideal, perhaps even meshing it with his own *K'awaikamet* ideals of hard work and experiential learning, thus creating a very productive and valuable educational background upon which to base his life. He returned to the village with different knowledge of agricultural practices based on both his traditional education regarding cultivation and his western education including planting techniques and hybridization. He also came home with multilingual abilities – fluency in Keres, English, and eventually Spanish – strengths that aided in negotiation between his tribal identity (Ko'styea) and his Carlisle persona (John Menaul Chaves). He did not forget his *K'awaika* roots, but used his experience with western industrial schooling to strengthen his skills as an agriculturalist, a carpenter, and a statesman. Through his experiences and the hardships endured by my own parents to achieve westernized education while maintaining a strong bond to traditional culture and homeland, the importance of education has continued to influence my endeavors in schooling. Through conscious efforts in my family, the impetus for our future

generations' learning includes a melding of our Indigenized values and culture along with a strong desire to explore westernized education, as exemplified by my great-grandfather and my father.

As both a student and a professional educator in the public education system in the Southwestern United States, it has been quite a long and interesting journey through the ranks of schooling thus far. I am painfully aware of the injustices experienced by many people under the guise of schooling. Unfortunately, I continue to witness the devastation of historical trauma resulting from the hegemony perpetuated by the American educational system toward girls, people of color, and all other people whose "difference" places them outside the appointed norm.

Most recently, I witnessed what might be described as a "success story" by historical proponents of assimilative Indian schooling. As demonstrated by Cornel Pewewardy's (2005) statement: "attempts to defeat Indigenous peoples were not so much by military force but by politically restructuring the institution of education to mold a colonial belief system" (p. 147). I witnessed this type of colonization of the mind at a parent-student-teacher conference. An American Indian parent demonstrated to her child the importance of school achievement by stripping his cultural connections to punish him for earning poor grades in school. This young man, according to his mother, was not to be caught singing or drumming or participating in any traditional religious ceremony until his grades were sufficiently acceptable to her. She reasoned that the only way to make him achieve in school was to take away the things that she knew *really* mattered to him. I was appalled. I left the meeting and wept silently because I felt powerless – in my

position as a professional educator – to affect any change in the experience of this young student at that particular time without overstepping my boundaries with his parent. This brings to mind the critique by Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2005) that “current institutions and systems [e.g., schooling] are designed to maintain the privilege of the colonizer and the subjugation of the colonized, and to produce generations of people who will never question their position within this relationship” (p. 1). The mother mentioned above adopted a stance indicating an infiltration of her mind that places colonized knowledge (school grades) preceding traditional knowledge (participation in traditional, spiritual life). She did not hesitate to inflict such a consequence on her child and did not acknowledge the internalized messages put forth by the subjugation of such knowledge, nor the ramifications for future generations of her family. How often this occurs at varying levels of severity, I can only imagine. This experience serves to remind me that there is a difference in perception as I examine my positionality – I understand that there is a monumental difference between being powerless as a condition of the structure of a social system and being complicit, either knowingly or through unconscious molding. These conditions are shaped by the colonial context of schooling, as Tuhiwai Smith (1999) reminds us: “Schooling is directly implicated” in the colonization of our modern worlds. She asserts: “the curriculum and its underlying theory of knowledge, early schools redefined the world and where indigenous peoples were positioned within the world” (p. 33). Such power struggles continue to shape the experiences of our children in schools today.

Throughout my own journey in the world of schooling, the impact of education has served to normalize that which appears incongruous with the epistemology of a raced, classed, and gendered person – a girl born and raised on the reservation.<sup>3</sup> Hegemonic ideologies have judged me since long before my own birth; they have created in my appearance the vision of “other” (Collins, 2000; Lewis, 2003) and have separated my reality from the experience of “America.” In what has been dubbed my informal education, I have experienced learning cleverly in song and story; every utterance and action has had purpose and meaning. My learning was infused with rhythmic patterns that continue to influence the way I construct meaning in my daily activity and in the

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<sup>3</sup> Prior to the reservation system, the U.S. government and individual Indigenous nations sanctioned land boundaries according to legal treaties during the 18<sup>th</sup> century; these treaties demonstrate interest convergence (Bell, 1992), as they often marked contested colonial (European) land claims and worked to benefit the U.S. with strong Indian allies in buffer zones (Deloria, 1969). The formal reservation system was imposed upon Indigenous peoples by the United States government as early as 1786 in New England, then further expanded in 1830 with the U.S. “Indian Removal Act” and became codified in the 1851 U.S. “Indian Appropriations Act” and further transformed by the 1887 “General Allotment (Dawes) Act” as U.S. containment policies and attempts to usurp more land. Deloria (1969) reports that “by 1934 Indians had lost nearly 90 million acres through land sales, many of them fraudulent” (p. 47). Many Indigenous nations ceded landholdings under duress in exchange for recognition of sovereign status or as confirmation of landholdings. Pueblo peoples in the southwest United States are affected by the reservation system, although many continue to live on ancestral land bases documented by Spanish Land Grants in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ongoing Native identity debate often centers around Indigenous peoples raised on the reservation versus those raised in urban areas; I use this term to locate myself in this metaphysical journey.

manner I practice theory (hooks, 1994). It was not surprising to encounter similar experiences with other Indigenous people, most poignantly expressed in the recollections of Joseph Suina (1985) in his essay, “And Then I Went to School”. Suina recalls his foundations of education in a full and vibrant recollection of growing up amidst teachings around every purposeful action in his young life in Cochiti in the 1950s. He describes his education as it was disrupted by school; school was a place that taught him that everything he loved about his life at Cochiti was all wrong. Like Suina, the artificial setting of school and all of its expectations to be white-like caused a disruption in my identity development. Suina recalls: “I was ashamed of being who I was, and I wanted to change right then and there” (p. 36). I too was left confused by the mixed messages I received from home about the value of being “Indian,” while I was also subtly encouraged to leave my true identity at home. I quickly learned that school required me to leave my “Indian” at home if I intended to experience success in the classroom. These messages resonated deep within my family’s consciousness and hold the enduring power to span from Suina’s childhood in the early ‘50s to mine in the mid-‘70s.

I cannot help but question the value placed on westernized education in set opposition to traditional modes of learning within my family since my great-grandfather’s experiences at Carlisle. With my own initiation into the “formal” educational setting in New Mexico at the local Head Start, the usage of my traditional Keres language changed its purpose. Proficiency in spoken English obscured my eventual fluency in Keres and distorted it into a secret language used by my parents only to discuss issues privately between them. My parents acted within their power to make certain I used English

properly; it was their way of assuring my future success in formal schooling. The dominance of westernization seized and reshaped my future. It also affected my parents' concession toward American meritocracy and reinforced their attempts to steer me in the path that would offer the least resistance – they shaped my future in response to dominant ideology for what they perceived as my benefit. As Suina stated, this difficult choice of paths was “intended for my welfare” (1985, p. 35) and in retrospect I wonder what a different path may have held for me. Through their life experiences my parents were aware that my opportunities related to the ways I could appear less “Indian” and more assimilated; I was encouraged to use a formal manner of English when conversing with whites and I was scolded for standing with folded arms, lest I “look like an Indian.” Linda Tuhiwai-Smith explains this pathway for Indigenous people as an expectation that “elite status came about through the alignment of their cultural and economic interests with those of the colonizing group rather than with those of their own society” (1999, p. 64). The ability to span generations and to seep into the fabric of a family's ontological disposition, or their way of seeing and operationalizing social reality, toward education and learning is indeed a sheer exercise of power, just as Pratt had intended in his Carlisle Indian experiment that began in 1879.

My epistemological standpoint, or the way I view the production of knowledge, had previously been fairly entrenched in the rhetoric of colonization, thus effectively limiting my agency until I began a more enlightened journey toward decolonization and the preservation of my own cultural identity. Over the course of many years of experience in and around westernized systems of education, my attitudes toward



schooling vacillated. Originally, I approached schooling from a strong assimilationist position. American schooling, as presented at the reservation Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) School in the main village at *K'awaika* created an atmosphere of competition and instituted a system of rewards that I bought into. As students, we were either groomed for academic success or assumed to be unworthy of redemption based on our responses to authority and adherence to the meritocratic ideal. Bowles & Gintis (1976) assert, “the objective educational system has etched the meritocratic perspective deeply” (p. 106) into the furthest reaches of the way we do school and the ways we view our places in society. As I became more entrenched in the “proper” way to engage in schooling, I now see that I became a pawn of dominant ideology – I internalized the self-loathing that set up my future school experiences – I consciously accepted the changes that school success demanded. I became the perfect hostage of hegemony and this relationship propelled me into higher education without fail, for it is those of us “chosen” who demonstrate the appropriate ideals of the dominant society that are allowed to succeed according to that standpoint (hooks, 1994). In the realm of higher education, internalized oppression continued to forge my path. It was reinforced by the discourse of privilege that I experienced in the academy through texts of higher learning and the white, male professors as gatekeepers of that knowledge (Blau, 2003) I sought to attain throughout my early years of post-secondary schooling.

However, in the past ten years I have begun to problematize the attitudes and actions I hold toward education. I have since understood that my perspective toward education has been incongruent with my traditional *K'awaikamet* values. Upon critical

reflection, I found instances when I had not exercised my own agency, which I now critique as my hegemonic collaboration toward the perpetuation of dominant ideology by not speaking out when I should have. This inner struggle has been highlighted by a new consciousness of my own identity based on the ideals of critical theory. My career choice, my institutionalized educational endeavors, my lifestyle, and my envisioned future all come under personal scrutiny through a different lens now as I begin to critically examine these experiences through an Indigenized lens.

Through this lens, I reflect upon the notions of meritocracy that previously shaped my vision during the first “real” teaching experience I encountered at *K’awaika*. Although I didn’t realize it immediately, I operated under the auspices of western power upon my return to teach children at *K’awaika*. I returned home with a missionary mindset, as an “educated” Native person, ready to save Indian children after my mind had been almost fully colonized by the academy; I was lauded as the golden child and called upon for public relations spots, interviews, and mentorship assignments for other teachers. I was near full assimilation, having already devalued my true identity. According to Michal Apple, a refusal to acknowledge your “own classed, raced, religious, and gendered biographies” without truly inquiring or taking the time to “accept, reinterpret, and reject what counts as legitimate knowledge selectively” (2000, p. 58) is quite dangerous. The success of western education comes at the price of assimilation.

Luckily for both my students and me, I began to experience a growing unease with the ideology espoused by the textbooks and pedagogical practices I had learned through my teacher preparation courses. This deeply intuitive influence caused me to critique my

actions and question the attitudes I had developed about the purposes of schooling, which impacted all of our lives. As I started to understand the power I wielded in my own classroom, as well as through my assimilated presence within the community, I realized that a long-overdue paradigm shift in my pedagogical practice was required.

Through my mere existence as an apparent conformist to western society, I had become the oppressor and was causing students to question their homes and traditions as inferior to western values in the same way I had questioned mine. This was articulated by some students who reported my presence as a college-educated, urban dwelling alter-ego of themselves to be threatening. They often demanded to know why I did not live in the village and why my clothing, my accent, and my house were “white.” I remember being a young student and aspiring to those same western ideals they now critiqued in me, because I thought my own identity was inferior. In the modification of my ontological stance toward education, I have come to realize that Indigenous epistemology has been repressed by the westernized educational system for the purpose of maintaining dominant power, as supported by the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999). I find my beliefs echoed in the works of numerous Indigenous scholars such as Greg Cajete (1994) and Vine Deloria, Jr. (1969) whose theories state that there are countless ways of knowing and that the knowledge we, as tribal peoples, have built our civilizations upon has been devalued and excluded from western thought.

Through my study of Giroux (2001) and Apple (1996; 2000; 2003; 2004) I have come to acknowledge the power differential within the classroom and the school milieu as far reaching and insidious in its hidden purpose. Giroux points out that “schools

represent arenas of contestation and struggle among differentially empowered cultural and economic groups” (2001, p. 74). It is truly up to me to do my best to counteract this force by providing balance where I am able. These sites of decolonization (Smith, 1999) within my sphere of agency usually can be reframed through the recontextualization of mainstream history and the inclusion of Indigenous epistemology that brings students’ lived experience into the mainstream of the classroom experience. To counter these deeply embossed practices of cultural hegemony, as Pewewardy (2005) points out: “Students need to know that colonial education practices and philosophies are still supported by the dominant education power structures in this country” as evidenced by “graduating students with a value system that is basically Eurocentric, individualistic, competitive, and materialistic” (p. 140). Through the work of this research project, I have searched for a site from where I may exercise my agency in a decolonizing context. This research highlights evidence that may bring change to the ways curriculum is addressed so that primacy of cultural knowledge is considered.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As communities strengthen their efforts to regain local control over the education systems which serve their children through avenues such as community based schooling, e.g. charter schools, tribally operated schools, and alternative schools, it is imperative that those systems appropriately meet the needs of these children by offering quality curricula that is culturally relevant and academically sound. Additionally, the public school systems that serve diverse populations in New Mexico must continually strive to provide inclusive and effective curricula that promote appreciation and tolerance of all students in

order to avoid the pitfalls often associated with a rigid focus solely upon data-driven accountability (Wood, 2004; Trujillo & Alston, 2005).

The absence of racial and ethnic identity support is especially poignant in the 2001 federal legislation of the Amended Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, otherwise known as the “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB). Ramifications of this federal policy have left widespread threat toward the maintenance of Indian identity for many Indigenous nations in the United States. NCLB states, among its major goals: “improving and strengthening accountability, teaching, and learning by using State assessment systems designed to ensure that students are meeting challenging State academic achievement and content standards and increasing achievement overall, but especially for the disadvantaged” (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Although such goals may seem plausible upon initial perusal, the underlying threat rests in the implementation of the law by states and school districts. In order to achieve improvement and strength in the measures set forth by NCLB, states must rely on scientific measures of learning to “evidence” quality teaching. But the primary focus for those measures is limited to demonstrating performance in Mathematics and Reading by attempting to meet “Annual Measureable Objectives” defined by NCLB, under the heading “Academic Standards, Academic Assessments and Accountability”:

Each State shall establish statewide annual measurable objectives...for meeting the requirements of this paragraph, and which—  
...shall be set separately for the assessments of mathematics and reading or language arts...

...shall be the same for all schools and local educational agencies in the State;  
...shall identify a single minimum percentage of students who are required to meet or exceed the proficient level on the academic assessments that applies separately to each group of students...

...shall ensure that all students will meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State assessments within the State's timeline... (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001 - PUBLIC LAW 107-110—JAN. 8, 2002 115 STAT. 1425, §11111)

Such requirements lead to the quantification of learning that can only be evaluated by standardized test measures. Since the federal law (and by default State law) chooses to limit its definition of official knowledge as math and reading scores, American Indian leaders across the nation have voiced concern over the NCLB legislation claiming that it forces schools to cut tribal culture and language classes in order to meet the requirements for “more important” subjects taught in school (McCarty, 2008). Despite proposed gains in reading and math under President Bush's school reform law, it does not address the needs of Native communities as evidenced by forcing out those cultural and community programs intended to sustain Indigenous languages and cultures (NIEA Preliminary Report, 2005; Trujillo & Alston, 2005).

Adequate Yearly Progress or “AYP”, according to NCLB, is the current rhetoric, which drives the public perception of whether schools are failing or not. It is the new measure of success that drives school districts to perform. Legally, AYP is meant to track scores in reading and mathematics for school districts across the country. There are

levels established by NCLB, which are meant to indicate proficiency in both instructional areas; all schools are mandated to reach full proficiency by the school year 2013-14. New Mexico has responded to the federal NCLB Act by establishing a timeline and guidelines for schools to measure their achievement of the federal mandate by publicly divulging disaggregated data sets as indicators of racialized groups', as well as linguistically and ability-labeled categories of students', and economically categorized students' performance according to indicators including 95% in standardized testing participation, achievement of pre-ordained rates of proficiency or reduction of non-proficiency (spelled out by year in the NCLB), and finally the indicators for attendance and/or graduation rate. Each school district is issued a report card, which appears for public scrutiny published by the NM Public Education Department.

As critiqued by Joel Spring in his 2005 book, *The American School*, the structure of the American school continues to pre-ordain success for a limited few by relying on the strength of gatekeepers through hegemonic social and economic systems as the operant of power in high schools that serve Indigenous youth. Spring writes that in schools that serve minorities, there has been little opportunity for the community to participate in the allocation of funds or creation of curriculum; instead such decisions were made by the "elite school boards, educational administrators, and teachers unions" (p. 451).

Additionally, Apple (1995) reiterates the concept of hegemony as a process controlled by dominant groups in order to maintain the consensus of those under rule. He states in *Education and Power*: "education, then, must be seen as an important element in attempting to create such an active consensus" (1995, p. 26). Although it appears a bleak

prognosis, the future of education for Indigenous youth is bolstered by current efforts to Indigenize education and to move the foundations of learning toward experiential knowledge (Cajete, 1994; Benham & Cooper, 2000; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). With concerted efforts to exert sovereign power, Indigenous nations cultivate teachers, administrators, and traditional ways of knowing into school settings by creating foundational curricular change to the ways we do education (Reyhner & Eder, 2004; McCarty, 2008). By adapting and exercising political power in the realm of public policy, Indigenous nations have forged legislation aimed at maintaining languages, lifeways, and cultural sovereignty.

In 2003, the New Mexico legislature enacted a law calling for the appropriate teaching of Native American students throughout the state via culturally relevant methods of instruction and curricular design. The New Mexico “Indian Education Act” (NMIEA) was established by the state legislature in 2003 thereupon creating the Division of Indian Education, a state-level entity.<sup>4</sup> The primary goals of the Indian Education Act are to provide a legislative body that is meant to:

- A. ensure equitable and culturally relevant learning environments, educational opportunities and culturally relevant instructional materials for American Indian students enrolled in public schools;
- B. ensure maintenance of native languages;

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<sup>4</sup> Please see Chapters 2 and 5 for a history of the NMIEA and the New Mexico Division of Indian Education.



- C. provide for the study, development and implementation of educational systems that positively affect the educational success of American Indian students;
- D. ensure that the department of education partners with tribes to increase tribal involvement and control over schools and the education of students located in tribal communities;
- E. encourage cooperation among the educational leadership of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and the Navajo Nation to address the unique issues of educating students in Navajo communities that arise due to the location of the Navajo Nation in those states;
- F. provide the means for a formal government-to-government relationship between the state and New Mexico tribes and the development of relationships with the education division of the bureau of Indian affairs and other entities that serve American Indian students;
- G. provide the means for a relationship between the state and urban American Indian community members to participate in initiatives and educational decisions related to American Indian students residing in urban areas;
- H. ensure that parents; tribal departments of education; community-based organizations; the department of education; universities; and tribal, state and local policymakers work together to find ways to improve educational opportunities for American Indian students;

- I. ensure that tribes are notified of all curricula development for their approval and support;
- J. encourage an agreement regarding the alignment of the bureau of Indian affairs and state assessment programs so that comparable information is provided to parents and tribes; and
- K. encourage and foster parental involvement in the education of Indian students.

(NM Public Laws 2003, ch. 151, § 1. [22-23A-1 to 22-23A-8 NMSA 1978])

Since it was enacted in 2003, school districts were left to implement the stipulations of the Indian Education Act with limited guidance from the Indian Education arm of the state Public Education Division (PED) as to the meaning of its application largely until it was revised in 2007. This trend can be demonstrated with an audit report conducted by the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee that indicated “implementation of the IEA was initially complex and slow due to the requirement of government to government procedures of the 22 tribes/pueblos/nations;” their data relied on expenditure records of public monies ranging from 2004 through 2006. This audit also pointed out that “PED has shown a lack of leadership as evidenced by a lack of focused programs and resources...” (State of New Mexico-Legislative Education Study Committee [Memorandum], September 12, 2006, p. 3). The push for meaningful implementation of the NMIEA in all school districts had not reached statewide scope, as it remained in a capacity building phase during this initial period (Richard Nichols & Associates, 2006). Enhancing the strength of the NMIEA was indicated as a major factor in promulgation of this State law in a 2006 report on the “Status of the NM-PED Indian

Education Division.” Several suggestions were indicated for the Indian Education Division, including permanent legislative funding and a need to:

Develop better awareness within PED of the enhanced responsibilities of school districts brought about by the NM Indian Education Act. Among other things, the IEA makes NM public school districts responsible for (1) developing Indian education policies and procedures, (2) assuring concurrence with tribes on the use of Impact Aid funds, and (3) providing for addressing Native language teachers training needs within their districtwide professional development plans. [Note: In the RNA survey, several PED respondents were unaware of these requirements or thought that they fell to the IED staff rather than being department-wide responsibilities]. (Richard Nichols & Associates, 2006, p 14-15)

As indicated by the findings above, even officials within the State Public Education Department were unaware of the scope of the NMIEA, thus making it difficult at best for school districts to make sense of their obligations under this law. Additional measures were taken in the reorganized version of the Act.

In 2007, the New Mexico Indian Education Act was updated to include provisions which expanded its scope to include pre-K through post Baccalaureate students, a larger allocation of advisory committee members, and an additional level of reporting directly to the tribal entities served by each district, as well as more evaluative categories in the statewide Indian Education reporting system (NMPED, Indian Education Status Report, School Year 2006-07). This newly amended NMIEA brought additional funding to the Indian Education Division of the NM Public Education Department which allowed hiring

additional staff to help support the provisions of the Act and to award grants to “Exemplary Programs,” displaying efforts to incorporate the NMIEA in the daily lives of students at their sites. Several school districts that serve large numbers of Indigenous students have taken this NMIEA to heart and truly begun to implement more culturally relevant programs and pedagogy in many of their schools, as exemplified by the numbers of projects reported annually, including culturally relevant variable school calendars, Indigenous bilingual programs, increased development and use of Indigenous measures of success for students, and the development and use of tribally designed certification for language instruction (Indian Education Status Report, 2006-2007 School Year). The unfortunate circumstance of this legislation for schools that serve Indigenous communities is its relatively low priority in relation to implementation of federal education policy and its weak structure for enforcement, thus relegating this law to a mere suggestion for school districts to implement in varying degrees with relatively small threat of economic sanctions, in comparison to the federal mandates, mostly in the form of loss of federal impact funding for American Indian pupils in the district. Through the work of the Indian Education coalitions in the state of New Mexico, we may begin seeing a stronger Indian Education Division with increased power to levy changes in the ways we implement culturally appropriate education statewide for all children, Although there are specific and strict guidelines published in the funding formulas for schools in this state regarding the participation of tribal communities with schools to meet the needs of students served within the districts, the reporting procedures merely require acknowledgement by the sovereign leaders via signature (Code of Federal Regulations,

Title 34—Education, Chapter II – Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, Part 222 – Impact Aid Programs).<sup>5</sup> In light of the enormity of NCLB, it would seem unbalanced to expect that state laws should take precedence over federal mandates, but without a specific focus on American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI & AN) children, it is easy to imagine how they might become lost. As Trujillo and Alston point out, “the implementation of NCLB has resulted in a rolling back of tribal sovereignty in AI/AN education and a greater intrusion of state and federal control” (2005, p. 18). The sovereignty to educate children by Indigenous nations in New Mexico will continuously be threatened without a strong voice, such as supported by the NMIEA and the coalitions that work to strengthen Indian Education.

Presently, schools that serve Indigenous students include community controlled local school houses, federally controlled Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) systems, tribally controlled grant schools, large urban public school systems, and smaller rural public schools. As the monumental institution of schooling in the public sphere has been shaped by over one hundred years of trial and error, we find that these modern schools must operate within the constraints of federal policy and accepted practices of schooling. Unfortunately, the largest factor that drives school operation seems to be tied to economic

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<sup>5</sup> Each Indigenous nation in the United States holds political status as a sovereign entity; one feature of such sovereignty includes the creation and operation of governmental systems, distinct to each nation. In New Mexico, the sovereign Indigenous nations are directed by political heads – Pueblo Governors, Tribal Chairmen, or Tribal Presidents – their sovereign leaders.

features as schools continue to vie for operational monies. Continuance of student enrollment and the ability to retain a highly qualified teaching force remain at the forefront for schools struggling to maintain all aspects of their operations while jumping the hurdles of underfunded NCLB mandates. School policy, then, is increasingly driven by economic agendas (Borkowski & Sneed, 2006; Kohn, 2004).

In the state of New Mexico, public education serves a wide range of students. At the inception of this study, the 2004-05 baseline year study of Indian Education in New Mexico includes the following statistics:<sup>6</sup>

1. New Mexico has 89 school districts, of which 23 school districts have substantial Native American student enrollment (35,245). This comprises 97% of the total state Native American student enrollment (36,326). The percentage of Native American student population is 11% of the total students in New Mexico public schools.
2. Statewide Native American students, in grades 3-9 and 11, scored lower in proficiency levels in reading, math, and science compared to other ethnic groups in the NMSBA [White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian].
3. Of the 23 school districts with substantial Native American student enrollment:

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<sup>6</sup> I chose to represent baseline data here to demonstrate a better image of the educational environment for Native students in New Mexico as this study commenced. There is more current data available, which will be presented in chapter 4.

- a. Native American students in grades 7-8 collectively ranked third in dropout percentage (1.26%) compared to other ethnic groups [White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian].
- b. Native American students in grades 9-12 collectively ranked second in dropout percentage (6.69%) compared to other ethnic groups.
- c. An additional AYP indicator for elementary and middle schools is the attendance rate which must be 92% or higher to meet this requirement. 21 school districts met this attendance requirement.
- d. Twenty-one (21) school districts receive Impact Aid funding for students who reside on Indian reservations and are required to develop Indian Policies and Procedures (IPPs) in consultation with tribes. 12 school districts had school board approved IPPs with signatures by current tribal governments or designees. Five districts had IPPs with tribal signatures but signatures were not current. Four districts had IPPs with no current tribal signatures.
- e. Fifteen (15) school districts incorporate important local tribal activities into the school district calendar, so that Native American students may participate. (Werito, P., 2006, Indian Education Status Report, 2004-2005 School Year)

Within these 89 school districts, the study site district demographics include students who are racially identified as: Native American (38%), Hispanic (41%), Caucasian (19%), and African American (1%). The two high schools within this district

are both in continuing years of “School Improvement” measures as a consequence of failure to meet AYP (NM PED School Report Card, 2004-05 School Year, 8/7/2006). The stigma of a “School Improvement” or “Corrective Action” label brings judgment upon schools from the governmental arm and from communities, but most troublesome is the impact felt by students whose limited agency within the public sphere of the law is even further compromised.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to observe, describe, and analyze the ways curriculum is created, understood and implemented in a geographically rural, yet diverse school system and how it responds to two seemingly disparate sets of legislation: the New Mexico Indian Education Act of 2003 and the federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act) of 2001. More specifically, this study aims to address the following research question:

How does state power operate in the inception and implementation of culturally relevant curriculum at a school district that serves a large population of Indigenous high school youth?

Additionally, the following guiding questions aimed to address the more abstract issues of state power as it relates directly to the implementation of curriculum at the proposed study site:

- 1) How is state power embodied in current curriculum, instruction and policy that affect Native high school students?



- 2) How are the state-intended policy and curriculum received and implemented at the two high schools (one located in a small border-town and the other on reservation land) in one school district that serves a significant number of Indigenous students from three distinct tribal communities?
- 3) What historical forces affect the way policy and curriculum are implemented at the high schools within this public school district?
- 4) In what ways does past and present neo-liberalism shape public opinion and state policy, which affect the ways curriculum is addressed in New Mexico school districts?

Implications for the study were derived from the analysis of classroom observation and school-site curriculum documents as reflective of district level policy to determine whose interests are served in the creation of and functioning of pedagogical practices directly affecting the students whom state and federal legislation is intended to help. It also examined the possible hidden discrepancies in the ways curriculum is implemented directly with different populations of students. This research is important because the macro-level forces that shape policy have a direct bearing on the ways schooling is done in the district. Additionally, the perceptions within the public sphere of education and in the communities served by the schools also affect school district policy.

### **Significance of the Study**

**Professional significance.** Currently, there is no research-based data published to address implementation of the 2003 New Mexico Indian Education Act or its 2007 revisions. The New Mexico Public Education Department, Indian Education Division

has authorized evaluative work on the status of Indian education in the state and of the function of the governmental division, but there is a dearth of research on the implementation of this act and its impact on students in the state. There is an ongoing investigation led by the Indigenous Education Research Group (RFP# 07-0009 Study on the Status of Indian Education in New Mexico) regarding the NMIEA across the state:

The Indigenous Education Study Group received a grant from the Indian Education Division of the New Mexico Public Education Department to conduct research on the status of Indian Education in New Mexico school systems. They will use the research findings to produce a New Mexico Indian education study entitled the NM Atlas of Indian Education 2025. This Atlas will be guided by the New Mexico Indian Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act, including Executive Order 13336, and tribal government education policies. It will examine the historical and present impacts of federal, state, and tribal dimensions of New Mexico Indian education. The study will produce policy recommendations to result in overall improvement of the educational performance of American Indian students in New Mexico schools. The study began in February 2007, with plans to complete the work by June 2010.

(<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/indian.ed/Northwest.html>)

Until this “Atlas” is published, Annual Reports issued by the NM Indian Education Division (NMIED) serve to compile data submitted by the school districts and to represent a snapshot glimpse at yearly developments across the state. The focus of the

present study differs from these snapshots provided by the NMIED with the addition of qualitative data to the test scores and quantified data presented in Annual Reports.

A major component of the NMIEA also lists professional development for schools, school districts, teachers, and educational assistants in order to help implement the guidelines set forth by the NMIEA. In the period directly preceding the NM Indian Education Act, there was limited formal professional development offered to public school districts regarding what is culturally relevant for the Native populations of students they serve, and even further limits on the access to such information for non-Native students. Since 2007, professional development for new and veteran teachers seems to have increased slightly, as evidenced by the inception of district Indian Education departments' more involved presence in the school districts and schools. Despite this increased awareness, each district is still left to decide how to most appropriately balance the many sets of regulations that are meant to hold schools accountable to educate students. It is unfortunate that in this era, schools have taken to data collection and standardizing curricula in order to meet the homogenizing stipulations of federal legislation. The state Public Education Department currently has an ongoing study of the effectiveness of the Indian Education Department and NM Indian Education Act statewide. The results of this study are not published at this time.

Local departments of education (BIE, grant/contract schools, private, and charter schools) might benefit from the results of this study as they endeavor to develop culturally sensitive and appropriate curriculum for their Native student populations. I hope this study becomes a decolonizing project that reveals the inherent racist structure of

schooling and that it helps to open sites for deconstruction of firmly held beliefs and practices in the power of curriculum and in the exercise of power and agency by various actors within this school system. This research seeks to address the beliefs from participants about what is expected of a curriculum that is culturally relevant and responsive to the cultural needs of the community, as well as what they think its purpose and place is in Indian education.

This research serves to inform the tribal department of education about the possibilities for implementation of a high school curriculum that is appropriate and responsive to the needs of the community, which it serves to inform policy for future high schools and for current operations within the department. This research tries to offer suggestions for avenues through which the tribal nation might exercise agency within the school system to make decisions about curriculum that would impact their own students and to help other students to learn and to appreciate the diversity of tribal entities. Through this research project, I provide ways to view the curriculum from multiple perspectives in demonstrating the needs of participants and I hope to offer tenable suggestions for implementing culturally relevant curriculum in this school district at the high school level. Perhaps these suggestions and the data I present herein may have implications for other grade levels of the district, as well.

**Theoretical Significance.** Through the analysis of curriculum policies in the school district, I examine the role hegemony plays within this district in the daily practices of schooling, plus look at how it is perceived and acted upon at the school level and the classroom level. The existing hegemonic influence in this school district is

examined within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2006); the data connects how the federal legislation shapes district curriculum policy and its monumental impact throughout every element of curriculum delivery. This critical analysis of school policy shows the pervasive nature of NCLB as it explores how administrators focus on NCLB issues as greater concerns than issues of cultural relevance and mandates imposed by the State of New Mexico.

The analytical lenses that I employ to examine the data come from the influences of both Indigenous and Western scholars. I investigate the textual data in the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I code qualitative data in the form of transcripts, legal documents, curriculum materials, and other public records for content using discursive categories constructed by participants. I apply these practices in a reflexive manner in order to establish trustworthiness and to uncover the discursive significance of participants by identifying the convergence of coded data as I track it; I look for agreement regarding established meanings in each data category that I code to establish semantic relationships; I seek a broad range of coverage in applying discursive codes across different types of data to contextualize it and establish its inferences within the larger socio-political realm; and finally, I analyze the linguistic details of these discourse categories to determine their communicative functions.

Also, in my critical analysis of the systems of operation within the school district, I experience and understand the conceptualization of power explained by *Critical Theory* (Giroux, 1981, 2001; Apple, 2001; & Freire, 2002) in terms of spheres of control through

various projects that affect personal agency, or the ways we enact ontological and epistemological imperatives in our daily lives, within the federal laws, school policies, and selected curricular materials.<sup>7</sup> To further localize my analyses, I employ an Indigenized lens, informed by the work of Greg Cajete (1994), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2002), Larry Emerson (2004), Angela Wilson (2004), and further developed into *Tribal Critical Race Theory* by Bryan Brayboy (2005). According to Brayboy, “[t]he primary tenet of TribalCrit is the notion that colonization is endemic to society” represented in “European American thought, knowledge, and power structures” (p. 430) in this country. He offers, in TribalCrit, a way to analyze the unique ways that Indigenous peoples experience dominant society’s systems at all levels. In effect, Brayboy creates an overarching theory that spans complimentary ideas between Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory, which had not yet been articulated to “explicitly address issues that are salient for and to American Indians” (p. 427).

**Personal Significance.** It is my personal and professional interest to gain an in depth understanding of the forces that have shaped the education of Indigenous peoples in this area of the United States and to study their lasting effects in a localized geographic area. It is my intention to use this information to bolster my research regarding the impact of schooling on Native American students’ experiences in schooling and to use some of the power of this knowledge to become a transformational leader in my field.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on *Critical Theory* in the Frankfurt School tradition, see Held, D. (1980). *Introduction to critical theory*.

This research is important to me because I am engaged in making curricular decisions that directly impact Indigenous students. I am attempting to guide young people to critically analyze the world around them in order to become active agents in their own decolonization, as well as to help lead them toward indigenizing their experiences in schooling. This research is personal to me because I had to struggle through years within this same system -- a system of schooling that rewarded me as I denied my identity while striving for assimilation; it has taken even more years to try to undo the colonization of my mind. This system of schooling taught me that mediocrity was acceptable because of my identity and that I should never attempt to amount to much more than average -- the college path was not stressed and I was not fully prepared to deal with college once I got there, neither academically nor socially. I learned to accept failure as inevitable and that I was always going to be relegated as the “other,” no matter how hard I tried to fit in – to assimilate – because of racialization and body politics, as I understand now. This school system taught me that to be successful meant to be white or like-white and that I should be ashamed of my heritage, but could use it to exploit when it was economically necessary. This system devalued my language and encouraged the full and appropriate use of the foreign language – it also taught my parents and siblings that in order to do well in school, the Keres language was to be discouraged, by not given primacy over the dominant language of schooling. It has caused me to have a void in my being without the language to understand and express my identity as an Indigenous woman in my community.

The real strength of fully implementing a culturally relevant curriculum that meets the needs of the local communities is to strengthen the identities of the students whom it will affect and to give them a strong base from which to draw once they learn to experience academic success in high school and post-high school endeavors. As a decolonizing project, it might persuade children and adults to think in terms of strength and not deficit when constructing and implementing curriculum that is academically rigorous and culturally relevant. It could allow them to take pride in the contributions of Indigenous ways of thinking and knowing. If the affects of this research are enduring, I would hope to influence teachers and learners to meld Indigenized habits of mind with the practice of schooling. Also, as a decolonizing project, this research may help teachers and learners to recognize the systems of power inherent in the institutions of schooling so they may be better able to navigate through them instead of becoming disengaged by the daunting tasks of the educative process.

### **Overview of Methodology**

This study utilizes a critical discourse analysis of secondary curriculum, lesson plans, textbooks and other classroom materials; it also examines the 2003 NMIEA and the impact of federal NCLB legislation as these policies exist within a New Mexico school district that serves a large population of Native American children. Critical Discourse Analysis is a methodology that seeks to understand the meanings inherent in the language used within a particular context, this school district, in particular, to unmask the dialectical relationships between discourse, ideology, and power (Fairclough, 1993; 2003). On analyzing educational policy from the federal level to the district level, Taylor



(1997) helps me to explain how to make sense of “particular policies in their historical context; tracing how policy ‘problems’ are constructed and defined and how particular issues get to be on policy agenda” (p. 28). I employ the use of frames for analyzing political contexts and their influences over substance and expression of educational policy.

Throughout the research process, I use methods of triangulation to “secure an in-depth understanding” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8) of my research site and its participants by conducting interviews with secondary education teachers to follow up on voluntary teacher surveys, as well as interviews with school district administrators/curriculum directors. In addition, I strengthen my triangulation efforts by engaging in classroom observation and interviews with community members. Throughout the process of data collection in this research project, I identified categories as they emerged through transcription of interviews and observations, evaluation of surveys, and annotation of documents reviewed. These categories are organized and coded as they relate to the research problem by providing a detailed analysis and interpretation of the findings as they became known.

I have been forthcoming in operationalizing the emerging concepts I employ to analyze the data so that issues of validity are transparent and that my analyses strive for “conceptual and ontological clarity” thus leading to my articulation of “meaningful and relevant epistemolog[ies]” emerging from the research (Mason, 2004, p. 188). Although there are no simple truths to this research, I have worked to establish validity by identifying the conceptual frames, including state power, schooling, personal agency, and

neoliberalism; observing these concepts as they appear in the data, including emic accounts by participants and participant observation transcripts; and finally, measuring their meaning through the modes of analysis outlined above, including CDA and Tribal Critical Race Theory.

As I generate data through these methods and lenses of analysis, I address issues of reliability by constantly realigning my measures to the research questions at hand. I make every attempt to assure the accuracy of my accounts from field notes, recordings, and transcripts by rereading, rehearing, and reviewing all of the data, as well as opting for member-checking practices to help ascertain the reliability of my analytical methods. I strive for precision in the measures I employ while conducting CDA, therefore I also validate my findings using a process of doubling back to check for accuracy in their reporting, thus making it a reflexive act, and relying on the four tenets of CDA articulated by Gee (2006): *Convergence, Agreement, Coverage, and Linguistic Details* (p. 113-114).

### **Delimitations**

Although this study is comprehensive in nature, it does not include a look at public schooling in the elementary grades, nor early childhood settings. These developmental periods for children are indeed monumental, but this research will focus on the older adolescent stages of public schooling. It may prove useful to apply some concepts of this research to other areas of the world, or even to other levels of education, however, this research is geographically limited to a west-central school district in New Mexico, as a unique and rich area of study. As noted in the description of the research site, there are schools in operation within the proposed school district boundaries that are

private, federally controlled, or tribally controlled; this study does not propose to examine all of these schools, as it aims to look only at the two public high schools within the district.

### **Definitions**

My use of the following terms throughout this research draws – on my own understanding – as it has been shaped by the theorists in the field of critical educational studies and Indigenous studies. I define these terms below using a simplified discourse:

***Culture/Indigenous Culture.*** Often debated from anthropological and sociological rhetoric, basically culture in this research refers to the indigenous traditions, practices, languages, ways of knowing, and epistemologies of the students served by the school district as separate from the dominant “American” culture promoted through the system of schooling.

***Culturally Relevant, also Culturally Responsive Curriculum.*** Can be defined as the inclusion of sound pedagogical practices that honor the languages and cultures students bring with them to the classrooms and schools in an on-going and comprehensive manner that seeks to bring students’ tacit knowledge into the setting of schooling and to encourage academic growth as a result.

***Curriculum.*** As discussed in this research refers to the institutionalized, standardized, and politicized ways in which schooling is done to students and the effects such practices has on schools and educators. Such practices include legislation at federal and state levels, school practices, and written guides that required adherence to accepted norms of what counts as legitimate knowledge.

***Critical Pedagogy.*** The implementation of the principles of sound teaching through practices that honor and include the knowledge that learners bring with them to schools. Additionally, it is the active critique of systems and resistance to those systems that serve to shape learners into standardized models of the “ideal” student. It encourages learners to challenge the dominant norms of acceptability and find empowerment through their work as critical actors (Apple, 1994; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2001; McLaren, 2003).

***Critical Theory.*** The use of reflection and questioning of the status quo in social systems. I use it to examine the system of schooling and the infiltration of other systems of power to take hold and shape it. The techniques involve operationalizing assumptions about the structures that exist within the systems – from where power resides and how it is strategically used in support of status quo; the most important aspect of Critical Theory is the action component – this research and its assumptions make sites of resistance possible for the participants in the situation. Because it allows for a deeper examination of the power structures in schooling and a wide angle look at the operation of state power via legislation within the study site. It provides an axis upon which to build sites of resistance. I use this as an opportunity for decolonization and regaining power within the hands of the local Tribal entities over their educational systems. It is not merely a tool of critique for critique sake, it is an operational tool to be used to open and examine sites of resistance in order to promote action (Apple, 1994; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2001; Gramsci, 1971).

***Hegemony.*** The unspoken institutionalization of hierarchies of power established and perpetuated by those in power as an underpinning to uphold state power. All actions

and reactions are controlled by the forces underlying the hegemony – so that the system is set up to maintain the same power structure through consent. Ideological hegemony is most pervasive because it appears as “commonsense” and is accepted as status quo oftentimes without contestation. I use it to describe and identify ideologies at play within the structure of the school district at one level, and the structure of the institution of schooling on a macro level, influenced by the dominant power forces of the federal government. It is enacted in the micro level as we make sense of our daily experiences in response to the macro level hegemonic influences of school and society (Gramsci, 1971; and further articulated by Apple, 2004).

***Indigenization.*** The process by which people may incorporate Indigenous ontology and epistemologies into the westernized realms of knowledge production. It represents a shift in primacy of knowledge toward Indigenous metaphysics, or ways of knowing (Cajete, 1994; Emerson, 2004; Smith, 1999).

***Indigenous.*** A designation used as a decolonizing statement denoting nationhood and identity of first people and original inhabitants of this continent. Used interchangeably, when necessary, with colonial terms including “Indian” and “Native American”. Also used in the decolonizing context: “Native”.

***Internalized Oppression.*** The self imposed belief in one’s own inferiority based upon inundation from outside influences related to racialization, racism, negative stereotypes, and ineffectiveness based on those pressures; It in turn, infiltrates and shapes the long-term outlook of a person, thereby oppressing opportunities and achievements within his/her grasp; it is also generalizable to other members of the same racial or

cultural group and serves to further oppress their opportunities and achievements (Bell, 1992; Collins, 2000; Daniel-Tatum, 1997; Spring, 2007).

*Neo-liberalism.* A term used to describe the ideology of political correctness and its common practice of commodification of elements that represent diverse perspectives in such ways that usurp the power from its original state. Its belief in ameliorating the “wrongs” through economic actions and individualism often has the consequences of supporting the agenda of the political right/conservatism by creating class struggles and competition which trickles into the schools and encourages systems of schooling to transmute a business mindset in preparation of privatization (Apple, 1995; 2000; 2004; Spring, 1998).

*Power.* A privileged system that is developed and maintained by those with the means to make monumental decisions that benefit the continuance of such authority and affect the lives of those without authority, used without regard to the devastating effects of such wielding and often disguised /re-packaged to make commonsense and downplay of such effects. There are power differentials in every level of the school district studied. Power is represented in a matrix of domination that places individuals within certain relationships to the dominant power structure (Collins, 2000, p. 274). This matrix is always dependent on the identities of individual actors within the context of each situation, as perceived in gender, race, sexual orientation and economic factors. As Collins points out, “intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation points to the significance of these oppressions in shaping the overall organization of a particular matrix of domination” (p. 275). In the micro level within the local district the

power flows downward into the classrooms with students at the bottom of the rung and parents/ community relegated to the outside positions in the hierarchy trying to exert force or watching as decisions are made without their consultation. On the macro level – this power is embodied within the legislation, which has been influenced by neoliberalism; at the state level, it represents pressures from both macro and micro levels and appears to be an instance of interest convergence (Apple, 2004; Bell, 1992; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2001).

***Racism.*** The political institutionalization of advantage based on phenotype and pigmentation. I use race and racism throughout the dissertation to describe systems enacted through laws and social institutions meant to uphold and promote white supremacy. I use racism to encompass far more than individual acts of prejudice, but to highlight the existence of racism as an insidious structural force embedded deeply within dominant ideological systems (Bell, 1980; Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Crenshaw, 1995; Daniels-Tatum, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994).

***State power.*** The political and cultural capital embodied in the system of laws, institutions, and social practices deemed acceptable by the dominant society. It is held by few and protected under the guise of social programs and “commonsense” policies that address the needs of people while upholding the political power of the few through converging interests in the economic and social sectors of the state. The state is made up of institutions and groups that circumscribe social and political meanings accepted as “commonsense” practices and presented as benefitting the common good (Apple, 2000; 2003).





## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Literature

The present study is built upon the works of critical theorists, scholars on race studies, Indigenous scholars and historians, and critical education ethnographers. In its examination of schooling this research is framed conceptually by the constructs of state power, hegemonic alliances, ideology, and neo-liberalism – several components of the theoretical frameworks espoused in Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy. It also draws on Critical Race Theory in the form of TribalCrit and incorporates principals of Indigenized ways of interpreting and analyzing data.

The review of literature provides a synthesis of existing knowledge based on the operation of state power through schooling, American Indian students and public schooling, and an analysis of neo-liberalism in state policy on education. I first present the conceptual frames within a historical context in order to situate the contemporary structure of schooling examined in this study. Awareness of “American” schooling history is necessary in the analysis of education policy toward Indigenous peoples and is essential in understanding the outcomes of this study therefore I begin with a brief overview of history in the field of schooling.

I begin with American public education, not to privilege the white system of schooling but to problematize the historical conditions of schooling that Indigenous children continue to experience in contemporary settings. The discussion of public education is followed by a section on “Indian education” to further demonstrate specific issues within the institutionalization of school for Indigenous students, educators, and

communities especially in the geographic locale of this research. Finally in this overview of the historical context of schooling, I discuss the history of resistance to imperatives of the white public school system by movements to adopt a more Indigenized vision of education for Native children. The rest of the chapter is then divided into two remaining sections that discuss theoretical and empirical literature in critical educational studies that help to understand and situate the present study. In the second section, I present a brief discussion of the processes, approaches and schools of thought related to Indigenization, Critical Pedagogy and Tribal Critical Race Theory. Finally, I detail several empirical studies that follow the traditions of Critical Ethnography, Critical Policy Study, and conventional ethnography dealing with schooling and Indigenous students.

My choice of Critical Theoretical traditions to support this research stems from its nature that can both delineate and respond to the socio-political, historical contexts of schooling addressed herein. This theoretical approach allows me to examine the issues of state power inherent in the people and their policies that have formed the institution of schooling. Therefore it is important to begin with an overview of the historical context of schooling to situate the issues of power presented later in this chapter so that a discussion of the mechanisms of schooling may follow.

### **Historical Context of Schooling**

**United States Public Education.** Since its inception as a regimented and formalized method of educating children in this country, the school has been a contested sphere. The series of reform movements over the past 200 years have each been marked by a particular political agenda. Varying schools of thought that have shaped the

education system in the United States have come in and out of prominence along with the political sway of the government. The federal government played a hand in the shifts of power associated with each brand of curriculum reform adopted. Schools changed focus to keep up with legislative changes and demands from the public interest (Graham, 2005; Hale, 2002; Kliebard, 1995; Spring, 2005; 2007; 2008).<sup>8</sup>

Typically, eras of schooling can be distinguished by the underlying goals and assumptions of public education set forth by the pressures of the national agenda at the time. A chronology of schooling might begin with “The Common School” era 1770-1900, followed by the “Public School” era 1900-1950, then an era of “Separate and Unequal” 1950-1980, and finally “A Nation at Risk” era 1980-2000 (Ravitch, 2001). Similarly, Graham (2005) identifies eras of schooling chronologically beginning with “Assimilation: 1900-1920,” “Adjustment: 1920-1954,” “Access: 1954-1983,” and “Achievement: 1983-Present.” Regardless of its label, the very beginnings of schooling in this country promoted the ideology of standardization.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Public interest can be defined by various methods and presented to meet differing objectives. Joel Spring (2008) asks “Who determines the public interest?” and refers to the 2005 National Summit on High Schools where the “public interest” of high school education was decided upon by state governors and corporate leaders. Likewise, Michael Apple discusses the notion of authoritarian populism as an ideology represented by “visions of “the people”” to include nationalistic, religious conservative interests (2004, p. 166).

<sup>9</sup> Early political leaders in the United States including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush and Noah Webster were most influential during this era. Both Jefferson and Rush attempted to establish state systems of education in order to help bolster the new country with an educated [white] citizenry capable of sustaining

Performance of these eras of education in the United States can be interpreted according to five historical themes posed by Joel Spring in his (2005) *The American School*. They are summarized as follows:

- Conflicts over cultural domination
- Ideological management of the distribution of ideas in society
- Racism
- Economic issues
- Consumerism and environmental education

Spring discusses these themes as they appear throughout the progression of schooling in the United States. The most salient points he makes include his analysis of the role of cultural domination as a central tenet of education history. Spring points out that domination has been the driving force in this country since the “invasion of North America in the sixteenth century and continues today in the debate over multiculturalism” (p. 3). To demonstrate the ways public schooling has developed, I offer this brief history utilizing Spring’s five themes.

Spring’s first theme, conflict over cultural domination was evident in the social transformation and response to the needs of a growing country. Creating a national

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the freedoms and stability afforded by their government; Webster promoted “American” cultural nationalism and was intent on creating an English language completely separated from British. With their status as educated elite, these men directed their power toward the creation of an “American” system of education (Kaestle, 2001).

identity drove the purpose of schooling for white children in the United States in the early- to mid-1800s. Conflicts over cultural domination were at the forefront of the creation of public schools in the newly formed United States of America. According to Herbert Kliebard (1995), the increasing urbanization of the American public and expansion of written English literacy prompted the schools to respond with a movement to standardize a national curriculum through the use of McGuffey readers and Webster's Blueback spellers. These staples of curriculum in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries provided a clear slant toward white Anglo-Saxon Protestant morals and taught basic principles of American patriotism (Ornstein, 1993). The aims to establish a dominant "American" culture via schooling were quite clear in this era.

In his second theme, Spring explains that ideological management of the distribution of ideas in society is evident in early the history of public schooling. "Ideological management involves the creation and distribution of knowledge in a society. Schools play a central role in the distribution of particular knowledge" (2005, p. 4). The existence of hegemony as part of daily life via schooling ensures the permeation of an "American" ideology throughout the consciousness of the burgeoning nation. Some of the first movements toward ideological management based upon "scientific" knowledge came at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the mental disciplinarian movement, based on the idea that the mind is a muscle that develops over time with repetitive practice.<sup>10</sup> Noted historian Howard Zinn described U.S. education at the turn of the

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<sup>10</sup> See Kliebard (1995) pages 4-8 for a detailed discussion of the mental disciplinarian doctrine.

twentieth century as a system shaped by the political agendas of the rich philanthropist and government bloc. Some students were groomed for the upper echelons of this society by virtue of their access to different forms of knowledge and others were not afforded the same opportunities due to their inherited status in life. Schooling in that time was not meant to engage critical thought. As Zinn points out, “educational institutions did not encourage dissent” for the college educated “middlemen in the American system...who would be paid to keep the system going, to be loyal buffers against trouble” (2003, p. 263).

The notion of Americanizing all of its children drove the mission of public schooling in the United States, with the realization that “the curriculum of these Americanized schools would be shaped by the books that the students read” (Ornstein, 1993, p. 163). The public school movement was initiated by the “thought that schooling should be not only more widespread but also more systematic and more publically supervised” (Kaestle, 2001, p. 13). These ideas became the strongest underlying factors in public education throughout its history. Kaestle synthesizes the Common School era as one that:<sup>11</sup>

Moved education more fully into the public sphere and made it amenable to public policy. State system builders and urban centralizers seized the opportunity.

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<sup>11</sup> Horace Mann is credited with educational reform beginning in 1837 through the inception of the Common School as a precursor to more widespread public schools. The advent of Normal Schools for teacher preparation, first established in 1823, also gained wider acceptance from this movement.

While they attempted to coexist with local control, they also used legislation and supervision to encourage values they prized even more: free access to elementary and secondary education, a modest equalization of resources across localities, the assimilation of a diverse population, moral education for a stable society, more extensive education for a more complex economy, and the training of citizens in patriotism, political knowledge, and public affairs. (2001, p. 16)

The driving ideology of this era was the creation of an “American” educational system divorced from the British system and one that would not encourage resistance (Kliebard, 1995; Pinar, 2004; Tyack, Anderson, Cuban, Kaestle, & Ravitch, 2001).

For the working class people, schooling stressed basic skills to promote a literate work force as Zinn asserts, “It was important that these people learn obedience to authority” (p. 263). Impelled by the industrial age, public high schools became mirrors of the factory system and produced a labor force indoctrinated by ideological management of schooling. Howard Zinn illustrates that as mechanisms of the industrial system, schools instituted courses like History “in the curriculum to foster patriotism. Loyalty oaths, teacher certification, and the requirement of citizenship were introduced to control both the educational and the political quality of teachers” (p. 263). By implanting these notions into the curricula and placing them within the daily experience of students, the messages become more powerful and inescapable.

The media is included as a vehicle to manage ideas and values for young people; the media of the early days of school included textbooks, magazines, and newspapers as they do today but now with more exposure to the internet and digital media. As early as

1904 children were targeted as a viable consumer group and marketing devices used school as an innocuous conductor for brand name recognition – to show children what they wanted as a way to manage them ideologically (Spring, 2005).

The third tenet of Spring's examination of education history points to racism as endemic to the history of the United States evidenced through systems of schooling by the often violent conflicts between racism and movements to counter its effects. He critiques the myth that U.S. history portrays schools as pillars of benevolent transformation by preaching the values of equality and citizenship while at the same time excusing the government and dominant groups from the brutal and racist acts committed against historically and currently oppressed peoples.

The assimilative goals of schooling clearly support this claim from both its inception through the era of Separate but Unequal, and into contemporary legislative measures. Public high schools were legally sanctioned in the mid-1870s by state court rulings that allowed states to establish and pay for them, but they were generally excluded from the southern states where Blacks were still second-class people (Ornstein, 1993). Debate over who would determine the curriculum in these schools emerged. The National Education Association's Committees formalized this ideology with recommendations for strict high school curriculum standardization and focus on core subjects including languages, mathematics, sciences, and history.<sup>12</sup> The conflict over

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<sup>12</sup> The National Education Association (NEA) was founded in 1857 as the National Teachers Association to unite state teacher organizations in the growing field of public schooling. The NEA has been a powerful



whose brand of knowledge would be legitimated through the curriculum continued with each shift in power, but it was always based upon Western Civilization (Graham, 2005; Hale, 2002; Kliebard, 1995; Pinar, 2004). And as Pinar (2004) states, “These [NEA] reports cast a mold for the school curriculum out of which it has yet to break free” (p. 75). Although different theories and movements gained status throughout the history of schooling, the core subject areas defined by the NEA Committees have remained.

In the mid-1900s “the nation’s public schools became embroiled in classifying students for different curricular tracks” (Ravitch, 2001, pp. 66-67) which was facilitated by an increased reliance on intelligence (IQ) testing to sort the intellectual elite from the vocational workers, as indicated by the institution of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in 1941 for college admissions. Almost always, non-Anglo Saxon immigrants and people of

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component in developing and responding to education reform, for example the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies was initially created in 1892 as the NEA focus group to standardize college entrance requirements so that high schools would have common curricular goals. The Committee of Fifteen on Elementary Education convened in 1865 to offer a report on primary schooling largely advocating for a humanistic approach to include a Western Civilization focus by centering elementary education on grammar, literature, art, mathematics, geography, and history (Kliebard, H. 1982). The Committees consisted of elite white men, usually college presidents. Charles Eliot, president of Harvard was the first head of the Committee, was heavily influenced by G. Stanley Hall. Hall’s research in the field of psychology and child development was influential in creating highly regimented, authoritarian schools that stressed indoctrination into American culture (Kliebard, 1995; Ornstein, 1993).

color were racialized and excluded or segregated by these practices (Ravitch, 2001; Spring, 2007).

With the entry of the United States into World War II, a new brand of curriculum theory emerged that was fashioned by nationalistic patriotism and morals of democracy. These moves served the purpose of deliberately shaping white youth into the type of democratic citizens the U.S. Government intended, as well as creating a dichotomy between “us” and “them” as a unifying force in the country, especially targeting ethnic immigrants from countries the United States warred against (Kliebard, 1995; Spring, 2005). Schools again became cultural sites of socialization into American nationalism for a growing immigrant population. English-only movements and fervent racism fomented by U.S. involvement in the World Wars during this era further intensified the notion of white-American intellectual superiority and limited educational opportunities for African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans and “ethnic” whites who spoke Italian, German, or Hebrew (Ravitch, 2001). Ravitch portrays this segregated education as vastly unequal. She states, “The legacy of this era was a system of mass education, but one that educated different groups differently” (2001, p. 119), thus reproducing unequal systems in the United States that privilege the cultural knowledge of Americanized students, while devaluing the strengths of children seen as un-American (Hale, 2002; Kliebard, 1995).

The idea of Americanism did little to help ameliorate the issues of the racial divide brought about by the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, and so with more federal legislation, the purpose of the American curriculum was again reinscribed to fit the needs

of changing social and political norms, as well as changing federal government legislation (Kliebard, 1995). With the numerous reforms in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it would seem that the Progressive notion of school as “the great equalizer” would come into prominence, but as demonstrated later in this chapter, schools remain vastly unequal.

Spring’s fourth tenet focuses on national economic trends and schooling. As a means to bring an end to poverty, Spring notes that “Economic Issues in Public School History” have played an important role in shaping what the schools and classroom sets of instruction look like. He states that schools have always been crucial in determining the labor market in this country. For example, the Progressives brought about a different, more socially oriented approach to schooling that attempted to de-emphasize the strict regimentation of the Common School and replace it with a more child-centered, humanistic method. This movement combined many of the social progressive issues of the early 1900s (poverty, workers’ rights, fair government) with greater effectiveness of school administration and a move toward professionalization of the field of education; it also represented a move away from dependence on textbooks and more toward reliance on social reality. This era opened the realm of education to the influence of business with the introduction of industrial and vocational education. The era of Progressive education

transformed public schooling.<sup>13</sup> Like many other educational reforms, progressivism became co-opted, as indicated by Ravitch,

Unfortunately, the term “progressive” was invoked to cover a multitude of programs, approaches, and methods, including not only child-centered schooling but also I.Q. testing, curricular-sorting, and vocational education. Throughout the first half of the century, any efforts to diversify the curriculum away from academic studies and to restrict such studies only to college-bound students was considered “progressive.” (2001, p. 67)

The hegemonic forces of business and public interest asserted control over schooling. This power bloc supported the acceleration toward a more patriotic industrialization of education in response to U.S. involvement in the World Wars.

The social efficiency movement which characterized the period from 1910 through 1930 with emphasis on outcomes of high school gained resurgence again in the 1990s. The main thrust of this model aimed to “cultivate an individual’s capacities as a producer, a citizen, and a parent” (Ornstein, 1993, p. 175). The movement maintained the westernized ideological base for what constituted academic rigor and returned to a focus on the vocationalization of schooling. In this model, education has become the corporate product with the formation of school-business-political alliances.

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<sup>13</sup> John Dewey is most often associated with this era of “Progressive Education” and is credited with promotion of innovative child-centered pedagogy mostly in private schooling but eventually in public schools as well.

The assumptions of these alliances are described by Larry Cuban (2001) to include a dynamic relationship between efficiency in free-market competition and public school choice, rigorous subject matter in schools drives an economy based on information, and the bottom line for the market is based on profit-loss margins whereas the bottom line for schools is based on annual standardized testing performance. In the new era of reform, the corporate model has expanded the commercialization of schooling from business management models to advertising space in textbooks, curriculum, and physical spaces (Cuban, 2001). This reliance on the captive audience of consumers in schools plays well into Spring's fifth tenet.

Finally, in the fifth tenet Spring discusses "Consumerism and Environmental Education." He points to the development of the theoretical foundations of consumerism and states that "the endless consumption of new industrial products" (p. 7) in the realm of schooling means the transmission of a consumerist ideology to be proliferated by the endless supply of young people in schools, however the new movement toward the "biospheric paradigm" seems to be at odds with consumerism (p. 8). More recently, textbook publishers are also present in the debate about curriculum and how environmental education should be addressed.

During the WWII era curriculum in the United States focused heavily on consumerism by stressing awareness of rapidly depleting resources needed for the war effort. Kliebard (1995) describes the American curriculum affected by war:

Aviation and navigation were given special attention in the context of several subjects, and social studies emphasized war aims. Industrial arts courses were

revised to take into account armament needs. Consumer economics and home management also received increased attention in order to assist the citizenry to live under wartime conditions. (p. 205)

The strong sense of nationalism and patriotism rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century school house again came into vogue in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as schools emphasized students' responsibilities as consumers during wartime. This is especially poignant for American Indian students whose induction into schooling in 1879 was heavily infused with militarism and directives toward extreme loyalty to country (Adams, 1995; Blau, 2003; Child, 2000; Connell-Szasz, 2003; Hale, 2002; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2005; 2007).

Consumerism for students is also hidden within the text of their instructional materials; they are targeted as active consumers of information. Spring (2008) states that textbooks still shape curriculum because they contain "facts and ideas that are the product of a whole host of political debates and decisions" (p. 285). He gives the case of the 2003 lawsuit against the Texas State School Board for its rejection of an Environmental Science textbook that it deemed promoted "anti-American" messages and instead adopted a textbook sympathetic to mining interests.<sup>14</sup> The Texas State School Board claimed

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that the states of Texas and California hold twenty percent of the textbook purchasing power in the United States. These two states ultimately make the decisions for what gets published and offered to the schools in the rest of the country. See Spring, (2008) *American Education*, for a detailed discussion of censorship, textbooks, curriculum, and instruction, pp. 280-311.

other “anti-American” messages contained in textbooks centered upon global warming discussions. The 2002 School Board demanded the textbook company change the ways students learn information about global warming by refusing to adopt a science text until it downplayed the role of rain forest destruction in ozone depletion and included a dismissive statement about global warming (Spring, 2008).

In post-Civil Rights America, the proliferation of consumerism and economic drive that shapes the curriculum to prepare for a better college which will bring about a better job, are offered along with the hidden curriculum. The overt curriculum focuses on standardization and domination of the culture wars as forms of ideological management. Spring asserts that the federal government continues to exert control through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in both the overt and hidden curricula of school. He states that the NCLB legislation “mandates the teaching of a single culture in public schools through a combination of the moral consensus of character education, the standardized content of the curriculum” (p. 463) which converges with standardization through assessment and accountability.

Despite the different chronological eras and transformations of public schooling, the curriculum has never veered far from its original goals of assimilation and nationalism. Such goals have always gone hand in hand with the education of American Indian students, with an emphasis on deculturalization. The next section discusses the historical context of education for Indigenous people in the United States with an overview of Indian education in New Mexico.

**Indian Education.** As illustrated in the preceding chapter, the history of Indian Education is indeed fraught with turmoil but it also represents resistance to impositions of state power as evidenced by growing scholarship from Indigenous perspectives and efforts to reclaim traditional methods of Indigenous education. Much of the recent inquiry into schooling of Indigenous children can be characterized as Critical Indigenous scholarship or at least has components that consider perspectives of Indigenous people. Previous studies and theories have examined the schooling of American Indian children from perspectives of assimilation and deculturation (Reyhner, 2004; Spring 2005; 2007; 2008), historical standpoints (Adams, 1995; Connell-Szasz, 2003; Hale, 2002; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2004), legal studies (Deloria, 1984; 1985; Deloria & Wilkins, 1999; Russell & Miles, 2008), resistance (Deyhle, 1995; 2002; Irvine, 1995; Martinez, 2006; McCarty, 2002; Peshkin, 1997; Klug & Whitfield, 2003) and critical policy analyses (Beaulieu, Sparks & Alonzo, 2005; Demmert, 1998; Demmert, Grissmer, & Towner, 2006; Faircloth & Tippeconic, 2010; McCarty, 2008; Smiley & Sather, 2009).

Many scholars of Indian education agree that the definitive goal of schooling for Indigenous youth has been total assimilation into white culture (Adams, 1995; Blau, 2003; Child, 2000; Connell-Szasz, 2003; Hale, 2002; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty, 2004; Reyhner, 1992; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2005; 2007). The era of “American” Indian education at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began with the federalization of Indian boarding schools, first at the Hampton Institute experiment in 1875 and later at the Carlisle Industrial School in 1879. These



early boarding schools led the way for the creation of a network of federal Indian boarding schools across the nation, including two in New Mexico – the Albuquerque Indian School (1881-1982) and the Santa Fe Indian School (1890-present) (Adams, 1995; Child, 2000; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).<sup>15</sup> This era of Indian education has had long term consequences on the modern development of Indian nations and identities as described in Chapter One.

Foundations of regimented schooling from the boarding school era for Indian children inculcate state sponsored racism in contemporary schooling as well. Klug & Whitfield (2003) describe the lingering psychological effects from the boarding school era and US Indian policies as Intergenerational Trauma. This legacy of colonization is reinscribed through participation in the Americanized systems of schooling, as Klug & Whitfield note, “the negative impact of colonial practices to annihilate traditional Native practices were most evident in schools. This legacy has had a negative impact on educational efforts that is felt even today” (2003, p. 55). The function of schooling remains the same in its most fundamental purpose through the exercise of power from the top down.

Adams (1995) *Education for Extinction*, Child (2000) *Boarding School Seasons*, Connell Szasz (2003) *Education and the American Indian*, and Reyhner & Eder (2004)

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<sup>15</sup> The Santa Fe Indian School operated under the guidance of New Mexico’s Indian Pueblo Council following the 1975 Indian Self Determination Act; it currently operates as a Pueblo-controlled contract school, though it continues to be partially funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

*American Indian Education*, detail the comprehensive nature of assimilation strategies employed through Indian schooling during the so-called Allotment Era from 1890-1928 in the United States. The components of US assimilation policy were twofold: remove all vestiges of Indian-ness and by so doing, create a people in the image of the white, Christian American in its place. In our contemporary world, “the intensity of cultural hegemony in the schools is symptomatic of a larger educational crisis that has prevailed in the historical and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples” (Martinez, 2006, p. 121). The hegemony Martinez alludes to can be seen in the history of education in New Mexico that has followed a similar progression as “American” schooling. This is notable because of the unique political status of New Mexico as a contested space whose shifting borders have defined its people politically but not culturally.

It is important to consider New Mexico’s educational history, especially of its Native peoples and longstanding Nuevomexicano population.<sup>16</sup> The earliest colonial Indian schools in New Mexico were established in 1721 by the King of Spain as Franciscan missions. The practice of religious, state controlled schooling continued in the New Mexico territory during the Mexican Period from 1821-1846 (Chavez, 2006; Hale, 2002; Mondragon & Stapleton, 2005; Nieto-Phillips, 2004). This is significant in

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<sup>16</sup> See John Nieto-Phillips (2004) *The Language of Blood*, Laura Gómez (2005) “Off-White in an Age of White Supremacy: Mexican Elites and the Rights of Indians and Blacks in Nineteenth Century New Mexico” for in-depth discussions of the history of race in New Mexico. These authors detail the politicization of Hispano/Nuevomexicanos as an ethnic and racial group.

light of Spring's (2005) discussion of deculturalization as "an educational process that aims to destroy a people's culture and replace it with a new culture" (p. 183). In the Spanish and Mexican periods deculturalization centered on Spanish language and Catholicism as embodiments of state policy toward educating Pueblo people. As a concept intertwined with Manifest Destiny, the notion of deculturalization was inevitable and justifiable in the history of the United States when used as a tool of oppression. It can be seen in the transition of Spanish and Mexican schooling to American schooling in New Mexico (Spring, 2005).

Once the United States appropriated the lands of New Mexico in 1846, state interest in public education for "Mexican" children did not exist, although Catholic education was still prominent in various Hispano and Pueblo settlements along the Rio Grande.<sup>17</sup> In the mid 1800s white American preachers and soldiers came to settle among the western Pueblos in response to government subsidies for Indian education. The congressional appropriations in 1869 also enacted compulsory schooling for Indian children from six through sixteen years old. Under this system, John Menaul a Presbyterian missionary, established a day school at a western Pueblo and remained there from 1875-1887. During his tenure at the Pueblo, Menaul printed the first Indian-English

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<sup>17</sup> Present day New Mexico, Arizona, and California were ceded by Mexico as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo that ended the Mexican-American war (1846-1848); also included were parts of present day Utah, Nevada, and Colorado. Following the Treaty, millions of "Mexicans" were denied full U.S.

texts for students, including *McGuffey's First Reader*. His influence eventually extended to nearby Albuquerque where he established an Indian industrial boarding school (Cheremiah, 2004). Menaul initially opened his school for Spanish speaking boys but eventually merged with a Presbyterian run government contracted Pueblo Training School in 1882 ([www.themenaulschool.com/frmContent.aspx?PageName=History](http://www.themenaulschool.com/frmContent.aspx?PageName=History)).

During the latter part of the 1800s, many other Indian schools opened in the larger urban areas including the Santa Fe Indian boarding school in 1890. The Ramona Industrial School for Indian Girls of the Southwest operated under the auspices of the University of New Mexico Indian Department in Santa Fe in the mid-1880s. Enrollment of Indian children was transferred from Ramona to St. Catherine Indian School, a Catholic run facility in Santa Fe in 1894. The competition between Catholic and Presbyterian missionaries for Indian students often led to intense conflict in New Mexico, but all of their schools were committed to the common goal of assimilation of New Mexico's Pueblo children through the use of vocational training and Christianity (Cheremiah, 2004; Hyer, 1990).

The first U.S. law authorizing territorial public schooling took effect in 1891. At this time the push for statehood was at its strongest and Manifest Destiny ideology became rampant thus impacting the admittance of New Mexico into the Union based on race and Spanish language issues (Chavez, 2006; Mondragon & Stapleton, 2005; Nieto-

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citizenship. In 1930s the issue of citizenship resurfaced, thus forcing segregation in California's public schools and the removal of 400,000 U.S. Mexican American citizens to Mexico (Spring, 2007).

Phillips, 2004). Gains for bilingual public education resulted from the Spanish-speaking Nuevomexicano elite who had organized to promote racial pride in Spanish language and culture. Around 1889 New Mexico's first Normal School was established in Las Vegas to formally educate teachers who could help maintain the bilingual education of New Mexico's mission schools. Schooling for Indigenous populations in New Mexico did not garner the same attention as did the Hispanos; schooling in territorial New Mexico for its Pueblo students still focused on vocational training and Christianity (Hale, 2002; Mondragon & Stapleton, 2005; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Indoctrination into Americanization was part and parcel of the schools that reached New Mexico along with statehood in 1912. The fervor for U.S. assimilationist policy also spread to New Mexico at the turn of the century. In addition to the public American schools, New Mexico continued to operate religious mission schools and government subsidized day schools became part of the educational landscape of the Rio Grande and western Pueblos. One of the western Pueblos hosted these government day schools in each of its villages beginning in 1917 (Cheromiah, 2004).

After 1928, Indian schools went through a period of reform.<sup>18</sup> More emphasis on local control of Indian education by Indian communities included a push for creating

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<sup>18</sup> Following the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, Lewis Merriam led a federally commissioned study of Indian affairs in 1928 under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to examine how the progressive school reforms had impacted Native schools and students. The Meriam Report, as "The Problem of Indian Administration" report came to be known, served as the impetus for Indian Education reform. Meriam

community day schools for Indian children in the 1930s Indian Reorganization and New Deal era (Hale, 2002; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2007). In 1934 two acts of federal legislation attempted to change the ways tribes operated under the federal system; they were the Indian Reorganization Act and the Johnson O'Malley Act (JOM). Under JOM, Indian education became a state responsibility. Hale (2002) states "The Johnson O'Malley Act provided financial incentives and authority for state school systems to assimilate native children into mainstream public schools" (p. 63). From then on, the federal government contracted with individual states to provide public school education for Indian students. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was established in 1947 (changed from U.S. Indian Service) and subsequently, several Indian educators joined the "Indian Service" after completing their formal training at normal schools.<sup>19</sup>

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pointed out that Indian tribes were not managing their own education, government, economic, and health systems. It also revealed the poor quality of Indian education and health services under the management of public officials. The education section of the report relied on John Dewey's model of progressivism and advocated for Indian art and experiential learning based on the social realities of Indian students.

<sup>19</sup> John Collier and Willard Beatty are considered influential in the reshaping of Indian education during the Reorganization and New Deal era. Collier was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933 and quickly appointed Beatty as Education Director for the Indian Service. During his tenure (1933-1945) Collier is credited with reforms in Indian education including bilingual and Native cultures curricula, increasing training for Native teachers in the Indian Service, and decreasing the federal boarding schools in favor of community day schools (Hale, 2002; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Bilingual education took on a new meaning for Native students in the 1930s and 1940s with the creation of translated versions of texts in Navajo, Hopi, and Lakota readers at reservation day schools. The 1922 Meriam report also indicated that Indian high schools were needed and struggles for college preparatory courses were daunting during the push for vocational education in the economic depression (Lomawaima, 2006). The recommendations of the Meriam Report and the stipulations of the Indian Reorganization Act acknowledged rights of tribes to develop and maintain their own systems of schooling. In the public school matter, JOM required parental input in the schooling of their children. However, as Hale (2002) points out,

The states wanted the federal dollars for the education of Native American students, but they had other issues. They did not want to lose control over the funding because of a greater role in education having been assigned to native parents and communities. The states also feared that if the Native Americans controlled the funding, they would in turn have greater political power. There was no real change from the basic assumption that non-Native officials should be in charge of Native American education. The Federally Impacted Areas Act in the 1950s and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of the 1960s ensured that nonnatives would control native education even to the present day. (2002, p. 62)

The relationship between Indigenous nations and the federal government has always been tenuous, but with the additional layer of government interaction between tribes and states in the 1934 legislation, the tensions increased.

Much of the gains from the community day school era were reversed with the country's attention to war efforts during World War II as well as new federal policy in the era of Termination and Relocation from 1944-1969. The community day schools came under attack by political conservatives who insisted that Indians students needed to leave reservations and return to off-reservation boarding schools and Indian families relocate to larger cities.<sup>20</sup> A federal push to again expand Indian boarding schools in 1950 returned the educational discourse to assimilation.

Indian education and public education in general, experience constant battles and undergo various "reforms" with every change of government administration. According to Joel Spring (2005), "American schools were increasingly linked to the policy needs of the federal government" (p. 375) which has led to a public education system that is constantly reinventing itself to fit policies made based on government needs. In the 1960s, the political tide changed again with the Civil Rights Movement and another federally commissioned study in 1969, "Indian Education a National Tragedy," also

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<sup>20</sup> The U.S. government adopted a conservative agenda following WWII. Gains for Indian Nations during the New Deal era were deemed seditious and thus produced new efforts at eliminating expansion of Indian rights. A House Select Committee to Investigate Indian Affairs and Conditions recommended intensified efforts to eliminate reservation Day Schools and separate Indians from their reservation land holdings in order to assimilate them into mainstream American society and gain control over their lands, as well as to cut government spending. Termination Policy and Indian urban relocation policies dominated the era from 1944-1973 (Hale, 2002; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).



known as the Kennedy Report, impacted legislation on Indian education. The era of Indian Self-Determination brought about numerous changes in Indian education with a shift away from termination policy. In 1972 the passage of the Indian Education Act and its counterpart the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act secured additional funding and returned Indian education toward a more culturally relevant focus. Special education funding was also a key component of this Act, as was the involvement of parent and community participation in educational decisions affecting public schools. Two new oversight offices came from this reform – the Bureau of Indian Education and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (Hale, 2002; Lomawaima, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Children during this time period were beginning to experience schooling in a different light as exemplified at the Rough Rock Demonstration School, a Navajo community school that emerged from the Indigenous activism of the Civil Rights Movement. The struggles of this school are documented by Theresa McCarty in her 2002 book, *A Place to be Navajo: Rough Rock and the Struggle for Self-Determination in Indigenous Schooling*. Indian schools like Rough Rock responded to the legislation of the time period. Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act otherwise known as the 1968 Bilingual Education Act can be seen “as a rare instance of the joining of Indigenous and state interests” (p. 116) by creating opportunities for community control of Indigenous education. The parents of the Rough Rock community responded to the conditions of their local school that left their children “within the confines of a historically alien institution” (p. xvii) by coming together to write curriculum and change

the way their children experienced school. They built in local and tribal control and insisted on strong Navajo culture and language elements to teaching their children as methods of “cultural reclamation, the unseating of historical relations of authority and control” (p. 121). During this time period, government oversight and tribal rights on Indian education seemed to be compatible as more legislation surfaced, however McCarty discusses the issues inherent in the Rough Rock community’s dealings with the bureaucracy of the federal BIA system. She states that “The rhetoric of self-determination was and is betrayed by a Federal bureaucracy tethered to a colonial system of patronage and control” (p. 128). These federal systems also restrained the growing numbers of Indigenous schools at the same time more legislation focused on Indian education.

In 1978, the Title XI Education Amendments Act also helped to bolster Indian Self-Determination in the realm of education and to equalize the distribution of funding for public and BIA or tribal schools. The new era of local control was solidified by federal legislation in 1988 with the Tribally Controlled Schools Act that formalized the recognition of Indigenous children’s unique cultural and linguistic needs. Also in the same year, the Indian Education Act was reauthorized to continue operation of the Office of Indian Education and grant-funding for schools with large Native American student populations (Hale, 2002; Lomawaima, 2006; Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Moving toward the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Indian education has continued to undergo changes. Much of the pre-NCLB development resulted from the 1990 Native American Languages Act and issues illuminated by the 1991 Indian Nations at Risk Task

Force. The latest reports on the state of Indian education in the United States continue to point out many of the same issues as previous federally commissioned reports – underfunding, lack of opportunities for parental involvement, and the need for Native culturally relevant curriculum embedded in the “regular” education practice.

Through the numerous changes in federal law regarding Indian education, Indigenous nations have made gains in their attempts at transforming schooling for their children, however, as Hale states, “federally funded native education still remains firmly controlled by the BIA (2002, p. 74). Vine Deloria critiques the interminable government report on Indian education by stating that the conclusions suggest the following:

That the government has to do more to get Indians involved in education. In some instances involvement means organization of parent advisory groups, at other times Indian school boards...In practice, Indian involvement usually means bringing a large crowd of Indians together to they can listen to a panel of educators tell them that they should become more involved in education. (2001, p. 152)

The latest agenda set forth by NCLB legislation “created a nationalized school system” (Spring, p. 462) with little room for local control, let alone exercise of tribal sovereignty in matters of education. Western conceptions of schooling garner approbation as status quo and continue to be superimposed without consideration for traditional Indigenous processes of education.

In his essay, “Indigenizing Education: Playing to Our Strengths,” Wildcat (2001) points to the replication of western systems in Indian Country as the root of many

conflicts and discrepancies in moving toward true emancipation of colonial fetters. He asserts that curriculum still represents Western thought and structure:

It is easy to see the influence of Aristotle's categorizing of experience and knowledge at work in how we divide and teach subjects. The medieval division of the seven liberal arts into the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, and music) conforms with Aristotle's philosophic division of subjects... Aristotle's legacy within Western metaphysics, especially as it continues to shape Western notions of education, cannot be underestimated. (2001, p. 10)

Wildcat discusses an infusion of indigenized knowledge can help to reshape the values placed on knowledge; in sciences for example by a process of recognizing, then naming the components of Western conventions and offering Indigenous counterpoints to develop deeper and more complex meanings. As he explains, these Indigenous knowledge systems have been repressed and undervalued as legitimate ways of knowing, "insights too often precluded by indoctrination in the metaphysics of Western science and, more generally, the modern Western worldview" (2001, p. 14). We are now in the midst of education reform for Indigenous children. A closer look at the growth of scholarship and infusion of Indigenization in the field of education follows.

**Movement toward Indigenization.** Much of the movement toward Indigenization stems from the work of Indigenous scholars worldwide. As early as 1969, Vine Deloria, Jr. offered intellectual discourse to Indigenous scholars based on his affirmations of American Indian political and cultural sovereignty in all arenas of

existence. His numerous publications have always centered on inherent principles of indigenization – sovereignty, self-determination, restoration of cultural values, and resisting colonialism/racism.<sup>21</sup> Deloria’s self-proclaimed “Indian Manifesto,” *Custer Died for Your Sins*, brought issues of importance for American Indian people into national recognition from an academic standpoint. Deloria’s assertion in 1969 still holds true for us today in the field of education: “Indian people today have a chance to re-create a type of society for themselves which can defy, mystify, and educate the rest of American society” (p. 268). It is following these paths forged by Vine Deloria, Jr. that contemporary Indigenous scholarship has begun to flourish and develop theories about what Indigenous models could bring to education.

Indigenous scholarship began to focus on transforming education in the late 1980s with research and theory dedicated to exploring possibilities for Indigenizing the educational experiences of tribal children in U.S. schools. Prominent theories of Indigenization have been developed by Indigenous scholars such as Marie Battiste

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<sup>21</sup> Vine Deloria, Jr., Standing Rock Sioux from South Dakota, was a legal scholar and prolific writer of philosophy known as one of the strongest voices of American Indians. His works include numerous books and written contributions to journals, magazines, and edited volumes; among Deloria’s most prominent books that are not used in this review are: *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf* (1970), *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* (1979), *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (1984), *Red Earth White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (1995), *The World We Used to Live In: Remember the Powers of the Medicine Men* (2006).

(1998), Greg Cajete (1994), Ward Churchill (1996), Sandy Grande (2004), Eber Hampton (1993), Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), and Daniel Wildcat (2001).

The movement toward emancipatory education for Indigenous children begins at the grassroots level in order to meet the needs of each community. Greg Cajete asserts, “Politicians and institutions have largely defined Indian education through a volume of legislative acts at the state and federal levels. For decades, this has entangled Indian leaders, educators and whole communities in the government’s social/political bureaucracy” (1994, p. 28). To break free of those entanglements, a total re-articulation of Indian Education is taking place within the Indigenous Education movement. In the 1980s, Eber Hampton began to articulate his ideas about Indigenous education and with the publication of his article, “Toward a Redefinition of American Indian/Alaska Native Education” in 1993 he brought the notion of standards for Indigenous education to the international stage for consideration. To develop a method of educating tribal children by privileging traditional ways of knowing, a paradigm shift is underway. As Cajete (1994) points out,

American Indians have struggled to adapt to an educational process that is not their own. Yet, American Indian cultural forms of education contain seeds for new models of educating that can enliven American education as a whole, and allow American Indians to evolve contemporary expressions of education tied to their cultural roots. For American Indians, a new Circle of education must begin, rooted in Tribal education and reflecting the needs, values, and socio/political issues Indian people perceive. (p. 27)

Cajete's work on Indigenizing education in his book *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* (1994) helps set the major assumptions of Indigenization.<sup>22</sup>

The field of Critical Indigenous studies has grown since the International political dialogue about Indigenous peoples' rights has become eminent.<sup>23</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes "Indigenizing" as a process of centering all aspects of "the indigenous world" and recognizing the distancing of "the settler society and its metropolitan homeland" (p. 146). She refers to the writings of Ward Churchill and M. Annette Jaimes [-Guerero] in their approaches to define indigenism as a concept reliant upon indigenous histories, identities, and cultures but "grounded in the alternative conceptions of world view and value systems" (p. 146). Daniel Wildcat (2001) introduces the concept of indigenization as "the act of making our educational philosophy, pedagogy, and system our own, making the effort to explicitly explore ways of knowing and systems of knowledge that have been actively repressed for five centuries" (p. vii).

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<sup>22</sup> Cajete's major works also include *Igniting the Sparkle: An Indigenous Science Education Model* (1999), *A People's Ecology: Explorations in Sustainable Living* (1999), *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (2000), *Spirit of the Game: An Indigenous Wellspring* (2005), and *Critical Neurophilosophy and Indigenous Wisdom* (2010).

<sup>23</sup> In 2007 the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Articles 14 and 15 delineate measures to uphold the rights of Indigenous people to create and maintain systems of education for their own people that reflect and honor their identities and ways of knowing. Information available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html>

Linda Tuhiwai-Smith 's 1999 book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, outlines 25 interrelated projects which she describes as strategic in purpose with aims toward social justice. These projects, according to Smith, an Indigenous Maori scholar, go beyond mere words and rebellion in order to develop Indigenous self-determination. Although Smith does not focus specifically on Indigenous education, she brings to the forefront a discussion of ways to reclaim education for Indigenous people; she highlights the strengths of Indigenous communities that have been engaged in political and cultural struggles for decades.

Wildcat (2001) prompts Native scholars and educators on a new path of exploration into American Indian metaphysics “if we are to not only decolonize, but also actively “indigenize” and truly make Native educational institutions our own” (p. 31). He reminds us that ours is a long history of resistance and calls us to action in this transformation of education, not on a superficial level, but in a deeply rooted practice that would “incorporate features of our cultures into a holistic and integrated indigenous process of education” lest we fall into the trap of producing what he refers to as “educational tokenism” (p. 39) by addressing our children’s need on paper only. Wildcat envisions the true path as experiential. Grassroots movements across the United States carve out spaces in public realms to bring about such experiential opportunities for Indigenizing schooling.

In New Mexico, the movement to Indigenize schooling has been supported by the work of the numerous educators. Larry Emerson, Dine’ activist scholar, publicizes the construct of Indigenization in schools and curricular practices through his work with



education agencies. Through the New Mexico Indian Education Advisory Council, these conceptualizations for educators of Indigenous children have advanced, especially notable in the “2006 Values & Beliefs Statement.” This list declares considerations for Indigenous education in New Mexico under three major categories: Values and Beliefs, Challenges, and Barriers.

Under Emerson’s leadership, the council points out major imperatives for providing culturally meaningful and responsive education to the children in New Mexico, including “Support for the concept of “Indigenization” and the facilitation of Indigenized educational theory, practice, research, and evaluation” (p. 1).<sup>24</sup> They further explain the concept of indigenization as one of the many challenges to “centrally locate Native language, culture, and history in schools to prevent marginalization of our communities” (p. 2). And the Council addresses the historically based yet ongoing barrier to Indigenous self-determination encompassed in the “tendency to allow non-Indians to impose culturally inappropriate educational practices and ideologies that negatively impact our communities” (p. 2).

These components of an Indigenized model of education are echoed in Emerson’s commentary to the Indian Education department of the largest school district in New

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<sup>24</sup> The New Mexico Indian Education Advisory Council was created in (2002) to help facilitate the development of the State Indian Education Division and implementation of the Indian Education Act. Larry Emerson serves as the Chair of this Council; other members of the Council who helped author the statement of values and beliefs include Pauline Billie, Zelda Yazza, and Iola Begay.

Mexico. In February 2008, the Indian Education “Storyteller” published Emerson’s description of indigenization in its department newsletter. Emerson grounds the concept of “Indigenous” in historical context and then explains Indigenization as the active engagement in approaches that center Indigenous perspectives and practices. He explains in the article “Indigenizing a Curriculum:”

An Indigenous curriculum privileges and engages Native epistemology and pedagogy to convey critical principles, concepts, and meanings that embody age-old practices such as sustainability, relationality, metaphor, restoration, regeneration, ceremony, ecology, place, kinship, and community. In doing so, a culturally and linguistically relevant way of learning is offered the learner whose task is not only to strengthen his/her understanding of the Native world, but also to acquire learning tools to engage modernity. (p. 2)

Through the efforts of Emerson, Cajete, Martinez, and other Indigenous scholars’ reform of Indigenous education in local school districts is taking root through spaces of resistance and movements toward emancipatory education.

Throughout the socio-political, historical transformations of the American system of schooling, the purpose of schooling itself remained very much the same – to shape young people into the kinds of adults needed to participate in a democratic, capitalistic, and fractionated society. For different groups of people, the ultimate outcomes of schooling have looked different. Early goals of “American” schools have not changed drastically over the past two hundred years, but efforts to rearticulate and reclaim the past five hundred years of traditional Indigenous education have converged in focused efforts

to bring meaningful and lasting change to schooling. As Giroux (2001) states, “Any critical theory both defines and is defined by the problems posed by the contexts it attempts to address” (p. xx). By examining the historical context of education, we are able to see the development and operation of state power in every transformation of schooling and to recognize the extent of its institutionalized reach. The following section demonstrates intersections of theoretical literature with the overarching purposes of the present study.

### **Theoretical Literature**

My decision to incorporate the Critical traditions to support this research is based upon the nature of Critical Theory to serve as both a way to name and to analyze the socio-political, historical contexts that frame the present study. I am able to examine the issues of state power inherent in the institution of schooling by applying the theoretical approach of critical educational theory, or Critical Pedagogy, to understand the mechanisms of schooling. The study is framed theoretically by Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy, namely through the constructs of state power, hegemonic alliances, ideology, and neo-liberalism. I also rely on tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory, which draws from Critical Race Theory to incorporate Indigenized ways of interpreting and analyzing the data.

The following review of theoretical literature provides a synthesis of existing knowledge that analyzes the operation of state power in schooling and its component ideologies that affect policies, pedagogies, and practices of schooling. Overviews of the theoretical anchors that provide the foundation for my analysis (in Chapter 5) appear in

this order: Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy followed by Tribal Critical Race Theory. The theoretical frames discussed in this review are then presented through the use of empirical examples in the final section of this chapter.

**Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy.** First, I begin with an overview of Critical Theory, and then I follow it into the field of education in the form of Critical Pedagogy. Critical Theory is meant to interrogate existing constructions of reason and to challenge belief systems and social relations. Its origins from the Frankfurt School in 1923 can be attributed to the works of the school's director, Max Horkheimer, whose work primarily centered on the emancipatory qualities of critical theory resulting from the combined forces of social science and philosophy in practice (McLaren, 2003).

According to Henry Giroux (2001), Critical Theory has two primary assumptions, it: "refers to the legacy of theoretical work developed by certain members of what can be loosely described as "the Frankfurt School"...to assess the newly emerging forms of capitalism along with the changing forms of domination" experienced by its originators at the time (p. 7). And secondly, the "concept of critical theory refers to the nature of self-conscious critique and to the need to develop a discourse of social transformation and emancipation that does not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumptions" (p. 8).

This school of thought is associated with social theory, according to Zeus Leonardo (2004). Leonardo compares the two disciplines, "Critical theory is known for its propensity for criticism" while "Social theory represents an expanded set of criticism with the advent of more recent discourses, such as postmodernism and cultural studies" (p. 12). According to a synopsis of critical theory provided by Bob Nowlan (2001),

critical theory examines the contradictory conditions “in how we as human beings, operating within particular kinds of structures and hierarchies of relations with each other” have created the “worlds in which we live” (p. 1). McLaren (2003) describes critical theory and its originators as producing ideas with similar aims of empowerment and social transformation of injustice.

Peter McLaren (2003) describes Critical Pedagogy as a relatively new field, emerging from the work of critical theorists and progressive educators, stating that it stems from “a radical theory of education [that] has emerged in the last twenty years” (p. 185). The field is based on works of Critical educators and theorists over the past one hundred years and has been specifically applied specifically to education and schooling most recently. In the application of Critical Theory to the field of education, Henry Giroux discusses the field of critical studies in education, or Critical Pedagogy. In his 2001 book, *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition*, Giroux articulates a way to link Critical Theory to education. He states:

Critical theory refers to both a “school of thought” and a process of critique. It points to a body of thought that is...invaluable for educational theorists; it also exemplifies a body of work that both demonstrates and simultaneously calls for the necessity of ongoing critique, one in which the claims of any theory must be confronted with the distinction between the world it examines and portrays, and the world as it actually exists. (p. 8)

In this application of Critical Theory to the field of education, Giroux relies on the academic traditions of Frankfurt theorists Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, instead of primarily focusing on Habermasian theories, as he claims most educationalists do.

As a school of thought heavily influenced by Critical Theory, Critical Pedagogy stems from the Frankfurt School tradition, and has grown from the works of many twentieth century scholars, educators, and theorists including John Dewey's ideas of progressivism in the 1930s. McLaren (2003) provides insight to understanding the development of critical pedagogy as a "new" theory of education. He states, "critical pedagogy examines schools both in their historical context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the class-driven dominant society" (p. 185). A discussion of the origins of Critical Pedagogy appears in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (2003) and points to its theoretical traditions, as described below.

The Critical Pedagogy field is absent of a particular form, and instead refer to it as a theoretical field based upon philosophical traditions explored by renowned theorists such as Gramsci, Foucault, Freire, Boal, Kozol, Illich, Greene, Bowles, Gintis, Carnoy, Apple, Dewey, and Kohl. Briefly, each aforementioned theorist is encapsulated as follows: Gramsci and Foucault focused on power and the construction of knowledge; Freire worked toward development of a pedagogy for emancipatory education; Boal, who was a contemporary of Freire developed a theory of praxis through theater; Kozol's work brought racism and class into the study of schooling; Illich examined institutional structures of schooling; Greene linked education and democracy; Bowles, Gintis, Carnoy, and Apple theorize about power relations and the reproduction of capitalist systems in

schooling. Finally, the work of both Dewey and Kohl, educational theorists, bring ideas that challenge schooling and center on democratic ideals into the critical pedagogy discussion (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003).

The philosophical underpinnings of critical pedagogy include a basic commitment “to the development and evolution of a culture of schooling that supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 11). Critical pedagogy sees the ways schooling works to maintain asymmetrical power that is devoid of history and political ideologies and acts to help students legitimate their lived realities and knowledge systems (Darder, et al., 2003; McLaren, 2003). It sees schools caught in the whirlwind of competing economic interests and strives to challenge the “uncontested relationship between schools and society that...claims that education provides equal opportunity and access for all” (Darder, et al., 2003, p. 11). McLaren (2003) includes the broad theme of politics in his description of critical pedagogy’s foundational beliefs that critique the relationship between power and politics, “the traditional view of classroom instruction and learning as a neutral process antiseptically removed from the concepts of power, politics, history, and context can no longer be credibly endorsed” (p. 186). The work of Michael Apple (1995) also problematizes the operation of power as a reproductive social force in schooling.

In further describing Critical Pedagogy’s philosophical foundations, Darder, et al. (2003), include the fundamental components of “historicity...that all knowledge is created within a historical context” (p. 12) and that to understand the context of schooling, one must examine the historical frames that provide meaning for its practice.

As part of the inherent historicity of context, it is important to reach beyond inequitable capitalism and instead center race as a primary actor in the examination of the imbalance forced by white supremacy in schooling (Allen, 2005). Critical pedagogy also employs “dialectical theory...that functions to unmask the connections between objective knowledge and the cultural norms, values, and standards of the society at large (p. 12). Through dialectical theory, knowledge and actors coexist and work to create meaning – as “both a product and a force” (p. 13). In his discussion of “the dialectical nature of critical theory” (p. 194), McLaren (2003) points out that critical educational theory encourages actors to seek out and honor the promotion of empowerment for students and to continually strive to create spaces for contestation of injustice, as well.

An important discussion of ideology and critique by Critical Pedagogues includes a distinction regarding, “the critical notion of ideology provides the means for not only a critique of educational curricula, texts, and practices, but the fundamental ethics that inform their production” (Darder, et al., 2003, p. 13). The use of ideology and critique in Critical Pedagogy are heuristic devices that can be used to uncover discrepancies between school culture and inherent knowledge systems. McLaren (2003) posits, “the critical perspective allows us to scrutinize schooling more insistently in terms of race, class, power, and gender” (p. 188).

The philosophical roots of Critical Pedagogy also include the reliance on a critique of hegemony. Darder, et al., (2003) state that through the implementation of critical pedagogy, “teachers are challenged to recognize their responsibility to critique and transform those classroom conditions tied to hegemonic processes that perpetuate the



economic and cultural marginalization of subordinate groups” (p. 13). McLaren (2003) explains, “schools serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful, while simultaneously disconfirming the values and abilities of those students who are most disempowered in our society already: minorities, the poor, and the female” (p. 189). McLaren also explains how critical pedagogues support the critique of hegemony as he states, “mainstream schooling supports an inherently unjust bias, resulting not only in the transmission and reproduction of the dominant status quo culture, but more fundamentally in the reproduction of the division of labor and the interests of the ruling class” (p. 189).

As the culminating linkage of critical pedagogy into action, the components of praxis, counter-hegemony and resistance, dialogue and conscientization are seen as necessary actions to put the pedagogy into place. Each of these acts are steps in the larger project of critical pedagogy – resistance and counter-hegemony work toward creating spaces and voices that refuse to conform to flawed systems and practices; praxis links theory and practice in a dynamic and reflexive relationship; and dialogue & conscientization work to empower students with critical consciousness and awareness (Darder, et al., 2003).

The components of critical educational theory that I employ in my analysis of this research include the concepts of state power, ideology, hegemony and neo-liberalism as sub-categories under the critical pedagogy frame. I discuss each concept in relation to critical educational theory below.

**State power.** Perhaps one of the most salient analyses of state power is provided by Michael Apple (2001). In his discussion of the way the state functions, Apple quotes Wong's (2002) definition of state as "a distinct ensemble of institutions and organizations whose socially accepted function is to define and enforce collectively binding decisions in the name of popular interests or the general will" (in Apple, 2003, p. 3). Apple asserts that schooling is a political process and one that "will constantly be in the middle of crucial struggles over the meaning of democracy, over definitions of legitimate authority and culture, and over who should benefit the most from government policies and practices" (p. 1). As an entity shaped by the state, schooling must also conform to the constantly changing shifts in power and answer to the needs of public interests.

In *Educating the "Right" Way*, Apple argues that state power exists within a system of alliances he terms the new hegemonic bloc; the four components of this bloc include Managerialists, Authoritarian Populists, Neoconservatives, and Neoliberals. These hegemonic alliances determine the public's interest. When applied to schooling, the unmasking of legislation, curriculum, and pedagogies can be attributed to the influence of the hegemonic bloc. Michael Apple discusses components of leadership in educational politics (Apple, 1996; 2000; 2003; 2004) as he identifies powerful coalitions "that are pushing education and social policy in general in conservative directions" (2004, p. 174). These groups represent combined interests in the maintenance and perpetuation of dominant power through economic modernization, ideological management, invocation of traditional values, competition, and efficiency. The power of this bloc has seeped into the institution of education by the current national policies that tout

accountability, standardization, and market-driven privatization of schooling in various forms. The operation of state power then rests in the performance of ideology and neo-liberalism, which I discuss below.

**Ideology.** In the discussion about ideology for the present study, the scope and function of fundamental belief systems represented by ideologies are considered. Apple (2004) problematizes ideology by identifying its distinguishing characteristics, “It always deals with legitimation, power conflict, and a special style of argument” (p. 19). In this schema, ideology works to validate social acceptability of the beliefs it represents while simultaneously avoiding or redefining conflict as a strategy to maintain power. Specific rhetoric is codified and enacted by the perpetrators of the ideological base to support its group assumptions. This means that the “language performs a rhetorical and political function” (Apple, 2004, p. 107). For example, in the highly technical systems language used to promote research-based curricular programs, the special style of argument helps to generate state support through policy and funding. In essence, the language employed works “to bring about a technical solution to political and value problems” (Apple, 2004, p. 111).

Thus, through the scope and functions of ideology, the perpetuation of power in schools finds its roots in the political agendas of the privileged elite. Examination of ideological operants in the school structure must be addressed to determine the extent to which dominant forms of power operate in schools. In his 2001 *Theory and Resistance in Education*, Henry Giroux discusses the concept of ideology as a major component of reproduction and structuring of knowledge through cultural transmission. Giroux states:

Ideology does not simply refer to a specific set of doctrines or meanings. It is a much more dynamic concept that refers to the way in which meanings and ideas are produced, mediated, and embodied in forms of knowledge, cultural experiences, social practices, and cultural artifacts. (p. 209)

He also discusses the utility of ideology as a means for people to discern meaning in their experiences as a “force that can either distort or illuminate reality” (p. 209). Giroux is careful to reiterate the importance of human agency in the form of resistance when confronted with ideology, but stands firm in his assertion that ideology is also an important concept to consider in understanding the ways schools produce and reify meaning.

Joel Spring (2005) states: “Public schools were established to distribute knowledge to children and youth. Because knowledge is not neutral, there has existed a continuing debate about the political, social, and economic content of schooling” (p. 4). Efforts of the hegemonic alliances have employed ideological power conflicts to center the debate on commonsense and common good, as rhetorically strategic arguments. Apple (2000) speaks of restructuring knowledge in the formation of “what education is for, what and whose knowledge is considered legitimate, and who has the right to answer these questions” (p. 9). The perspective of white, male European dominant epistemology has shaped the way we experience our world in a public sphere, regardless of our own positionalities, as we are forced to respond to their ideologies in the context of our daily lives. As Giroux (2001) states, “Schools are political sites involved in the construction and control of discourse, meaning, and subjectivities” (p. 46). Adherence to such

principles of curriculum development regard empiricism and logic as truth, despite the subjective realities of those people whose existence is discounted – women, people of color, the economically disenfranchised, and those of different political, sexual, and/or philosophical orientation.

American schooling was founded on the assumption of the certainty of a western view of the world, another rhetorical stance. Through the enactment of the special styles of argument, academic success has been defined by the guidelines set forth by the powerful hegemonic bloc (Apple, 2001) and mediated by forms of ideological hegemony (Giroux, 2001) to form a one-size-fits-all practice embodied in standardized curricula, including textbooks and high-stakes testing, in order to reinforce the belief in a westernized view of success. Apple (2004) offers the example of “liberal educational policy...as an ideological form” (p. 16) that fails to acknowledge the inequities that produce disproportionate success in school. In order to perform at optimal levels within these western constructs, we must know European history and subscribe to dominant ideologies, or at least be able to negotiate through these expectations. This leads to my next segment on neo-liberalism to describe the maneuverings of ideology in the operation of schooling.

**Neo-Liberalism.** One example of current ideology that shapes schooling is the concept of neo-liberalism. It can be defined as the marketization of education and is couched in current NCLB legislation using specialized technocratic rhetoric to support a neo-liberal agenda. The neo-liberal agenda is one that wants “educational policy to be centered around the economy, around performance objectives based on a closer

connection between schooling and paid work” (Apple, 2004, p. 174). The agenda of neo-liberalism purports to create economic processes beneficial to the global capitalist state. When applied to the field of education, the neo-liberal agenda becomes enacted in the commodification of education at all levels from students to learning to legislation and shapes what counts as knowledge.

Neoliberal policies in education serve to further differentiate and create de facto racial segregation in business, housing, and in schools. The neoliberal agenda can be unmasked by applying elements of Bourdieu’s (1977) cultural reproduction theory in that neoliberal policy claims neutrality and the disguised promotion of inequality. Apple (2004) describes neoliberal policies as “couched in the language of “helping the poor,” increasing accountability, giving “choice”, and so on” (p. xi). Apple points out that the outcomes are racialized and never as optimistic as the feel-good phrasing chosen to mask the true intentions of such directives. Neo-liberal ideology, presented as superficial democracy is evidenced in policy at all levels.

In particular, the neoliberals have advanced their economic and political agendas through schools by increased lobbying for policies that are meant to lead to the marketization of schools. The neoliberals, according to Apple (2004) are at the forefront of the hegemonic alliance, which he also deems the New Right (2000). An important aspect of the New Right includes the creation of a common-sense ideology in an acritical context. Apple argues that the New Right created a deliberate split between “the binary opposition of we/they” (2000, p. 27) in order to bolster the culture of fear that their group, the “we”, instilled during the post-civil rights era. At the heart of the fear project was

implanted a “clear sense of loss: of control, of economic and persona security, of the knowledge and values that should be passed on to children, of visions of what counts as sacred texts and authority” (p. 27) to distance the New Right from the “other” and to create a new sense of discrimination in opposition to the new enemy. The fundamental goals of this coalition alter the meanings of equality and instead replaced ideals of citizenship and “the common good [as] regulated exclusively by the laws of the market, free competition, private ownership, and profitability” (p. 30).

Omi and Winant (1994) argue that such shifts in ideology and political strategy create space for a “neoliberal racial project [] consolidating as the new form of racial hegemony” (p. 148). They critique this project as a rearticulation of 1980s racial politics “in a more benign, mildly progressive politics of redistribution” (p. 148). The project itself involves the shifting of racial dynamics through neo-liberal agenda that blames all of the failings of American systems on liberal racial policy. The shifts in political rhetoric of neo-liberals seek to eliminate race as a factor in public discourse in order to deny the existence of racism and to transfer the burden of blame from structural inequalities to the individuals bearing the brunt of their own oppression.

Additionally, Omi and Winant (1994) critique the neoliberal racial project as a narrow dichotomy related to color and/or class situation, and its insistence on a universalist neoliberal discourse as a means to bury the issues of race and racism as an un-conflicted vestige of the past. To counter this trend, Apple (2004) cautions us about becoming complacent in the era of neo-liberal policy domination because “Neo-liberal and neo-conservative movements are – aggressively – altering our jobs and our schools.

Their effects are increasingly dangerous” (p. xiv). No longer can claims to neutrality and universalist ideology be allowed to dominate the sphere of teaching in the public system of schooling because, according to Michael Apple in his (2004) *Ideology and Curriculum*, “Social and economic values, hence, are already embedded in the design of the institutions we work in, in the “formal corpus of school knowledge” we preserve in our curricula, in our modes of teaching, and in our principles, standards, and forms of evaluation” (p. 8).

A critical analysis of the structures and relationships of power associated between race and schooling tends to be focused on more ideological factors of meritocracy and achievement, rather than institutionalized racism, according to Leonardo (2005). In school systems both neoconservative and neoliberal racial projects operate as influences that shape teachers’ ideologies of achievement, meritocracy, and colorblindness according to race (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Omi & Winant, 1994; Tatum, 1997). These understandings about the nature of power as it operates vis-à-vis classroom interaction are also indicative of the neo-liberal agenda and the power of hegemonic ideology through the “ideological and epistemological commitments [teachers] tacitly accept and promote by using certain models and traditions” (Apple, 2004, p. 13) through daily interaction and routines. This leads to an important discussion on the issue of race and the field of critical race studies below.

**Critical Race Theory and Tribal Critical Race Theory.** I begin this segment by presenting an overview of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and then I discuss its introduction to the field of education before I bring the discussion into the frame of Tribal



Critical Race Theory, or TribalCrit as a major analytical lens for the present study. CRT urges the examination of the foundational structures that allow continued usurpation of power from people of color in an institutional sense. The notion of divide and conquer as a strategy of the power structure of school policy works to create fissures between racially marginalized groups in competition for funding, opportunities to voice the needs of their own particular community's interests, and recognition as legitimate players within the education system.

Originally a tool used to analyze the legal system, Critical Legal Studies evolved into the field of CRT in the 1970s. Several critical scholars have written extensively in the field of CRT, including Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Kimberle' Crenshaw and Mari Matsuda. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) outline several generally accepted tenets, or propositions of CRT: "racism is ordinary, not aberrational," (p. 7) is discussed as the normalization of racism so that it often appears unnoticed, as with colorblindness and the commonsense belief that everyone has the same access and opportunities to wealth, social status, and education. Racism is considered an enduring and permanent part of the socio-historical experiences operationalized in the creation of nations. Racism is not anomalous, but is deeply embedded in institutions and practices. It is a structural system that upholds white supremacy in overt and subtle ways through the institutions of power and it determines agency based on race. Secondly, white supremacy "serves important purposes, both psychic and material" (p. 7) is also a discussion of "'interest convergence' or material determinism" (p. 7). The idea of interest convergence is presented in more detail below. A third tenet describes race as a social construction that is not based on

static measures of race or racial traits. Critique of the practice that categorizes people into fixed categories is important to the foundations of CRT. The fourth tenet considers the consequences of racialization in society by dominant groups toward minority groups and the changing nature of which groups are racialized differentially. Also, “the notion of intersectionality and anti-essentialism” (p. 9) is an important consideration of CRT as the field of study moves to understand multiple identities and lived realities for racialized people. Finally, the idea of counter narratives serves a crucial function in CRT. In order to resist the effects of racism, counter-narratives are an important component that informs the daily, lived experiences of people of color in juxtaposition to the dominant white narrative. These narratives offer the racial subaltern perspective to disrupt hegemonic racist rhetoric as a form of resistance and to contextualize the knowledge gained from encounters with racism.

The main tenets I utilize for the present study include interest convergence and colorblindness. Interest convergence is important for my research because it allows me to consider how converging interests operate in the research site as an example of how promoting white supremacist interests of the state (via NCLB) can also converge with seemingly serving interests of minority groups (via NMIEA). The concept of interest convergence relies on the notion that no gains can be made by groups of people-of-color independently of consent granted by dominant whites. The interests of the dominant white group must somehow either gain from the opportunities sought by people-of-color or at least not be terribly inconvenienced by the concession of power, however limited it might be. Derrick Bell (1980) cautions against getting overly excited with civil rights

under the inherently racist structure of the U.S. government. Bell points to the *Brown V. Board of Education* decision as an example of interest convergence. It was not outside of the interests of the dominant whites to pass and sustain a law for desegregation, so he points to interest convergence that allow all-black schools to close down, black teachers to lose their jobs, and tracking of black students in white (now integrated) schools to occur – all at no great loss for the dominant whites. Historical incidents of all-white colleges that suddenly allow black students to attend if they play basketball would be a gain for the dominant whites, so it is in their interest to allow admission of black students – though not a large gain for all black students to openly attend and be accepted into such colleges, it was a small step forward. Interest convergence can be applied to legislation, as well as local school decisions regarding admission and/or policy.

Colorblind racism is also another important consideration in the discussion of Critical Race Theory. The foundations of colorblind racism rest on the ideological rhetoric employed by the politically conservative right who posit the convenient belief in a utopian egalitarianism and looks at all people as “just people” without difference. It was quick to catch-on in post-Civil Rights America, as advocates of this ideology claim it as panacea for all racial woes. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva defines color-blind racism in his (2001) *White Supremacy & Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* as “the new, post-civil rights racial ideology” that “does what all ideologies do: it helps sustain relations of domination or, in this case, the post-civil rights racial status quo” (p. 12). It offers no division of color based on economics, political power, historical experiences, or other social barriers (Blau, 2003) which allows social inequities to be relegated to issues of

individual deficiency. It is expedient for public policy, as it provides the perfect cloak for the disaffected white population in its support of government structured racism.

Colorblind ideology de-problematizes issues of race as non-existent relics of the past and places blame squarely on the shoulders of those most affected by overt racism, while embracing covert “coded” forms of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, Dixon, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Adrienne Dixon calls out the current “political climate premised on and invested in colorblindness as a condition for equal opportunity, meritocracy, rugged individualism and dogged religiosity” (2006, p. 219-220).

The idea of white ownership of knowledge is not only frustrating to those of us who do not benefit from this privilege, but it is also detrimental to the children whom we purport to serve through public education. This discourse normalizes the generic “American” ideal and conflates success with ascription to an ideology of white supremacy, partly due to the fact that “A predominantly white teaching force is likely to make most decisions through the lenses of white people’s experiences” (Bohn & Sleeter, p. 158). As Jay McLeod (1995) aptly states: “structure is still the source of inequality” (p. 253), so then schooling is the mechanism that provides the structure for the hegemonic ideals perpetuated in dominant ideologies of meritocracy, achievement, and colorblindness.

CRT was introduced to the field of education in 1994 by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate in their thesis, “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education.” They first presented the idea of applying CRT to education at the American Educational Research Association convention and later published their theoretical framework in the

*Teachers College Record* in 1995. Utilizing the same basic framework as CRT described by Bell, Ladson-Billings and Tate follow the tradition of Carter Woodson and W.E.B. DuBois understandings about the nature of race and racism. They use the notion of race as property as the anchoring concept and include the endemic nature of racism in American life, “A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Law”, “Changing Claims of Neutrality, Objectivity, Color-Blindness, and Meritocracy”, as “a radical critique the status quo of education as well as the purported reforms” such as multicultural education and its co-opted transformation to multiculturalism (p. 62). All of the components of the Ladson-Billings & Tate framework can be tied back to property in terms of gaining rights through conformity to whiteness, including enjoyment of material rights, reputation and the right to name which equates to status, and the right to exclude through programs such as tracking which deny equitable access to non-whites (1995).

The application of CRT to the field of education has grown tremendously since the mid-1990s as exemplified by 14,208 articles available through a search of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) using keywords Critical Race Theory, education, and schooling. The number of articles available in 1994 was small (36) in comparison to a leap of over 500 articles each year from 2003 forward. Some of the most prominent authors’ works appear in the 2006 anthology *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God’s Children Got a Song* including Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate, Adrienne Dixson, Celia Rousseau, and Garrett Duncan. Substantive writing about race and education also comes from Antonia Darder in her edited book, *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (2003), and in *Critical Pedagogy and Race*, edited by Zeus Leonardo

(2005). Transformative pedagogy, acknowledgement of intersectionality, and anti-racism are at the heart of all of the recent works regarding CRT and education. I reference several of these authors throughout the present study.

**Tribal Critical Race Theory.** In recent scholarship, Bryan Brayboy (2005) has discussed the notion of a TribalCrit as a branch of CRT. He reports in his essay, “Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education,” that Indigenous scholars are often faced with a “seeming disconnect between community stories and personal narratives and “theory”” (p. 426). According to Brayboy’s framework, “TribalCrit emerges from Critical Race Theory (CRT) and is rooted in the multiple, nuanced, and historically- and geographically-located epistemologies and ontologies found in Indigenous communities” (p. 427).

Brayboy has written several pieces using variations of CRT and his Indigenous lens (including “Race and Schooling: Ethnographies, theories, and practice,” 2005; “Hiding in the Ivy: American Indian Students and Visibility in Elite Educational Settings,” 2004; “The Implementation of Diversity in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities,” 2003; “Insider—Outsider: Researchers in American Indian Communities,” 2000). In his 2005 essay, “Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education,” he formulates a conceptual framework for the study of race as it applies to Tribal peoples in the United States in response to the lack of applicability of CRT to Indigenous peoples as both racial groups and legal/political groups in dealing with the United States federal government (p. 427).

Brayboy puts forth both an analytical lens and a theoretical lens in his theorizing of TribalCrit; he explains the analytical lens as “a new and more culturally nuanced way of examining the lives and experiences of tribal peoples since contact with Europeans over 500 years ago” (p. 430). He also describes the theoretical lens he employs as addressing “issues of language shift and language loss, natural resources management, the lack of students graduating from colleges and universities, the overrepresentation of American Indians in special education, and power struggles between federal, state, and tribal governments” (p. 430).

In this postulation of TribalCrit, Brayboy (2005) introduces the nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory. They are:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, white supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.

7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory, they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (p. 429-430)

One of the most significant parts of this theory is the grounding Brayboy creates in the context of colonization so that it infiltrates our Indigenous consciousness and causes us to “fail to recognize that we are taking up colonialist ideas when we fail to express ourselves in ways that may challenge dominant society’s ideas about who and what we are supposed to be, how we are supposed to behave, and what we are supposed to be within the larger population” (p. 431).

Another important point that Brayboy makes is regarding knowledge – he recognizes cultural knowledge, knowledge of survival, and academic knowledge. Instead of placing these as competing forms of knowledge, he privileges and equalizes these ways of knowing in a dialogic relationship that provide a fortified kind of knowledge that bolsters our expressions of sovereignty. As he concludes, Brayboy reminds us that “TribalCrit is based on a series of traditions, ideas, thoughts, and epistemologies that are grounded in tribal histories thousands of years old” (p. 441) and may lead to new methods and new perspectives in the realm of Indigenous education and research, as stated earlier in this chapter.



The tenets of TribalCrit central to the present study specifically regard the experiences of Indigenous peoples and schooling. The frameworks that respond to colonization and assimilation are particularly salient in their resistance to superimposing dominant ideology on Indigenous minds and bodies. As Brayboy states, “the goal, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, of interactions between the dominant U.S. society and American Indians has been to change (“colonize” or “civilize”) us to be more like those who hold power in the dominant society” (p. 430). In applying this tenet to schooling, the messages of the hidden curriculum and the ideological management of schools can be examined more thoroughly through this Indigenized lens by analyzing the role of colonization as it continues to demand assimilation to dominant ideologies promoted through selective histories, traditions, and values embodied in textbooks, school conformity, and curricula. He also states that “TribalCrit rejects the past and present rhetoric calling for integration and assimilation of American Indian students in educational institutions because, rather than cultivating and maintaining cultural integrity, assimilation requires students to replace this cultural knowledge with academic knowledge” (p. 437). Instead, TribalCrit calls for balance in honoring Indigenous ways of knowing and academic knowledge – but not one at the expense of the other. This frame is especially useful in analyzing the curriculum policies of the research site and the legislative policies of the state.

Several of the concepts discussed in this theoretical review of literature appear as elements of empirical research in the field of secondary schooling for Indigenous students in the United States. The next section details some of these empirical studies.

## **Empirical Research**

My search for recent research concerning Indigenous Pueblo youth in secondary public schools, specifically at border and reservation schools was limited by the existence of only a handful of critical ethnographic studies.<sup>25</sup> The research presented here looks at the racialized experiences of Indigenous students in schools and in social systems that impact these students in their respective schools. The research also provides details about the roles of power operating through policy at school and national levels. I present some of the research available at the time of the present study below.

More recent scholarship utilizing qualitative studies had included research focused on concepts such as resiliency, resistance, deconstruction, and learning styles regarding Native American students, schools, and experiences (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). As Deyhle and LeCompte examined cultural differences on the Navajo reservation, in her *Cultural Differences in Child Development: Navajo Adolescents in Middle School* (1994), and Deyhle 's study of Anglo racism in her (1994) Navajo border-town examination of racism, there were several critical ethnographic elements of particular interest as she discussed the discomfort and resistance met at the school level.

In Cornel Pewewardy's (1993) study about an Indian magnet school, he also offers critical methodological structure that supports the research I intend to engage in from an Indigenous lens. His treatment of culturally responsible pedagogy informs

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<sup>25</sup> A recent study that fills this void was published at the close of the present study, but was not reviewed.

See Martinez, G. (2010). *Native Pride*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

another element of critical pedagogy that is also supported by Tarajeau Yazzie in her Culturally Appropriate Curriculum study – both with the intent of strengthening the way schooling is approached with Indigenous youth by embedding traditional teachings and ways of knowing into the curriculum.

Demas, E., Canella, G., & Rivas, A. (2003) longitudinal study of 1990s welfare reform and legislation that mandated marriage, through the process of research, the authors uncovered a much deeper structure than just exercise of legislative power. The authors used an “emergent poststructural analysis to explore various sites from which the discourse has/is emerging” (p. 110). They then focused their efforts at the study of power as it operates through joint forces and combined millions of dollars that make-up membership in conservative and politically powerful organizations. Their findings indicate these conservative think-tank organizations employ “Specific methods are being used to construct knowledge, authority, and the acceptance of public regulation – to create a discourse that is not only unquestioned, but is legal and would attain regulatory resources” (p. 110). The authors state: “Our recent work has lead us to believe that this reinscription is part of an agenda designed to eliminate gains in power (however small) by traditionally marginalized groups like people of color, women, people who would challenge dominant gender constructions and orientations, people who have been labeled poor, and even children” (p. 107).

Importantly, Demas, Cannella, and Rivas believe that conservative organizations “creates techniques and sites of power, spirals or normalization and control at all levels”

(p. 107). To make their argument about the power of discourse, the authors point out that in the 1996:

The assault on the poor was successful, setting the state for a discourse that would use ‘concern for poor children’ and ‘control over incompetent parents’ to legitimate ignoring systemic inequities in systems and institutions. Poverty was again discussed as the moral failure of the poor. This ideology fit perfectly with the broader societal attempts to discredit women, and minorities on a variety of fronts (e.g., attacking academic diversity, affirmative action, anti-feminism in the media). By the 1990’s discourse structures had been established that would silence diversity and placed the poor, and especially poor women in accepted positions of contempt. (Demas, Canella, Rivas, p. 109)

Specifically related to my proposed study, Ellen, Canella, and Rivas discuss the impact of politically powerful groups’ activities in the promotion of conservative curriculum in schools by means of funding for political agendas including pro-marriage programs in impoverished communities. The importance if this research applies to federal legislation of policy, as they report that “as one of the most influential foundations, frequently quoted by the mainstream media and often used the principle outside source for the Bush administration, the Heritage Foundation has been accepted as an authority on issues on welfare reform” (p. 112) which makes a strong link to education reform, as well.

The authors reference Foucauldian ideas of power exercised as a function of social networks that distribute power through institutions and cultural practices, especially evident in establishing public discourse in support of the network of such

dominance. They critique the conservative networks (Foundations) as wielding inordinate amounts of influence that has the power to redirect and regulate academia, laws, forms of media, and various other influential institutions while limiting what is accepted as appropriate discourse in establishing public and private norms. These exertions of power effectively encode public discourse with conservative agendas that further perpetuate their dominance in the form of slogans, images and labels that manipulate public perceptions:

Apparatuses of power are in place. We have come to believe that as educators and citizens we have overlooked them for too long, in the public discourse in general, and in the ways that our social and educational curriculum is being reconstructed and narrowed. Resistance has become more difficult; but that is all the more reason to construct new methods and sites from which to resist. Those of us in education should be informed and ready to take action; that knowledge/language/power and critical analyses of the technologies that they inform are necessary as we reconceptualize our social and educational curriculum, as we move to resist new forms of exclusion, disqualification, and injustice. (Demas, Canella, and Rivas, p. 120-121)

This study clearly demonstrates both the theoretical base and critical methodology that I wish to employ in my proposed research. It uses emergent design in the analysis of discourse and examines the concepts of power in its operation from inception to implementation in curriculum and in the larger arena of public perception.

Clear delineations of a school district power structure are outlined in Marshall, et al. 1985 study of the influences of power on the decision making process of creating school policy within school districts in six states in the US. The authors found that policy groups held the most power within each state and present a top-down model of “Ranking of Policy Influentials” whom they label as “Insiders”, “Near Circle”, “Far Circle”, “Sometimes Players” and “Other Forgotten Players” (p. 62). Within this framework, the most powerful are seen as legislators and state-level education officers, special interest groups and teacher organizations; moving lower in this power structure, the authors point out that various other state-level associations are considered sometimes influential, and finally the courts, federal policy mandates, and curriculum material producers wield the least influence.

Although the theoretical framework for this research is not deeply critical in nature and the methodology was based on a quantitative paradigm, this study is useful in my proposed research as it points out the structure of power that exists in neighboring states, including those most powerful in terms of shaping textbook decisions and national curriculum policy. It allows me to consider which bodies “have formal and informal power to dominate education policy making” (p. 74) in a large context beyond the local school board. The comparison across the six states also provides a larger view of how “history, current crises, recent power shifts, and pervasive informal rules for action maintain policy group power in each state” (p. 89).

In this 1994 case study, Jerry Lipka describes his research on school improvement efforts in Alaska regarding language instruction in the schools. He states that there was

severe conflict within the research site “as issues of power and ideology surfaced” (p. 71). He presents action research with the indigenous community and the school district to restructure the organization of schooling using these questions to guide the process: “What should be the language or languages of instruction? What is included as curriculum? Whose knowledge is legitimate?” (p. 72). Lipka refers to the link between culture, language, and power. He states that his “case shows how the structural power of school is a determining variable in how a federal mandate is reinterpreted” (p. 72).

Lipka’s treatment of this research case included observations, interviews, language assessments, community meetings, and community questionnaires to understand and analyze the historical forces and interactions which shape the research site. He encountered conflict within the community as they voiced their beliefs in what language should take primacy in the schools – he reported that there was a split between groups in the community who believed that the indigenous language was more important than English and those who wanted a focus on English at the expense of the indigenous language because they feared it would interfere with their success in a westernized system of schooling. Lipka states: “The colonial legacy and its message of English and Western culture partially created this either-or conception” (p. 90).

He points to a theme that emerged during the community meetings which generated questions and revealed that “embedded in these questions are issues of power and control” (p. 90). He found that the district still maintained control over the implementation of curriculum rather than participate in “consensus decision making is yet another example of neo-colonialism” (p. 91). This revelation affects Lipka’s suggestions

for further research regarding schools in indigenous communities, which he says: “requires ongoing and continuing dialogue and action between schools and communities to carefully articulate and negotiate pedagogy – bringing into concert issues of language, culture and power” (p. 91).

Again, in the interest of examining the nature of power evidenced through curriculum policy and schooling of Indigenous children, I find Lipka’s research to be informative in its methodology, conceptual framework, and theoretical framework.

In his 2005 case-study of the process of reform in one school district in Alaska, Timothy Jester examined the operation of power, as demonstrated by the decision making authorities in the district. He used triangulation methods in his data-collection process that included analysis of school-district documents, observations of office meetings, observations of schools and classrooms, and interviews with participants including school staff and school board members. Jester employed an interpretivist framework and he states that his “observations were guided by the twin aims of identifying and understanding contextually the district’s standards-based reform” (p. 865). He looks at the “political maneuvering circulating within the district” (p. 879) to analyze how the “standards-based education functioned as a technology of power” (p. 882). He determined the following:

The discourse of standards-based education functioned as a technology of power that constructed an arena for what could be said, thought, and considered possible... and teachers actively participated in constructing this effect of power as they implemented standards based education. (Jester, p. 883)



An important link to my research proposal is included in the suggestions made by Jester regarding needs for additional research that “should examine policy discourse and policy content within a political framework and analyze the roles of discourse in creating the need for educational reform” (p. 885). Jester also points out some imperative questions that need to be asked in research regarding school policy in indigenous education for Alaskan Natives, which I feel are important to consider in my proposed research and to indigenous education in general, including:

(b) How is reform recontextualized in [] districts? (c) What are discourses flowing within districts, and what roles do these discourses play as technologies of power?

(d) What contestation is playing out and what does this reveal about the local sociopolitical contexts, specifically the Alaskan Native postcolonial context? (p. 886)

Jester’s use of Bourdieuan (1998) themes of power and Foucauldian (1980) technology of power seems useful as I construct an analytical framework from which to understand the data I collected.

Hicking-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) study four schools that serve both rural and urban indigenous populations (2 in Australia and 2 in US). “This article analyzes comparatively the competing discourses of ethnicity in school curricula offered to indigenous children...” (p. 89). It draws from a Postcolonial perspective – “draws attention to the questions of who defines the curriculum and whose interest is served” (p. 65) and examines “how schooling may help children of color to develop identities that are not distorted by the colonizing identity of eurocentrism, and how teachers can learn to

challenge assimilationist curricula...” from which “a postcolonial perspective names and challenges the legacies of colonialism and their continuation in neocolonial practices” (p. 67).

“The eurocentrism of the North American and Australian curriculum offered to many indigenous children is not officially recognized and does not meet their educational needs, yet it is an important factor explaining their relative lack of success in the educational system” (p. 67). The authors findings indicate that all four schools examined are affected by mostly white teachers and administrators; two of the schools demonstrated didactic curriculum, pedagogies are teacher centered, communities are not included in decision making nor do they actively participate in school based groups. However, two of the schools “were imbued with the indigenous culture that the first two schools lacked. Self-determination was shown in the control of the school by the indigenous community” though they experienced high teacher turnover, funding shortages for resources and materials; communities were present in the schools,” most of the teachers were indigenous and had worked out ways of teaching both Western and indigenous curriculum strands so that there was a sense of local culture embracing global culture” p. 81.

The authors note the problematic situations each school faced with standardized testing and the different approaches or non-approaches to helping their indigenous students through these grossly inappropriate means to measure achievement. One school individualized test preparation while making it “just a small part of a culturally congruent curriculum” (p. 85)

The findings of these case studies indicate that: “When there is ownership of the curriculum and teachers work collaboratively to develop a bilingual and bicultural program for students, indigenous self-determination can become a reality. If learning is contextualized, culturally relevant, and authentic, students will become more engaged in their education” (p. 88). “The unmasking of the sociopolitical role of whiteness and of its instrumentality in furthering Eurocentrism should lead to a deeper understanding of the pedagogies of deculturalization imposed by Western schools and the devastating impact of this imposition, not only on Indigenous students but also on other subjugated ethnic minorities” (p. 88-89). And posits that “Teachers and teacher educators need to study alternative epistemologies, multiple perspectives, and critical multicultural pedagogies, including both-ways curricula, which would lead them to different ways of educating” (p. 89).

This study can be used to inform my proposed research by its interrogation of whiteness and application of Tribal Critical Race Theory, situated in a perspective of neo-colonialism in schools that serve Indigenous students, both on and off aboriginal homelands. It calls for changes in foundations of pedagogy, insists on the appropriateness of culturally relevant curriculum, and asserts the benefits of tribal-community involvement in the schooling of children.

**Indigenous Pueblo Youth.** There were two dissertation studies that specifically addressed issues of Indigenous youth in secondary schooling. One was set in an urban school system (Martinez, 2005) and was not specific to Pueblo youth. The other was set in a rural Pueblo border town (Irvine, 1995). The Martinez study examined issues of

power and is used to support other parts of the present study in different chapters. The results of the Irvine study are discussed below.

In her 1995 doctoral dissertation, Patricia Irvine reports on an ethnographic study of Pueblo youths' perceptions of schooling in their border-town high school. She provides a lengthy overview of the historical context of education *and* schooling in this rural area of New Mexico. She uses some Critical traditions in her approach and presents a discussion of language and identity issues for the Pueblo students who participated in her study. Her overall conclusion was based on the negotiations of identity and constructions of academic success for these student participants.

Irvine's study briefly examined the legitimation of Native language use in school and representations of identity around the school. She presented the various ways students negotiated their tribal identities and how they carefully separated their school identities by forming alliances in school. The overall conclusion was based on emic data from student discourse that described a situation where "Pueblo students are in an apparent double bind: on the surface, at least, they appear to have a choice between being "Indian" or "smart," but not both" (p. 234). Irvine situates her approach in a postcolonial frame and calls for more practitioner based research on the issues faced by Pueblo youth in border-town schools.

**Curriculum policy.** Federal policy with the aim of standardizing an entire pluralistic, multicultural, multi-ethnic population undermines culturally relevant education and bifurcates expectations of what an educated person looks like. Kevin

Kumashiro (2008) offers a study on the creation of curriculum in U.S. schools based on his Critical approach.

Kumashiro examines the manipulation of power by the political rightwing hegemonic bloc to shape all aspects of schooling in the United States. He presents his data based on policy analyses and political ethnographies. In his critique of federal policy toward education, he points to the inordinate power wielded by the right and their socio-political maneuverings to redefine education for this country through the creation of organized power blocs. He includes several groups in these blocs: foundations, think tanks, advocacy organizations, and political action committees (Kumashiro, p. 12).

Kumashiro explains how the right claims and redefines the purpose of schooling through insistence on positivistic educational research and the inculcation of fundamentalist Christian value systems. He offers data that show that “the Christian Right has come to make control of government as well as education a top priority” (p. 57) by forcing their agenda issues into the public education sphere such as teaching of so-called “intelligent design” and regulation of textbook adoption and student organizations.

To exemplify the power of specialized forms of rhetoric, Kumashiro provides cases to demonstrate the shift in educational discourse as the Right reframes and redefines meanings, or appropriates the ideology. One example shows how a previous frame from the left claims “Education as Age-Appropriate” but becomes redefined by the right to promote “Children as Innocent” which is coded meaning that hides discussions of homosexuality in schools as a way to protect children from its “contagion” (p. 69).

Kumashiro discusses the power of the right to narrow curriculum “back to the basics” to

include focus on reading and math scores, and he points out the hidden agenda within that frame keeps students from developing critical thinking skills in order that they do not feel the need to challenge the status quo. He posits that “frames have the power to shape society’s understanding of and responses to problems...in ways that prevent a deep understanding and the collective will to act” (p. 85).

**Deficit Models and Corrective Action.** According to the meta-analysis of research involving Native American students and education, in general (Demmert, 1998; Demmert 2003; Demmert, 2006; Tippeconic, 1999), the major concepts or factors appearing in the literature have included quantitative studies related to deficit models and focused on corrective action. These studies center around issues related to language deficiencies of Native American students, cultural deficiencies, and application of problem behavior theories for issues such as suicide, pregnancy, drop outs, depression, and addictions including: substance abuse, alcoholism, and gambling.

Due to the nature of many of these qualitative studies’ focus on deficit approaches, I did not find them of particular usefulness to this study, however I would be remiss not to mention these studies that examine Indian education from quantitative perspectives, as they inform much of the empirical work that has appeared regarding Indian education to date. The use of such databases as the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), and compilations housed by the BIA Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) which represent quantitative data recorded from tribal schools and reservations across the country are evident in many of the research reports available on the status of Indigenous

peoples in the United States (Demmert, 1998; 2003; 2006). There are hundreds of empirically based, positivist paradigm accounts of statistical referents to academic achievement, proficiency, and school-based performance.

## **Conclusion**

Issues of social justice in the education of Indigenous children exist both in and around traditional Indigenous homelands. The process of addressing historic patterns of misappropriation of power in these contexts is complex and begins with the deconstruction of power as it operates within the various channels of the school district. There have been numerous studies of Indian Education, but only few help to inform the present research as a critical ethnography of Indigenous high school youth.

It is interesting to note that more recent scholarship on Indigenous youth can be characterized as decolonizing work that focus on building strengths through resiliency and resistance. The few studies I examined shared a common theme - strengthening students and their learning through Indigenization of schooling.

The exercise of legislative power is evident throughout the process of schooling, as indicated by the studies presented in this chapter. Power not only operates through legislation, but by efforts of elite groups that exert control over schooling at all levels ranging from the construction of knowledge to daily operations of the school itself that continue to marginalize the non-dominant subaltern. The ideological management that takes place in schools is hidden within the policies and practices embodied by the seemingly innocuous operation of school as a neutral entity.

Many of the available studies are made more powerful with the inclusion of participant narrative, in such practice as the present study also engages. Those narratives add the dimension of expert knowledge directly from the people who experience the realities of schooling, power, and transformation being studied. These studies help to frame my methodological approach and point out important features of research that I cannot miss, such as opportunities to engage participants in the creation of knowledge about the research matter being studied so that I may more fully understand the static documents and artifacts that I examine. Also, the existence of a multitude of databases based on quantified information about Indigenous children can prove useful in understanding the ways educational theories and school programs operate in Indian Country in response to the mandates of the current NCLB fury. The approaches used in these studies varied and were important to inform my own approach. Ultimately, the use of Critical Pedagogy was reinforced as the most appropriate approach for the present study.

Critical Pedagogy, with an Indigenous nexus has a place within the field of liberatory education. The relation of critical theory and its associated “schools of thought” provide a deep and complex series of interrogations into the historical practices meant to subsume Indian culture within the dominant American society, as it is a look into the possibilities of action that may bring transformation to an education system in desperate need of revision at its foundations. In the next chapter, I apply these theoretical frames to the design of the present study.



## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods and approaches used to collect, organize and analyze the data. This qualitative study's methodological framework applies critical educational ethnography articulated by Carspecken (1996) to conduct research with a critical perspective. This critical perspective is grounded in issues of social theory which "include the nature of social structure, power, culture, and human agency" (p. 3). I situate myself throughout this critical educational ethnography with a lens shaped by TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005), an Indigenized version of Critical Theory introduced in Chapter 1. Indigenization, in this research represents the refocusing of politics and action towards a Native perspective to locate a space for understanding the realities of the participants within their contemporary, lived experiences (Emerson, 2005 & 2006; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Smith, 1999). This lens allows my Indigenized ideology "to enter intrinsically and inseparably into the methods, interpretations, and epistemology of [this] critical research" (Carspecken, p. 5). Such a value orientation does not determine the research findings, as Carspecken warns, but I acknowledge my Indigenized critical epistemology as a part of the research process. The explanation of the relationship between the research process and this multifaceted epistemology follows below.

Throughout this research project, I acknowledge the political nature of research and its colonial underpinnings. Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) asserts that, "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and

that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (p. 5). Smith posits that research is representative of the “complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices” (p. 2). As a member of my research community, I remain cognizant of my role as a researcher and as an Indigenous researcher, I strive to carve an added dimension for Indigenous voice where non-indigenous researchers have written for consumption in the academy. Bryan Brayboy (2000) emphasizes the burden of privilege we bear, as members of the post-secondary institutions that provide our perceived authority as researchers. I have attempted to make certain that I can judge the data as new and emergent information. Despite my particular knowledge of the research participants, my role as a researcher will ultimately affect this relationship. These considerations are inherent to the designs and ways that Indigenous scholars approach all research projects (Smith, 1999) and particularly in the ways that I approach this critical educational ethnography.

Briefly, the critical educational ethnography operates in a five-stage design, detailed in an upcoming section. The initial stages included: deciding on the research locale; creating my preliminary lists of research questions and related sub-questions; examining the intersections and mapping a course through potential data sources; taking inventory of my personal biases before beginning the research in order to raise my own awareness; and designing the study (Carspecken, 1996). I arrived at this research with assumptions about schooling and about the nature of schooling in this district based on my theoretical perspective discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. In the first stage of this research project, I compiled a primary record of data including field notes, observations,

and documentation of artifacts, including legislation and curricular materials. In stage two, I analyzed the primary record that included my field notes from passive observations “to determine interaction patterns, their meanings, power relations, roles, interactive sequences, evidence of embodied meaning, [and] intersubjective structures” (p. 42) in establishing a dialectic relationship, as suggested by Carspecken. Stage three included what Carspecken refers to as “Dialogical data generation” (p. 42) by inviting participant dialogue about the research and gathering qualitative data through trend surveys, interviews, and participant observation. I followed up with stages four and five by examining the social system relationships and using those to infer meaning within the structure through a political analysis. I apply the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in stages two through five, as I interpret discursive patterns and meanings in spoken and textual data.

CDA, as defined by Norman Fairclough (1995) and further described by James Paul Gee (2009) and Wodak & Meyer (2006), shapes my understanding and interpretation of the textual data through analysis using the tools of social language, situated meanings, cultural models, and Discourses.<sup>26</sup> CDA assumes that language and meaning constitute not only words, but rely also on social, contextual relationships that influence and are influenced by status and power. The added nexus of analyzing social practices as they are

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<sup>26</sup> Gee (1996) introduces the use of the capital “D” in Discourses to emphasize the multiple meanings of discourse to include “more than just using language to discourse about something” (Discourse Analysis: What Makes it Critical?, essay, p. 33)

enacted through language is what makes this type of discourse analysis critical. In this research project, I considered the various ways language is enacted within the Discourses of the schools and the school district through social practices of participants and the material artifacts to which they respond. These analytic tools are described in detail later in this chapter.

Throughout the five stages, I practiced reflexivity by using analytic memos and reviewing my critical reflections in the field notes. I am cognizant of the role I represent as a researcher and the political nature of this research, as addressed in the next section.

### **Role of Researcher**

The complex member status I negotiated at the research site included impressions and responses of participants based upon my perceived racialized presence. My situated identity may have affected the levels of trust by participants – at times, adding a perceived higher level of trust from the Indigenous participants and at other times, influencing a sense of obligation to prove that non-Indian participants were meeting the needs of Native students. There also appeared to be a false barrier when participants placed me in an outsider realm – that of researcher in the service of the institution that I critiqued in this project. My presence represented a western exercise of power in itself (Smith, 1999; Minh-Ha, 1989; Miheuah, 1998). Vine Deloria, Jr. critiques the purposes of research on Indian nations in his 1969 manifesto, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, as an exercise of the essential stance which relegates Indian people as “objects for observation... objects for experimentation, for manipulation, and for eventual extinction;” he adds that too much “useless knowledge” about Indians has been perpetuated in academia so as to “capture

real Indians in a network of theories [that] has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today” (p. 81). Trinh Minh-ha (1989) describes the process of “othering” through the subjugative power of language, in its manifestations of writing and discourse. My awareness of these issues led me to remain conscious of Minh-ha’s warning about the role of power as I interpret and write about the data. Instead of avoiding issues of this subjugative power, I attempted to interrogate its hegemonic force and to offer research that honored the counter-hegemonic power through narratives from the community.

I arrived at this research with assumptions about the assimilative nature of schooling and its hegemonic influences over the lives of Indigenous peoples. These assumptions have been articulated by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), who states: “The organization of school knowledge, the hidden curriculum and the representation of difference in texts and school practices all contain discourses which have serious implications for indigenous students...” (p. 11). I relied on my own Indigenized lens shaped by powerful insights from Indigenous scholars in my field of study, especially relying on the frame of TribalCrit to center the assumption of prevalent colonialism in society and its institutions. I understand the urgency of this project as political and transformative for the people whose participation in this research has illuminated the need for reassessment of schooling practices and policies; this understanding comes by the very nature of my Indigenous epistemology that values spiritual meanings within actions and spaces for its application of a critical analysis of the data.

Racial ideology permeates our lives - it often operates in our spheres of existence as Indigenous people because we have learned to create a dichotomy between being Indigenous and being white as critiqued by TribalCrit (2005). This racial and epistemological difference has shaped our experiences in schooling and has even facilitated the perpetuation of academic learning in our own schools via colonial ideologies. My position within the framework of Tribal Critical Race Theory and the results I obtain are a reflection of a lens that I employ from an Indigenous knowledge perspective based on the traditional lifeways I learned growing up in my Pueblo community. I do not disregard that racial power issue has shaped the histories of my research participants. To interrogate school policy in this study with an Indigenous framework and an Indigenized sense of purpose inspired me to continually affect change in policy and practice in educational institutions. For example, in my analysis, I placed myself within the frame of the school system as an Indigenous woman and derived meaning from the participants as an agent of change with full intention of reporting their narratives to affect the change they felt was needed. I operated within this research with a sense of purpose that acknowledged the counter-narrative stories.

My approach was grounded in critical theory and the application of a critical methodology. I practiced data gathering through discussion and reflection as an Indigenized way of arriving at knowledge; I also used the concept of transformation as the driving force behind this research which urged me to seek out and report on viable suggestions for change – one of the most important aspects of Indigenous scholarship (Brayboy, 2005). I also practiced reflexivity by constantly reflecting on the inner

dialogue and struggle with how much of myself to include and determine how it might affect my purpose, as Carspecken (1996) forewarns. I am keenly aware that people from Indigenous communities know that racism exists within their lived experiences in the schools. At times, they may be engaged in the same rationalizations about the production of knowledge at institutions but may be uncertain of how to articulate what they have experienced. These are key elements of my research and the grounding focus of the Indigenized lens that motivates a process of decolonization, because it is not enough to just name the problem, as Vine Deloria, Jr. (1969) asserts. Deloria points to “an undefined expectation in American society that once a problem is defined, no matter how, and understood by a significant number of people who have some relation to the problem, there is no problem anymore” (p. 93). So, in addition to offering this critical examination of the issues in the Bison Meadows School District, I also present implications for transforming the ways education is addressed in these schools in Chapter 5.

The research represents multiple perspectives based on my researcher identity: I am from the community but not fully immersed within the daily experiences of the people living there, because I commute from the city to the rural Pueblo community; also, I am employed within the community but not at the research site. The traditional anthropological insider/outsider framework of researcher identity does not capture my position since it creates a false dichotomy of insider versus outsider, whereas my presence and positionality is multifaceted and complex (Villenas, 1996). I bring tacit knowledge of the Pueblo community and of the system of schooling in it, but I am also keenly aware of my role as a representative of the system of schooling in various dimensions. Another

ethical concern results from my positionality at the school sites. My efforts to negotiate my position within the research setting are evident in reporting the research. I am known in the community through my interaction with children and adults in the school context and I do not wish to jeopardize these relationships I have built by misrepresenting any of the research.

I am engaged in research involving an often over-researched, yet underrepresented population - namely Indigenous Pueblo people – therefore, I make conscious effort to represent my data accurately. I consciously avoid gross overgeneralizations and try to present cases that are specific to the population, while making the case for applicability to similar situations, as is often the case with this type of qualitative research.

### **Research Setting**

This research is set in the Bison Meadows School District in New Mexico. There are two high schools within this district – Lava Bluff High School and Valley Vista High School.<sup>27</sup> One school is located within the municipality of Caldera, a reservation-border-town, and the other school is located directly on the traditional homelands of one Indigenous nation.<sup>28</sup> The communities served in this district have been affected by mining and have undergone a series of economic booms and their associated fallouts.

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<sup>27</sup> The names of places are pseudonyms throughout this dissertation.

<sup>28</sup> Towns and cities that border Indian lands are considered “border-towns.” Indigenous peoples who live in and near these towns tend to experience heightened overt racism and are likely targets of hate crimes. See Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, Winter 2006, for more information.



Demographics of the school district are representative of the racial and socio-economic diversity of the centralized geographical area in New Mexico where this study takes place. There are an estimated 27,481 people living across this school district. The U.S. Census data reports a racial breakdown of 55.7% white, 33.4% Hispanic, 41.5% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.5% black, .4% Asian, and .1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; these census figures account for the ability to include more than one racial category in self-identification. The population in this county has experienced a 7.4% growth since 2000 (US Census Bureau, 2007). There were a total of 3,605 students enrolled in the public schools (K-12) during school year 2006-07, while 46 students were reportedly home schooled and 260 students attended non-public schools located within the district boundaries.<sup>29</sup> The student makeup of the district chosen as the research site is reported as: Native American (39%), Hispanic (40.6%), Caucasian (18.9%), African American (1%), and Asian/Pacific (.5%) according to the New Mexico Public Education Department School District Report Card for School Year 2006-07 (3/5/2007). Table 1 below shows public school district students' race as compared to the census data for the entire county.

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<sup>29</sup> At the time this study was conducted, these figures were current. The demographics are updated and published annually through the State of New Mexico Public Education Department. For current figures, see <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/IT/schoolFactSheets.html>

Population	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic/Latino	White
<i>Public Schools (SY 2005-06)</i>	39%	.5%	1%	<b>not specified*</b>	40.6%	18.9%
<i>County Residents (2005)</i>	41.5%	.4%	1.5%	.1%	33.4%	55.7%
*note that the school data includes a race label “Asian/Pacific” while the US Census data separates “Asian” from “Hawaii/Pacific”						

Table 1: comparison of percentage of race population in public schools and county demographics

Although there appears to be a racial disparity between the school population and the general population, especially noticeable between data reported for Hispanics and Whites, the demographics of the county represent a large age gap in its residents. Due to the option to select more than one race on the census forms, the figures for race in the county do not add up evenly. It would be likely that people would select two races when there is acknowledgement of racial mixing, for example if the mother is Native and father Hispanic there would be a double figure reported. The U. S. Census data show the median age in the county at 33 years old. Between the ages of 30 and 59, there is not a significant difference in the populations of Hispanic and White residents, however the population of White residents aged 60 and over dramatically increases to a margin nearly double the Hispanic population (American Fact Finder, 2006). This could account for the apparent disparities in enrollment of Hispanic and White students in Bison Meadows public schools, since there are no other options for high school in the county. The White population over 60 years of age in Bison Meadows is greater than the older Hispanic

population and the median-aged Hispanic population is conversely incongruent to their White counterparts.

According to the 2004 U.S. Census estimates, 20.8% of the people in this county are living below the national poverty level. One indicator of economic living conditions is participation in the federal free and reduced-cost lunch program in the public schools. In Bison Meadows County, 56.1% of students participate in the free lunch program and 11.9% participate in the reduced-cost lunch program. These figures are fairly high, compared to the average for New Mexico's free and reduced lunch participation of 48.1% (free) and 9.9% (reduced) (NM PED, 2006).

This site was selected due to its location of high schools both within and at the outskirts of traditional Indigenous homelands and the historical tensions that have existed in the region regarding equity in schooling for all populations of students in the district. Interestingly, there are a number of schools within the district boundaries that primarily serve Native American children. There are seven schools situated on Indigenous lands, one is a public high school that also houses a public middle school, three of which are grant schools (two Pueblo and one Navajo) which are tribally controlled and operated, one is a Federal Bureau of Indian Education school (on Pueblo land), and one is an alternative treatment center operated under the auspices of the Federal Indian Health Service. There are two elementary schools directly on the boundaries of public and Indigenous lands – one private parochial and the other public. The town of Caldera hosts three religious-based private schools, six public elementary schools, one public high school, and one public middle school. All of these schools serve children from

throughout the county, but I choose to focus on the two public high schools that serve a large population of Indigenous youth from two distinct Pueblo nations and the Navajo nation.

At the time of my initial demographic research prior to entering the research site, the total student body population was 323 at the reservation school and 951 at the school located in the municipality of Caldera. The general trend for graduating students represented in 2002 figures shows that 35.7% of graduates applied for higher education at 2-year schools and 33.8% applied for four-year institutions. The 2005-06 graduation rate for the school district was 232 students total, or 90.2%.<sup>30</sup> In 2006, the percentage of Indigenous students who graduated represented 92.4% at the reservation school and 93.3% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students enrolled at the larger school in town (NM PED, 2006). Compared to the overall graduation rate of 89.4% at Lava Bluff and 92.4% at Valley Vista, the level of high school completion for Indigenous students seems on par with the district's overall student population. Both of these schools serve Indigenous students from two different Pueblos and draw students from surrounding Navajo communities, as well. A detailed comparison based on statistics during the time I

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<sup>30</sup> Graduation rates reported do not represent accurate data due to their reliance upon the 12<sup>th</sup> grade completion rates only; this practice was discontinued after 2007. The NMPED databases now track student cohorts from high school entrance to completion. The first cohort group tracked includes incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2004 through their completion in 2009. Students who complete high school early are also included in the graduation rates.

conducted data collection appears in Table 2 below.

	Total Population SY 09-10	Race					Gender		Free/ reduced lunch	American Indian/Alaskan Native Graduation Rate
		American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian / Pacific Islander	Black, not Hispanic	Hispanic	White, not Hispanic	Female	Male		
Lava Bluff High School	939	36%	<1%	1%	7%	<1%	53%	47%	56%	93.3%
Valley View High School	288	92%	<1%	0%	42%	20%	47%	53%	61%	92.4%

Table 2 Demographic Comparison of Two High Schools in Bison Meadows School District, NCES Public School Data

Historically, there have been issues of equity in providing appropriate schooling within this district. The experience of generations of students in this school district was noticeably similar between children whose parents opted for the reservation school and those who chose to send their children to Lava Bluff, the municipal high school, for a “better education” – a perception that endured over thirty years following a Civil Rights lawsuit regarding inequities in education at Bison Meadows School District. At the reservation school, Valley Vista High School, expectations for academic excellence were low, textbooks were outdated, the library and fine arts facilities were absent of improvements, and the teacher turnover rate was evident during my tenure at a similar high school. Based on my conversations with individuals in the community, the data show similar sentiments throughout the community, thereby forcing parents to opt for Lava Bluff High School instead of Valley Vista High School. The results and implications of this lawsuit and how the perceived inequities affect students is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

An important realization in this research is that many people from Indigenous communities are wary of divulging too much information, even if it is to a researcher that

also represents their shared identities. I have experienced the attempts at acculturation and assimilation by parents toward their students in school – demonstrated by the importance of grades, the focus on higher education, and the insistence on economic security for their young children. I have met formally with several parents of current students in the community who expressed support of my pedagogical decisions and praxis. A few of these parents have reported that they see, through my work, the possibility for their children to become “educated” members of the community.<sup>31</sup>

The community’s awareness of disparities in the educational opportunities at the reservation school is not unfounded, as the legacy of its historical legal struggles with the U.S. Office of Civil Rights persists. Currently, greater academic opportunities are available at Lava Bluff High School compared to the course offerings at Valley Vista High School. Overall, Lava Bluff offers students 56 academic choices, 12 remedial academic courses, and 86 elective options; while Valley Vista offers 27 regular and honors academic courses, 11 remedial academic courses, and 70 electives. Both schools provide opportunities for dual-enrollment for college credit, but only Lava Bluff is situated adjacent to a community college and there is not adequate transportation available for Valley Vista students. Despite repeated petitions to the School Board,

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<sup>31</sup> See Martinez, G. (2003) for a discussion in “Constructions of the Educated Native Person” (pp. 141-199). Martinez examines the multifaceted and often conflicted interpretations of what it means for Indigenous people to be educated, based on Graham Smith’s (2001) “five sites of struggle for Indigenous Peoples in relation to the schooling process: the academy, media, home, policy, and agencies.” (p. 144).

Valley Vista still has not been granted the authorization to offer AP (Advanced Placement) Courses, while Lava Bluff boasts 12 AP Exam courses each school year, along with high-status College Board-endorsed certification for its teachers.<sup>32</sup> Valley Vista is authorized to implement the Pre-AP strategies in its high school curriculum. The details of this particular political struggle became evident during my research and will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

### **Participants**

The research is based on one school district, so the sample pool consisted of participants connected to the schools and the district in some tangible way. Because of the small size of the school district population, there was little chance of achieving a true representative sampling. However, it was not a major consideration because I did not have the need for large-scale generalizability. I began my sampling in a recursive manner to meet the needs of the study using a “developmental, ad hoc procedure rather than an a priori parameter of research design” (LeCompte & Priessle, 1993). Initially, I knew that I needed to observe and interview classroom teachers to help me understand how they

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<sup>32</sup> The College Board is the international administering body of the SAT®, PSAT/NMSQT®, and AP college entrance testing and preparation. High Schools must apply and be authorized by the College Board in order to offer standardized AP curriculum and testing. Further, only AP College Board-endorsed trained and certified faculty are authorized to administer the AP programs at these schools. The Pre-AP® follows a set of strategies and resources designed for use in both middle- and high schools as preparation for the more rigorous AP curriculum and/or college entrance. For more details on the College Board process and products, please see <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/assessment/ap/offer>

experienced state power in their classrooms. I also wanted to interview students and their parents to become aware of the ways curriculum is experienced from the stakeholder's perspective. Finally, I wanted to get the perspective of administrators in the district to gain a sense of how they make curricular decisions on multiple levels. With these characteristics in mind, I used a simple, criterion-based selection of participants for this study to include people with strong connections to the school district – students, parents, community members, teachers, staff, or administration. I measured connections to the district based on participation in school life through regular meeting attendance, committee or parent organization membership, and/or participation in school sponsored academic activities (beyond sporting events).

Once I established criterion-based sample pools, I followed a sequence of convenience sampling and selection (LeCompte & Priessle, 1993). During initial site entry in stage three of Carspecken's (1996) critical ethnographic methodology, I invited participants to engage in dialogue with me. I designed a survey tool (APPENDICES J & K) for this point of my research plan. This instrument allowed me to invite many people to join the dialogue of this inquiry by introducing my research project to large numbers of people, then to ask for their perspective about their role within the school district through the use of the survey tool. Additionally, this opened the door to invite participants to engage in the study through interviews. I administered the anonymous Adult Survey to 89 people, including mixed groups of teachers, administrators, school employees, parents, and/or community members. Typically, I introduced the research study verbally and included a prospectus of the inquiry, followed by a question and answer session for



potential participants. I distributed the anonymous surveys during regularly scheduled meetings at school libraries, classrooms, auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. In addition to the surveys, I also distributed volunteer cards for participants to include their names and contact information if they desired to engage in the interview with me. Table 3 below provides an example of the Teacher interview participants.

<b>Teacher Pseudonym</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Teaching Experience</b>
ArtDawg	White	21 years
Benita	Native	1 years
Henrietta	Native	10 years
Joel	White	30 years
SoulHistorian	White	15 years
Mr. Timothy	White	20 years

Table 3 Teacher Interview Participants

From here, I built my sample based on these categories: Teacher, Community Member, Parent, and Administrator.<sup>33</sup> To obtain the student participant sample, I followed the Teacher interviews and classroom observations with a similar method for introducing the inquiry.

When a Teacher assented to the interview, I also arranged classroom observations and sought both Parental Consent and Student Assent for the Student Survey (APPENDICES J & K). I administered the anonymous Student Survey to a total of 95 high school students, grades 9 through 12, in their Humanities classrooms. I selected the general area of Humanities because those electives, Social Studies, and Literature classes

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<sup>33</sup> The participants from this pool are included in Appendix A – Adults, and Appendix B - Students

seemed least likely to be affected by NCLB changes at this point in time. Here, I invited students to participate in the interview process by providing volunteer cards with each survey disseminated. I received 23 positive responses for interview participation and then sent Parental Consent and Student Assent letters home with students to be returned to the classroom teacher or to me upon my next observation visit. Many of these letters never made it back, which significantly reduced the Student sample.<sup>34</sup> Again, the need for large scale generalizability was unnecessary in this stage of the research; the most important reason for selecting interview participants was to assure their voice in the process of producing this body of knowledge.

### **Instruments**

In the data gathering process of this project, I utilized several methods of obtaining information, ranging from observations to written and oral collection of participant data. I, myself, was an instrument to collect data as I completed passive observations (Carspecken, 1996), and as I worked through participant observations in my role as a researcher. Passive observation, as termed by Carspecken in *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research*, refers to stage one of the data collection process involved in building the primary record by conducting unobtrusive records of actions in the research setting. Altogether, the direct participant contact time I engaged in this project figures at 100 hours in the field over a period of 18 months. The various instruments are listed below and their procedures are discussed in the following section.

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<sup>34</sup> Participants are listed in Appendix B

- Surveys – I created the survey tools (APPENDICES J & K) in order to gather information on trends and opinions in the schools from both student and adult perspectives.
- Passive Observation – I observed common interactions at the high schools, district/school board offices, and local communities.
- Participant Observation – I participated in classroom interactions, school district workshops, and parent meetings at various locations.
- Interviews – I designed a research protocol for each group of participants (Appendix 3.5) to gauge their awareness of school policy, state and federal legislation, and general trends in curriculum delivery.
- Document Analysis – I examined texts used in Humanities classes, public records, and legislation to examine the codification of power through different lenses.

## **Procedures**

This section highlights some standard procedures in the research process that are not addressed elsewhere in this chapter. Some measures necessary to the viability of the study include strict adherence to university research protocols, securing access into the research site, and gaining support for research on the Pueblo Nation school site. These elements were crucial in establishing credibility to conduct the research.

**Institutional Review Board.** The university research protocol for engaging in research with human subjects establishes standard procedure in order to begin research of this sort. Once the proposal for this study was approved by the university's College of

Education and Office of Graduate Studies, I was required to bring the proposal before the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to proceed with the study.

There are several safeguards in place to assure that human participants are not coerced or harmed during the conduct of research projects. I addressed those precautions in these ways: all participation is voluntary -- participants were given the option to withdraw at any time and their interview transcripts are returned for alteration and validation; use of vulnerable populations under 18 years of age – I included parental consent for direct interactions with children, assent for children to make sure they understood the nature of this research, and conducted interviews in public places; anonymity of participants – the identities of all participants, their towns, schools, and locales are protected by the use of pseudonyms. By including these safeguards, some levels of protection to the research participants have been assured.

**School District Access.** The best way to gain access to this school district without a formal policy or procedure for conducting research was to seek authorization from the head of the district. In spring semester 2008, I contacted Mr. Landovazo, superintendent of Bison Meadows Schools, and arranged a meeting to present my research prospectus and answer any questions he might ask about this project. He granted me immediate access to the district and directed the principals to allow me into the high schools.

Because I am aware of the politics surrounding leadership in education, I felt it would be appropriate to personally contact each building principal and secure the assent from them individually, I immediately sent the same research prospectus to both

principals with a cover letter asking for a meeting. However, my initial access to the two high schools was stalled because of administrative changes. At the onset of this research project, both high schools experienced a change in leadership and the principal at Valley Vista, who had indicated that he would grant me full access and agreed to be interviewed, was now totally inaccessible. Despite three separate attempts to reach the outgoing principal of Lava Bluff High School, I never made contact.

I made second attempt to establish building access once the new principals were in place. I was finally successful in getting established with the new principal at Valley Vista High School and began working there in the fall semester 2008. After repeated attempts to establish a relationship with the new principal at Lava Bluff High School failed, I took it upon myself to enter the school under the auspices of the superintendent. This harsh entry is further analyzed and discussed in the next chapter. I remained intact in this school district until the spring semester 2010 and continued with follow up interviews until August, 2010.

**Pueblo Nation Access.** As a matter of courtesy, I contacted the Governor of the Pueblo where Valley Vista High School is located to inform him about my planned research project. Although the Pueblo government has no traditional or political leadership role over the public schools within its bounds, it was important to make this Tribal entity aware of my presence as a researcher on their lands. I arranged a personal meeting with the Pueblo Governor and provided him a cover letter detailing my personal background and the impetus for this research, along with the research prospectus for his

review. He was very enthusiastic about my research plan and wished me well with my endeavors.

These three formal steps helped me to secure access to the site and assure my right of entry to begin the research process. Throughout the 22 months I was situated in this school district, I periodically provided updates to these people and organizations. I was required to complete a continuation extension of IRB approval in fall semester 2009 so that I could continue my data collection process. I saw the superintendent of Bison Meadows School District regularly at School Board meetings and provide him informal updates on the progress of my research. Finally, I provided a formal progress update to the Pueblo Governor in October, 2009 which he again provided encouragement for continuation of the work and asked that I share it with him upon completion. I advised the Governor that once I had completed the formal process of University approval I would share the research with him.

Once I began the data collection process, I followed the general set of procedures involved in Critical Ethnographic Methodology, outlined by Carspecken (1996). Here, I detail the list introduced in the previous section:

### **Surveys**

The self-created written instruments I developed to gather information about trends and to set up a process by which to recruit interview participants consisted of a 15-item survey for adults and a 20-item survey for students. These anonymous surveys were designed to gauge the climate of the schools from the perspectives of those people who maintain regular interaction in those schools. The questions asked participants to rate

their opportunities to express personal agency in the schools, their experiences with texts and policies in the schools, and their feelings about culture and identity in the schools.<sup>35</sup>

In phase three, the dialogical data generation stage (Carspecken, 1996), I invited the people to whom I introduced the study an opportunity to participate in the research. I spent roughly five minutes talking about the research – providing an overview and inviting dialogue. The adult surveys helped me introduce my research to large groups of teachers, parents, and community members. I asked these adults to complete the surveys at faculty meetings, Parent-Advisory-Council meetings, and general information meetings. It was also through the surveys that I asked for interview participants by disseminating a 3” by 5” card to survey takers requesting contact information if they were willing to participate in an interview. I affixed a computer-generated address label onto each index card and identified each as a “Volunteer Form” with instructions to the survey participant to complete the card with contact information if s/he was interested in being interviewed. During the initial phases of introduction to the schools, I administered the student surveys to four classrooms of students in their Reading, English, and Social Studies classes. I also administered student surveys to students participating in the Parent-Advisory-Council meetings. Again, I asked for interview participants by using the same index card approach. In all, I counted 23 interview volunteers using this method.

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendices J & K for details about these surveys.

## **Interviews**

The interview process followed the initial recruitment using the survey procedure. Students who volunteered received a consent letter and an assent letter to take home. Most of these letters never made it back to school, thereby severely decreasing the student interview pool. Of the original ten student volunteers, only four completed the interview process. Conversely, the adult interview pool was wider and I felt it necessary to narrow down the interviews to include only parents, community members, and teachers in the area of Humanities (English, Social Studies, and Art) because I felt that these subject areas were least likely to be affected by federal policy, at the time.<sup>36</sup> It was important to observe and speak directly with the teachers in these content areas to determine how their classrooms and curricula had been affected by legislation that was not specifically targeted at their content areas. The sample pool appears below in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Participant Pool

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<sup>36</sup> In the early stages of NCLB standardization, Math and Reading were already being heavily tested at the time this study was conducted.



**Participants:**

**Formal Interviews**

- 5 high school students
- 6 high school teachers
- 4 parents of high school students
- 3 community members

**Informal Interviews**

- 6 school district administrators
- 2 school board members
- 2 school district administrative employees

I differentiated between formal and informal interviews; formal interviews consisted of an audio recorded interview based on the interview protocol (see APPENDIX K). Informal interviews included conversations I held during public sessions in the schools and the school district offices.

I developed an interview protocol to assess participants' awareness with NCLB and NMIEA legislation and to consider their thoughts on how the curriculum process works at their schools. I also asked questions that engaged participants in discussion about personal agency in the process of schooling and their perspectives of cultural relevance in their schools. Generally, the question pools situated three separate categories: Legislation, Perspective, and Agency. I conducted four follow up interviews with adults based on items that I felt needed further elucidation from initial interviews. Student interviews generally lasted 30 minutes; adult interviews took roughly 90 minutes each. Follow up interviews were considerably shorter and did not run longer than 30

minutes. I conducted interviews in various public spaces in the schools – libraries, teacher work rooms, classrooms, cafeterias, and outside of schools in offices and restaurants. I digitally audio-recorded all interviews, typed, and electronically archived each transcript.

After I backed up the digital files, I returned the recording and written transcript to each participant for verification before they became part of the permanent record of this study.

### **Passive Observation**

Although sometimes considered a non-obtrusive method of data collection, I must acknowledge that my mere presence somehow alters the normal interactions of participants in their natural settings. The tools I employed when engaged in these observations always included a field notebook and reflective journal, but sometimes included a digital audio recorder. When I collected data under the guise of a “nonparticipant,” I generally situated myself in an area apart from the main activity of the situation. If in a classroom, I sat behind the students in a corner, in a meeting, I sat toward the outskirts of the regular audience, generally out of the direct line of interaction of the main participants. I did not interrupt or intervene during these times. Passive observations took place at School Board meetings, school faculty meetings, school assemblies, and individual classrooms. My observations of public meetings always included a digitally audio-recorded file and effusive field notes. My observations of classrooms and faculty meetings did not include the digital audio recording. Once the

interaction was completed, I wrote my thoughts and responses in the reflective portion of the field note journal in all cases.

### **Participant Observation**

This type of observation differs from passive observation because I purposefully engage in the activity of the main participants through actions and dialogue. My main purpose in selecting this type of data collection method is to truly live the experiences of the participants in their natural settings in order to make sense of how state power is enacted upon their work in and around schools, as well as to gather data about how the participants respond to the exercise of state power. These exchanges provide a rich and deep understanding of the struggles and interactions the participants engage in as members of the community being researched. It was also a small way for me to offer assistance in exchange for access to these communities. In the Parent-Advisory-Council meetings, I offered my help with setting up the meeting space, signing-in attendees and distributing resources. During the Curriculum Alignment summer workshops, my participant-observer roles included note taking, word processing, photo copying, organizing data and materials, and resource gathering.

It is important to note that during these participant observations, my role was never as a key decision maker and my presence had the least possible impact on the final outcome of the tasks at hand. In instances when an opinion was needed for a critical element of the tasks, I always deferred to a regular participant in the situation and held back in providing my perspective on the situations.

During these long periods of observation, usually lasting 3-6 hours at a time, I did not use digital audio recordings, but relied on short intervals of cryptic note-taking to keep a chronological tab on the activities in which we engaged. Once I had the opportunity to break from the main activity, I would write down everything I remembered from the most recent burst of activity with specific detail into my field note book; I would also write my thoughts in the critical reflection journal.

In each participant-observation session, I made my role as a researcher known from the beginning. I often answered participants' queries about my research design, research questions, and final plans for the completed research. I engaged in many conversations with participants and include those casual interviews in my data results and analysis. I also was able to recruit some participants for formal interviews from these participant-observation sessions.

I also kept records that included elements of material culture such as maps, seating charts, schedules, handouts, power point presentation notes, and group guidelines to help me in reconstructing the environment of the sites studied. These artifacts are also discussed as they relate to the research site and my analysis of power in later chapters.

### **Document Analysis**

Throughout the entirety of the research project, I have meticulously collected artifacts of school culture from the school sites, the local newspapers, district and school websites, and the New Mexico Public Education Department relating specifically to the school district being studied. These collections of data helped me to keep track of the various influences to which teachers must respond in their daily lives in the classroom, as

well as providing indicators of how legislation and curriculum begin to mirror themselves. Aside from the legislative documents, the other printed materials gave me insight as to what makes up school culture and how I could analyze the Discourse of school culture based on the items available for public consumption. I will discuss how these artifacts were coded and analyzed in relation to the research question about state power in the following chapter.

Particular items of interest included school schedules, course offering guides, textbooks, teacher made materials, classroom cultural elements such as posters and flyers, school policies and memos, district guidelines regarding curriculum, testing, and standardization according to the NMPED and federal NCLB (APPENDIX C). Secondary items of interest include news items from local newspapers and district/school websites, and other various school-based postings unrelated to the academic curriculum (i.e. sports schedules and announcements). The importance of these artifacts is evidenced in the analysis of state power and what counts as knowledge in this school district. The items of most value to the collective movement and action of the school district figured most prominent in their display and accessibility.

Federal and State education policies are also included in the document analysis segment of this research. I looked at the federal NCLB, the State of New Mexico NMIEA and NM Grades 9-12 Content Area Standards and Benchmarks to examine how state power operated in shaping the process of schooling. Although these pieces of legislation regarding schooling are not generally found as material displays around the schools, they do drive the items that are on display, thus indicating the school culture. I

made some assumptions about the visible documents and situated these assumptions amidst the historical backdrop of this school district. These assumptions are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

### **Data Analysis**

**Reducing the data.** As part of the ongoing process of data collection and organization, I began preliminary analysis of the data as it was collected and organized. Through the entire process of transcribing the ethnographic data including interviews, passive observations, and digitally recorded reflections from the field, I kept note of the emerging themes and began theorizing using the practice of writing analytic memos. The field notes also included data about participant observations and material culture descriptors encountered within the research site. In addition to the ethnographic data collected, I also included themes from the entry surveys and relevant data from the historical records regarding this school district.

Transcripts, once completed and backed up digitally, served as one source of rich data from which to extrapolate themes representing manifestations of power and authority at varying levels, as well as the contestation of power and authority through areas such as the hidden curriculum embodied in the instruction and policy that affect Native high school students; reception and implementation of policy and curriculum within the school district; historical factors within the district; and the response to imperatives of neo-liberalism throughout the district.

I used a process to categorize and code the data by making constant comparisons of data and cross-sectional indexing. I named and coded each data set as a whole, then

compared it to all other data sets I had collected from the research site, searching for commonalities in emergent themes. I designed and employed a manual indexing system based on the presence and recurrence of the themes mentioned above in each data set. First, I examined the data sets and created literal indexing codes anchored in actual interactions and relationships; second, I applied measures of interpretive indexing to each data set based on the categorical themes introduced above; and ultimately, throughout these processes, I used reflexive indexing by examining my role in the data. At each stage of categorization, I reflected on the issue of validity and reexamined my research question compared to the kinds of data gleaned from my various instruments to verify that I was indeed measuring my intended field.

**Displaying the Data.** Overall, the data is presented according to the themes developed through a process of further parsing into the disaggregated forms then recombining as the final measure of representing the various meanings encountered through the research endeavor. During the continual process of reducing the data, I also manually sorted and displayed it in various ways to provide examination of different ontological perspectives. The narrative data is represented in its raw form, as direct quotes and within thick description to give rich detail to the context within which each theme exists. The demographic and statistical data regarding the students are represented in the form of tables and charts to provide clear snapshots of the people who exist within the context of the research site. Historic data and data representing material culture is displayed in narrative form, as well, in order to present a rich, multi-layered depiction of its situated meaning in this school district.

**Analyzing the Data.** By continually applying the theoretical approach of TribalCrit and the methodology of CDA, as I examined and reexamined the data, I kept focus on the critical nature of this project – not just as a method of critique, but also to keep in mind the transformative nature of critical research. In meshing the approach and the methodology, I examined the data with the understanding that historical contexts had previously shaped the phenomenon I observed, and I approached the data with the assumption that schooling is by its nature assimilative to white American culture.

Each theme emerged from the data as I interpreted them through this theoretical and methodological framework. I chose to use interpretive argumentation in analyzing the data, but I also demonstrate my analytical assertions with evidence from the field to support the theories that emerged from the data. Much of the constant comparative method, or emergent analysis of my data, is embedded in the triangulation practice described next.

**Triangulation.** In order to represent a true sense of the research participants' perspectives and to present a multi-faceted understanding of the research site, I collected data from various sources and utilized different methods. These were mentioned previously – passive and participant observation, interviews, surveys, material culture artifacts, and historical, as well as legislative policy research.

Harry Wolcott (1990), in writing about validity in qualitative research, talks about how it becomes inherent in his work as just sound practice. He offers some thoughts, based on his understanding of Geertz and thick description (1973) in terms of interpreting the cultural processes being studied. He lists nine points that describe what he focuses on



“to satisfy the implicit challenge of validity” (p. 127) – he aligns these to naturally occurring tendencies in the progression of fieldwork through the later stages of analysis and writing up the research. I describe his nine points and apply them to my work below.

*Talk little, listen a lot.* This technique is important to avoid becoming the informant by presuming to know what is going on, especially in familiar settings such as schools – which would preclude the researcher from asking important questions to really develop a clearer understanding. Upon completing initial transcriptions, I realized that I was doing most of the talking in the interviews, so I consciously made efforts to repress extraneous commentaries and worked to provide only clarifying questions that helped the interviews progress forward. I treated my first interview more like a personal conversation and not only did my narrative take up much of the conversation, I also allowed my analyses to shape the conversation, rather than allowing the participant to determine the course of response which effectively brought the dialogue to an abrupt halt, such as the following:

**NM:** ... in and of itself - having that realization, especially as a person who is...in charge of guiding these children through, in your content area - that says a lot. ...has there been a time where, you maybe encouraged students or allowed students to engage in creating images that you know, later on, you realized that they -maybe they weren't supposed to be engaging in the creation of those types of things?

**AD:** I can't recall anything like that, but that's my fear, you know.

**NM:** yeah, that's a pretty real fear ...

**NM:** and then you get this whole gray area between Navajo art and imagery and the Pueblos in the different ways that Pueblos that you have represented in your classroom, I mean sometimes as close together as all of these children live, sometimes, the \_\_\_ are so, they're different as far as expectations of you know what they can and cannot [AD: oh and they're kind of tight-lipped about it] yeah, (pause) so you know, I can understand the situations that you kind of shy away from sometimes because you know, you wanna know but you avoid it, its kinda gotta be difficult, and even, even as somebody is from the community, the people from the community, sometimes I've overstepped boundaries too, you know, like I didn't know I wasn't supposed to talk about that as a woman.

**AD:** oh no. (AD Interview 1, 235-244)

As I engaged in reflexive practice, especially regarding the “talk less rule,” I realized that in order to employ the “listen more rule,” I would need to consciously preempt my tendency to become involved in a conversation with the participant in which I took the lead speaking role. Instead, I made efforts to take the role of facilitator and worked to prompt discussion on the participant’s part. For example, in the final example illustrated above, I would have asked ArtDawg if she noticed any differences in the ways she approaches student cultural differences and needs in her classroom, which would have led HER to expound on the topic, rather than hearing MY interpretation of it.

***Record accurately.*** The researcher is able to practice this by using precise words during observations and interviews. Also, “recording as soon as possible, to capture words and events as observed” (p. 129) helps to avoid infiltration of analysis and/or

interpretation into the record prior to writing it down. I learned, early on, to carry small notepads and a digital recorder everywhere. These were in addition to my regular field-note journal, which was always conspicuous to remind myself and my participants that I was, indeed, engaged in research. The field-note journal became the more objective, thick description record, while the digital recorder and small notepad served as the reminders for locales, colors and styles of clothing or architecture, configurations of people, buzzwords, and mental notes to include in the official record when I had more time to sit and concentrate fully. Sometimes I would just write down initials of a person with a time or a word and the context, such as classroom conversation or hallway conversation to add to the thick description later. When I arrived at a quiet office, cafeteria table, or my vehicle, I would then write everything that I encountered in the short space and time going from one place to another. These small context clues helped trigger the entire context and write more descriptively and accurately. When I was not able to sit and write a full description, I would narrate into the digital recorder and later transcribe those notes into the field-notebook.

*Begin writing early.* Sound advice that includes beginning work on rough drafts as data is collected to write about preliminary thoughts while data are still fresh and to identify gaps where more information is needed. I accomplished this through the use of analytic memos. Through the analytic memos, I was able to isolate concepts, places, events, issues, and preliminary points of understanding and analysis to write about those items, which later came together to help guide further data collection and synthesis of ideas as I analyzed data. Many of the analytic memos I drafted contain not only a

reminder of the context, but my preliminary thoughts and analyses or questions regarding the context of the memo.

*Let readers see for themselves.* The use of thick descriptions and preliminary data to help readers to come to conclusions and to let informants speak for themselves rather than relying on researcher's interpretations and observations is one of the enduring characteristics of ethnography. It is important for me to append the field-note journal with other types of data to help form a more complete picture of the locales and settings, as well as the foundations for many of the organic processes that occur throughout the data collection. I use participant narratives from interviews and introduce or frame the context of each occurrence with data from various sources such as websites, textbooks, legislation, material culture, and participant observations, for example. Eventually, I reconfigured the isolated events within the analysis of the entire setting to provide a dialectic perspective.

*Report fully.* By including thoughts about possible meanings, or uncertainties through brackets or footnotes for issues that are not fully resolved; also for thin data on events or for events that did not occur during the fieldwork, many of my initial hunches were included and a more sound foundation for the research site/setting was established. Sometimes, participants referred to events or conversations they had with other people involved in the research setting, but without personally observing or engaging in similar conversations, I interpreted these proceedings based on recurrence in reporting by participants and the meanings they attached to the events, but footnoted or bracketed my own questions or assessment of these situations. In one case, I footnoted that participants

often refer to culture as an inherent part of their being and use similar referents when speaking about the importance of culture. The footnote mentions that although the participants do not articulate a shared, formal meaning for culture, that they use it as both an identity marker and an ontological practice.

***Be candid.*** Wolcott describes the richness of his ethnographic data and acknowledges the role of “subjectivity as a strength of qualitative approaches rather than attempt to establish a detached objectivity” (p. 131). He stresses the importance of situating oneself directly into the research settings in order to be able to truly examine his impact on the data, rather than pretend that he is neutral and the data are not affected by his presence in the research setting. My positionality as a raced, gendered, classed researcher is evident throughout the research project. I openly state the theoretical lenses with which I examine the data and I interpret and experience the data collection activities as a critical ethnographer with full acknowledgement of my presence in the research setting. I begin the introduction to this research project by stating my positionality upfront and acknowledging that it shapes the data to which I have access, as well as the ultimate transformative purpose of this research project by my use of TribalCrit.

***Seek feedback.*** The purpose of this activity is to check for accuracy, correctness, and completeness of reported information and to check for underdeveloped writing and/or overblown interpretation. Also important is to check for style and sequence – all to work toward getting things right but mostly to avoid portraying them wrong (p. 133). Perhaps the most beneficial assistance I have sought and received has been from a group of doctoral students, each at different stages in their Ph.D. programs, but each engaged in the

same processes I have experienced. This support group was sponsored by the University and we met weekly throughout the final semesters of my writing process. I have also sought help periodically from colleagues in the field of education who are not involved in my study. This assistance has been invaluable as I struggle to write with an academic purpose, while keeping the reader and the participants in mind. The usefulness of having more than one perspective reading through my manuscripts has aided the clarity and purpose of my writing.

*Try to achieve balance.* In working to establish “rigorous subjectivity,” returning to the field (field check) and assessing the descriptions/portrayal of participants and settings as making a solid fit with reality is necessary. At each stage of completion – whether it was finalizing my writing about an event, series of events, or particular participant – I returned to the research setting and virtually re-experienced the occurrence spatially and temporally to provide contextual confirmation about what I had written.

*Write accurately.* A formal check for internal coherence and consistency is necessary so that the reporting is free from internal contradictions; also conducting an internal word check for agreement, an actual practice in wordsmithing to convey true meanings is required. Similar to the “seek feedback” point listed above, this accuracy in writing came with the help of many people. I recruited an editor to help me with the finer wordsmithing endeavors and to help me form stronger arguments and make more in-depth analysis and points to support my research stance and the implications for the research, in general.

## **Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed justification for my choice in methods and it situates the research in the theoretical and methodological frameworks that help interpret meaning of the data. I position myself in this research endeavor as a raced, classed, gendered, political representative of the academy, but acknowledge that my ties with the local community engender a level of familiarity that must be examined reflexively throughout the research project.

Bison Meadows School District and its participants at Lava Bluff High School and Valley Vista High School are highlighted in this chapter as crucial elements of the research project. The methodology described in the chapter relies on the five stages of Critical Ethnography and explains how the Indigenized lens of TribalCrit helps to focus my critical analysis using methods outlined by both Critical Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis. The next chapter fully discusses the results obtained by using these methods.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Results**

#### **Introduction**

My objective in this research was to observe, describe, and analyze curriculum development and implementation in a geographically rural, yet culturally distinctive school system. I also examined how the curricula in this school district responded to two seemingly disparate sets of legislation: the 2003 New Mexico Indian Education Act, revised 2007 (NMIEA) and the federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act, or NCLB) of 2001.

This chapter is organized to address the research question posed in Chapter 1: How does state power operate in the inception and implementation of culturally relevant curricula at a school district that serves a large population of Indigenous high school youth? The discussion of state power begins in the first section and is also embedded within the sub-sections of this chapter using the four guiding questions that framed this research: How is state power embodied in current curricula, instruction and policy that affect Native high school students? How are the state-intended policy and curricula received and implemented at the two high schools (one located in a small border-town and the other on reservation land) in one school district that serves a significant number of Indigenous students from three distinct tribal communities? What historical forces affect the way policy and curriculum are implemented at the high schools within this public school district? And, in what ways does past and present neo-liberalism shape



public opinion and state policy, which affect the ways curriculum is addressed in New Mexico school districts? It is important to note that many of the issues related to each sub-section recur in variations across the results.

I used critical ethnographic methods including participant narratives, observations, and discourse analysis of policies, texts, and elements of material culture from sites across the school district to gain these results. My field experiences span from initial entry in September 2008 through exit in July 2010 and are reported as narrative data. In the first section (1) of the chapter, I describe the role of power at Bison Meadows School District as a socio-political system. I then present results themed by each of the four research sub-questions in the following order: (2) historical factors – struggles that define the educational landscape in the school district; (3) policy and curriculum – reception and implementation of standardized high school curricula; (4) hidden curriculum – embodiment of state power in curricula, instruction and policy, and (5) neo-liberalism – the power of “commonsense” in state and federal policy in the school district.<sup>37</sup>

The primary focus of this research centered on the factors leading to the creation of curriculum in the two high schools and the issues surrounding implementation of the

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<sup>37</sup> “Commonsense” is a term used by Michael Apple (2001) as he further articulates the Gramscian notion that hegemonic blocs devise and implement ideological consent over social and political meanings commonly used in the discursive practice of maintaining state power.

curriculum within the institutional system of the school district. I begin the first section with an overview of power in the Bison Meadows School District.

### **Power in Bison Meadows**

The initial data from general observations reported herein address the primary research question; Carspecken (1996) terms this data gathering phase Stage One, the act of building a primary record of complexities in the research locale. These data helped me to observe how state power operates in the inception and implementation of culturally relevant curricula at a school district that serves a large population of Indigenous high school youth. The following results are based on transcripts of field notes and passive observations, reported as a thick record of daily interactions in the district. First, I situate power as a local occurrence in relation to state power then I offer participant perceptions and experiences with state power in the school district.

There are several forms of power that operate in Bison Meadows School District. Although the research specifically examines the role of *state power* – the exercise of authority evident through the political and cultural capital of laws, institutions, and social practices deemed acceptable by the dominant society – it is important to note the ways state power becomes enacted at the micro-level of the school system. In this section, I examine individual power constructed within the frame of such a school system. I look at the ways authority is developed and maintained by those with the means to make decisions to benefit such authority and what affect those decisions have on the lives of those without authority. The authority within this school system is manifested in

organizational and individual exercise of power. My experience with the power mediators and gatekeepers at Bison Meadows follows.

My first formal contact at Bison Meadows was the district superintendent, Mr. Landovazo, a community member from one of the Hispanic villages.<sup>38</sup> He provided a hearty welcome into the district and invited me to collect data as my research required, Mr. Landovazo stated: “It is always good to see former students busy at school with students and also pursuing their studies. Please let me know if both principals are supporting your interest or if I should somehow support your interests” (email communication, 12/26/08). My previous experience with Mr. Landovazo had been as his student in high school and, later, as a colleague in the field of education. We had not maintained personal contact over the years but occasionally met at professional gatherings. He introduced me to his assistant, Mrs. Castañeda, through email, and she offered her help with my research project as well. Mrs. Castañeda offered her assistance with access to records or helping gather other information that I might have needed. This decision to start “at the top” assured my research access via Mr. Landovazo, the mediator of power in the district whose organizational and individual authority became my key to pass through Mrs. Castañeda, an administrative gatekeeper.

The power structure in schools is generally based on a top-down hierarchy. I acknowledged the administrative structure system at Bison Meadows high schools by

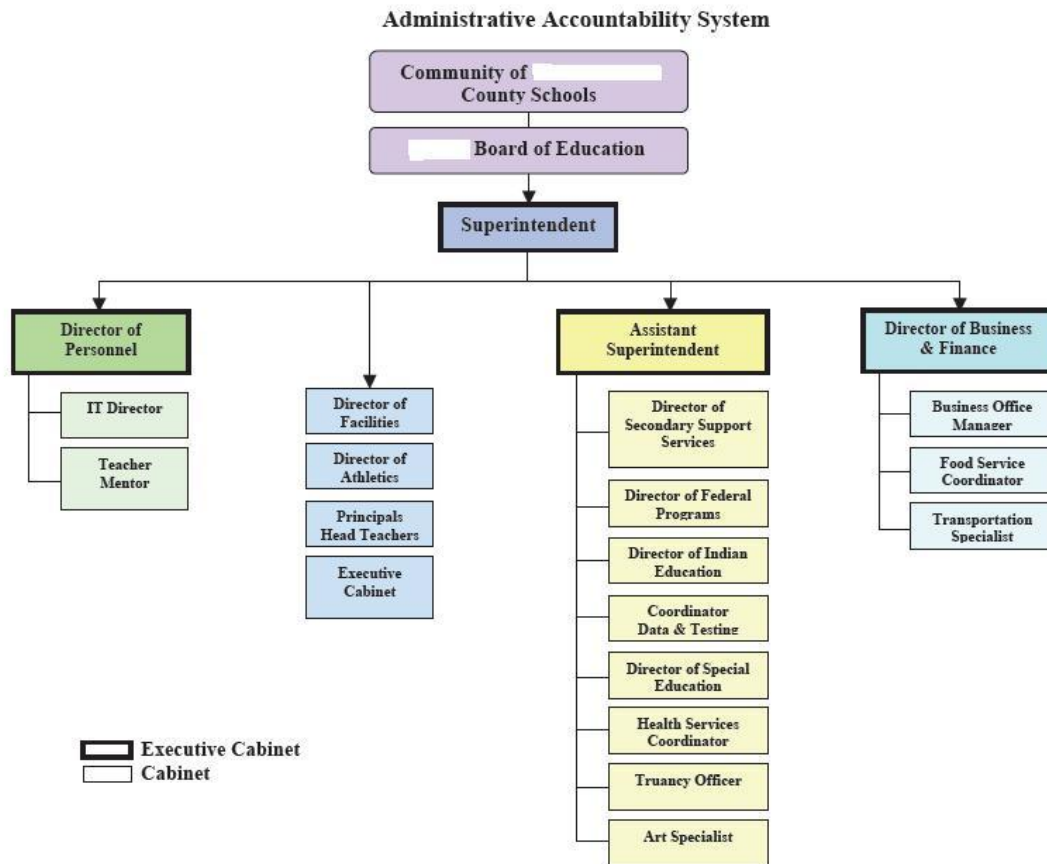
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<sup>38</sup> Pseudonyms are used for all participants and places mentioned in this study except prominent figures from the NM State government.

using the chain of command to ensure explicit permission for my presence from the building leader, the mediator of power, at each school. The hierarchy at Bison Meadows places the School Board above Mr. Landovazo, typical for school board operations, but in most cases reserves its authority. The five-member Board has consistently approved Mr. Landovazo's contract over the past 12 years and publically supports "the direction the district is taking under [Landovazo's] leadership" (DS, 2/10/09). The Bison Meadows School Board exercises its power to decide on personnel, budget, and policy issues with the strong guidance of Mr. Landovazo.

The evidence of organizational and individual power enacted at Bison Meadows is a byproduct of state power operating within the district. As the institution of schooling becomes more heavily obliged to implement the mandates of federal education law, the structures of power have become more compartmentalized to replicate a top-down, conformist system. Power, as it operates on varying levels at Bison Meadows, supports the role that state power plays in controlling the daily processes of schooling from running its business to educating its students.

Figure 2 Hierarchy of Power in Bison Meadows



Individual authority is acknowledged at the upper echelon of the district hierarchy, but teachers are not recognized within the Bison Meadows chain of command, therefore leaving them completely outside of the power sphere.

It seems as though on the macro level, this power is embodied within the NCLB legislation, which has been influenced by neoliberalism; at the state level, it represents pressures from both macro and micro levels. In the micro level within Bison Meadows School District, the power flows downward into the classrooms with students below the bottom rung and parents/ community relegated to the outside positions in the hierarchy trying to exert force or watching as decisions are made without their consultation. Joel, a teacher at Valley Vista provides support for this power structure when he talks about opportunities available for teachers in the school district:

**Joel:** Education works like any other business - the people at the top are in charge of EVERYTHING. I cannot think of one time when I as a teacher that I have had input into anything - curriculum, how the district is managed, nothing.  
(3/25/09, 50-52)

Joel mentions that the only real experience he has had with voicing his opinion is through the teachers' union; he also comments about how he is seen as a trouble maker because of his involvement with the union.

Another example of the ways teachers are often left out of the loop comes from Valley Vista teacher, Henrietta, as she describes the additional efforts it took to get representation on the Language Arts curriculum alignment committee at Bison Meadows:

**Henrietta:** I don't know how I heard that they were doing something or it was in the website and I spoke to our department head. And I said "don't you think you should be there?" and she said "what do you mean?" They're having a curriculum alignment meeting and we've got no representatives from [Valley Vista]. So I

went to the principal, or emailed her and I says that "I understand they're gonna be writing the curricula for the school district," I says "I think our, for Language Arts," I said "I think our department head should be there." So otherwise, I think if we hadn't done that we probably really wouldn't have been asked for any input.  
(4/2/09, 302-309)

As teachers whose daily work is affected by opportunities for their involvement in leadership within the school district, it appears that there are resistance efforts made by some teachers who are left out of the leadership loop. Without diligence on behalf of the teachers, teacher's aides, and parents, there is much that occurs in this district that goes unnoticed and becomes normalized.

The various committees and parent/community groups formed in Bison Meadows to promote parental involvement also represent the power structure of this model. One example of such a group demonstrates the formation of a top-down structure required under federal policy. In Bison Meadows, the Title VII Indian Parent Advisory Committee (Indian PAC) bylaws stipulate the governance structure to include three parent Co-Chairs, each representing one of the tribal entities in the School District and two student Co-Chairs, one from each high school or middle school. The purpose of this parent group is stated as follows:

To advise and assist in the planning, implementation and evaluation in the development of TITLE VII Indian Education Programs.

The Indian PAC will advise and assist in determining the most effective educational and cultural needs of the Indian students.

To provide students with continuous improvement and development in Indian studies and their academic achievement.

To implement the Indian Policies and Procedures (IPP), fulfill the requirements for receiving Impact Aid (Title VII) funds including tribal and parental responsibilities. (10/17/2007)

Although the stated objectives appear significant, the entity largely serves as an informational vehicle. A typical meeting of the Indian PAC includes family oriented social gatherings, coordinated by Ms. Chee, Bison Meadows Director of Indian Education, and formally organized by Robert's Rules of Order. Indian PAC members and officers sit and listen to presentations from district personnel and are asked to comment or vote on policy measures within a two hour period of time.

For example, at the January 14, 2009 Indian PAC meeting Ms. Chee presented attendees with 20 double-sided pages of written information – text, graphs, charts, and policies including the Indian Policies and Procedures (IPP) guidelines, federal Impact Aid application and data sets, Bison Meadows School Report Cards (compiled by the NM Public Education Department), and 2008 NM Standards Based Assessment (SBA) results. Parents and family members, community members, teachers, students, and the building administrator attended this meeting. The school cafeteria at the elementary hosting the meeting was filled as nearly 75 people crowded into the benches to partake in the free meal and listen to the information at hand. There were a significant number of smaller children (3-10 years old) in the audience who became restless as the meeting proceeded



and began crumpling their potato chip bags and moving from table to table, hence the opportunity for everyone in this crowded room to hear clearly was diminished.

Ms. Chee briefly presented each set of information either by power point (IPP and Impact Aid application) or verbally (School Report Cards and SBA results). There were brief clarifying questions from the assembly that Ms. Chee addressed before hastily asking for a motion to approve the IPP and then the Impact Aid application. The federal policies require parental involvement, but there was no real discussion of the issues included in the documents that parents voted on; it was impossible to ascertain whether these parents had a clear understanding of the documents within the timeframe given. Following the Rules of Order, Ms. Chee presented the information and quickly asked if there were any questions before asking for a motion to approve. Two parents from the Committee Board seconded the motion without any comment. When the issue is framed as Ms. Chee introduced with the intent that, “these [IPPs], we’ll sign our document tonight” (1/14/09), it becomes a discursive move to thwart further discussion.

It appeared that parent approval came from their silence in the midst of the piles of data in their hands and the involvement of parents in the process was documented by the signature they affixed to the sign in sheet before proceeding through the dinner line at the Indian PAC meeting. In other instances, parental approval is gained in much the same way – parents are invited to a gathering, as in the January 9, 2009 Impact Aid Public Hearing attended by three parents. This lack of parental participation is deemed consent through a process of neglect. Again, there was silence after the documents that needed approval were presented, thus indicating consent through silence. This information

gatekeeping strategy works well in Bison Meadows and there seems to be little resistance to its use in various situations.

Administrators' role as gatekeepers of information and power is salient at Bison Meadows. In their official capacity, they are the people who make every decision about managing the school district. Although teacher input is often "considered," the committees chosen to provide the teacher voice tend to rely on many of the same people most of the time. The Directors listed in the hierarchy are selected to lead the groups and often comprise the group membership in its entirety. Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Ms. Sisneros reported to the School Board that only she and three other Directors make up the District Restructuring Team for two of the largest schools, but that "Individual school teams should include staff, students and parents to develop alternate governance plans" (School Board Meeting, 4/13/09).

There are small consortiums of localized power within the schools and the people chosen for membership in these groups have inordinate power to shape the schools and the district decisions about programs, textbooks, curriculum, and even personnel matters. These chosen elite seem to have similar characteristics – white and/or Hispanic, long-standing community residents, personal and/or parental involvement in school district administration (legacy leadership), and are social or familial acquaintances. When I interviewed Marla, a very involved parent and employee of the school district, I asked her whether she had been included in one of these committees, her immediate reply was, "Neveerrrr! Never, ever" (7/9/10, 424). Marla relayed an example,

**Marla:** It was in November this past year um it was brought up that it was book adoption. And um a lot of the ladies [from the district Parent Advisory Committee] they were asking, that were at the meeting, were asking how they could be involved in helping pick books. And um the director basically said that they “have people who do that.”

**NM:** so they're offering their help, they're offering to be, to participate. And these ladies are like, parents?

**Marla:** m-hm. they're all, they are all parents who asked. And the Director of the, of the book adoption committee just said...they “have people who look for these books.” Even at the school that I work at - they have their own book committee. They never ever invite anybody else in, or they would never even think twice to even add in [a staff person] you know that's just not - I guess that's something that maybe, or we're just [staff], we're not anything that's really important (Chuckle).

**NM:** Even with people wanting to, expressing-- verbally saying "we want to do this" and just being shut down

**Marla:** yeah. (7/9/10, 426-438)

Oftentimes, high-ranking administrators at Bison Meadows had attended schools in the district as students – the superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals – and continue to exert individual power in spite of the state power that drives their mission. There is upward job mobility for a limited few, for example the current Director of Secondary Support Services worked his way up through the district ranks from the classroom to the administration; he was granted the authority to create his administrative

level position under the guidelines of NCLB in 2008. It is often these people who form and retain the blocs of power within Bison Meadows.

Some parents and community members question the motives of these Bison Meadows leaders as disingenuous displays of power and criticize the internal power alliances within the school district because of the limiting effects of these blocs. Outside of Ms. Chee, there is no Indigenous leadership represented in the upper echelons of the Bison Meadows School District administration; all of the people represented by this power bloc are white and/or Hispanic, though most have grown up within Bison Meadows County and attended the same schools. Henrietta, a district employee reflects on the operation of power in Bison Meadows,

**Henrietta:** And yet we have people educated on this side of the district running our schools on the west side - and you would think that they would see the discrepancies as far as allocation of monies, you know. I guess we thought that maybe one of our own in one of the power seats was gonna make a difference, and we see it hasn't. It's the money and everything is still controlled by one side of the district. (4/2/09, 32-35)

Also included in this critique of the power structure is the makeup of the school board. Out of the five Board members, one is a retired professional educator and the rest represent interests outside of education including small business, corporate business, and law enforcement.

An interesting division emerged through the data – the Bison Meadows School District is viewed in two distinct sides. There is both geographic and racialized

separation of these sides. The East Side is comprised of the two Pueblos and several small Hispanic villages while the West Side is comprised of the town of Caldera and includes the Navajo Chapter House. The racial demographics of the West Side are heavily representative of the “Spanish”/White population with an influx of both rural and urban Navajos. The East Side is heavily populated with rural “Spanish” and Pueblo villagers. A mestizaje exists on both sides, but alignment with the majority population of the side is often cited, as when students report being “Spanish” when they live in Caldera. Many of the students I spoke with at Lava Bluff report being bi-racial, while many students at Valley Vista report Indigenous identities even when they are indeed bi- or multi-racial. Participants of both sides, use “East Side” and “West Side” when referring to the district divisions, especially when there are contentious issues about adequate representation or resources for their respective sides.

There are two specific positions on the School Board meant to represent the interests of the two Pueblos in Bison Meadows County, currently both are held by Pueblo men. In addition to these two businessmen, the racial makeup of the School Board includes one white woman and two Hispanic men. The Navajo Chapter in Bison Meadows County does not have its own representative on the School Board, however, and is represented by one of the non-Native members elected based on district zones. The qualifications for serving on the School Board do not list involvement in the schools in any manner as a requirement. The most important feature of School Board membership seems to be having residence within the zone each member wishes to represent. The School Board is an elected entity voted in by County elections; its

members serve staggered terms. David, a local community member comments on the composition:

**David:** the thing about what I see is that with the Boards that we have, I think those that are in the field of education are the primary people who should represent our community. Based on the teacher in the classroom - they know what the needs of the student, where they're at, the parents, and also within the administration. I believe these people are the ones that should sit on the board, based on their knowledge and experience within the school setting. You know, I really, I would strongly see that we get that we get these educators into the school board. (4/2/09, 35-41)

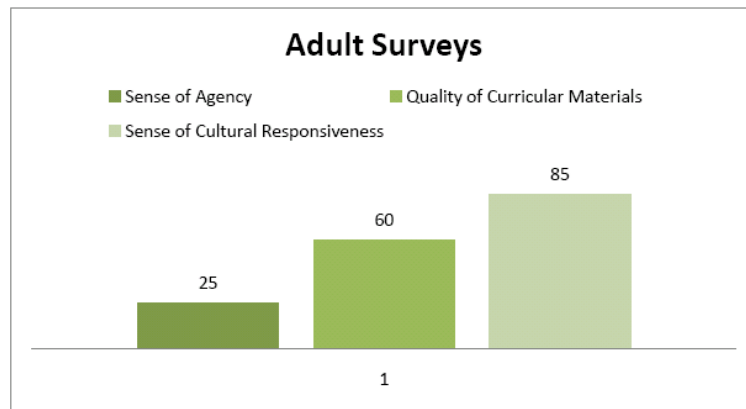
People living and working in the school district observe and perceive variations of unfairness in the existing power structures. But their agency is limited by opportunities to act upon the manifestations of power they witness in and around Bison Meadows School District by the very structures they critique.

As I examined the results of the surveys, the trends demonstrated an absence of a sense of power on behalf of the faculty and staff with many respondents. I designed these surveys for the main purpose of helping to understand trends in the schools from participants' perspectives; the surveys also allowed me to seek interview participants. I used the survey data along a nominal scale. I identified three categorical variables defined by survey question themes; the measure of central tendency represented by the mode within set membership of responses indicating agreement for each question theme. Examples of questions from the adult scale theme include a sense of agency indicated by

an “agree” or “strongly agree” response to: “I feel that teachers make decisions about curriculum offered in this school district.” Likewise, adults indicated a sense of cultural responsiveness (on their part) by indicating agreement with prompts such as: “I think schools in this district take all local communities into consideration when creating/implementing curriculum.” For student surveys, themed categorical variables included their responses to prompts such as “I get to decide what I want to learn about in school.” Although for student surveys, the sense of identity in the curriculum presented difficulties in that my categorical variable set produced false positive results because questions of opposing natures were both present within the theme, such as: “I would like to learn more about my culture in school” alongside other questions like “I learn about the history of my own culture at school.” The issue could have been resolved with the addition of a fourth variable entitled “Absence of Identity in Curriculum.”

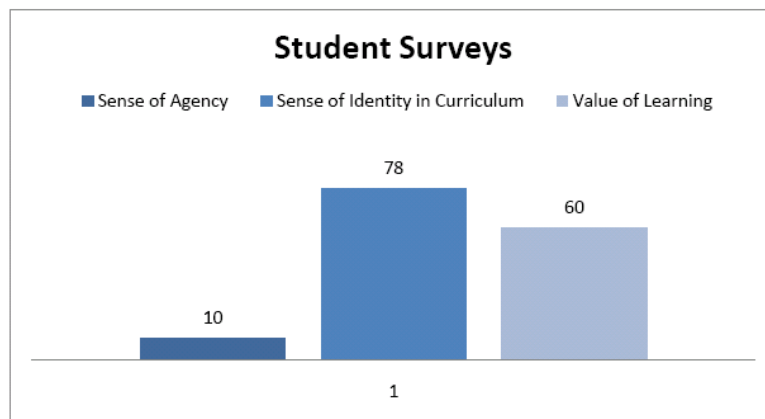
The surveys indicated strong tendencies to place decision making authority with entities such as the School Board, Federal Government, State Government, and/or school administrators. Very few respondents claimed to have decision making authority as parents, community members, or classroom teachers. Overall, respondents favored the textbook materials and felt that the students brought valuable knowledge with them from home. Figure 3 below provides quantitative evidence of some Adult perceptions about school and curriculum.

Figure 3 Percentages of Adult Respondents to Themes



Student surveys indicated their general satisfaction with what and how they are experiencing the curriculum in their classrooms. Many students indicated the absence of opportunities to make their own choices about curricular materials and they also indicated a desire to experience more and varied types of curriculum. Figure 4 below provides quantitative evidence of some student perceptions about school and curriculum:

Figure 4 Percentages of Respondents to Main Themes





The manifestations of power that exist in the Bison Meadows School District often result from mechanisms of state power that shape schooling. I now shift to examples of legislation to demonstrate the operation of *state power* in Bison Meadows.

According to the state of New Mexico Public Education Department, Valley Vista High School was a “School in need of improvement” after failing to meet the AYP goals during school year 2005-2006; Valley Vista reached the level of “Corrective Action” following the 2007-08 school year and slipped into the dreaded “Restructuring” phase 1 in the 2009-2010 school year. Likewise, Lava Bluff High School reached the “Restructuring” level in 2008-2009 after receiving the same state sanctions since first missing AYP in 2004-05. These designations, introduced by NCLB legislation and adopted as common language by the State of New Mexico and the Bison Meadows School District, are accepted as logical phases of daily operation. The compulsory sanction categories are reified by their insistence as official language of the state:

**Elementary & Secondary Act [NCLB] District Summary - What happens if a school does not make AYP?**

- After 1st year of not making AYP – the school, in partnership with its district

and local community, will be encouraged to:

- (a) perform a data analysis to determine why it did not make AYP,
- (b) amend its Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS), and
- (c) further develop and implement strategies to improve student

achievement. In addition, the Public Education Department (PED)

will provide technical assistance, as requested, during this process.

- After 2nd Year of not making AYP (designated School Improvement I) – the school must develop an improvement plan and offer parents the option to choose a school that is not in School Improvement.
- After 3rd Year of not making AYP (designated School Improvement II) – the school must provide supplemental education services (SES) such as after school programs, tutoring and summer services, based on budget availability. The school must also continue to offer school choice and provide transportation or pay the cost of transportation, based upon budget availability, for students who choose to enroll in a school that is not in School Improvement.
- After 4th Year of not making AYP (designated Corrective Action) – in addition to the requirements listed above the school and district must also implement one or more of the following: replace staff as allowed by law, implement a new curriculum, decrease management authority of the public school, appoint an outside expert to advise the public school, extend the school day or year, and change the public school’s internal organizational structure.
- After 5th Year of not making AYP (designated Restructuring I) – in addition to the requirements listed above, the school, district and PED must develop a plan including one or more of the following actions: re-open the public school as a charter school, replace all or most of the staff, as allowed by

law, turn over the management of the public school to the PED, and make other governance changes.

- After 6th year of not making AYP (designated Restructuring II) – in addition to the requirements listed above, the school, district and PED must implement the plan developed in Restructuring I.

**How can a school be removed from improvement status?** By reaching AYP targets for two consecutive years.

(<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AcademicGrowth/DistrictReportCards.html>)

In the new stance on federal education law, under the Obama administration, the NCLB has been reconstituted and its original moniker, “Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA)” reinstated. The threats of NCLB and its mandated state takeover still loom for schools and their personnel, however. ESEA still serves as a motivator for reform to meet the needs of the state accountability measures. The head of New Mexico’s Public Education Department decries AYP as an unfair measure of progress by stating: “I would like to remind our parents, students, teachers, administrators, community members, and state leaders that AYP is only one tool and is a very narrow and sometimes unfair measure of success and progress,” while she simultaneously lauds those schools able to make AYP goals and sets them as examples for all New Mexico schools to follow: “I also want to congratulate every student, teacher, parent, principal, superintendent, and Board of Education member of schools that made AYP in 2008. We will be looking to you for best practices” (Garcia, AYP Announcement [Public Address],

August 1, 2008). The state power evident in federal education law remains, despite subtle and confusing changes in expression.

The language of the state has become the common language of schools in Bison Meadows; we speak of progress using terms like AYP, accountability, proficiency, school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring - all based on the measures and sanctions defined by the federal NCLB Act and adopted as current education jargon. These terms have become so commonplace, that they now shape and define a commonsense approach to educating our children. The New Mexico Public Education Department has provided numerous ways to help the public make sense of the technicalities of its legislation. Secretary of Education, Veronica Garcia states: "...there are 37 ways to miss AYP. A school that has missed by three indicators for three years and a school that misses by 30 indicators for three years are labeled and progress through the corrective action system the same" ("2008 AYP Announcement," Mabry Hall, Santa Fe, NM, August 1, 2008, Public Address). Figure 4 below provides a visual display of Secretary Garcia's line of reasoning; it lists each performance indicator and its matching population sub-group:

Figure 5 AYP Indicators Matrix

## There Are 37 Possible Ways Schools Must Make AYP

*(Miss One Area and the School Does Not Make AYP)*

Population	Reading Participation	Reading Achievement	Math Participation	Math Achievement	Other Indicator
All Students	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
Native American	Met	Met	Met	Met	The other indicator for high schools is the graduation rate. The other indicator for elementary and middle schools is attendance rate. Additional indicator applies to the whole school.
Asian / Pacific Islander	Met	Met	Met	Met	
Hispanic	Met	Met	Met	Met	
Black	Met	Met	Met	Met	
White	Met	Met	Met	Met	
Students with Disabilities	Met	Met	Met	Met	
ELL	Met	Met	Met	Met	
FRL	Does Not Meet	Met	Met	Met	

These high-stakes measures of accountability have indeed affected Bison Meadows schools, hitting the District hard, as both of its high schools enter into “Restructuring” sanctions. Such measures are unfair, as Secretary Garcia speaks of the harshness of the AYP indicators, stating: “Calculations are also unforgiving meaning that if a school misses by only one student or a tenth of a percent toward the achievement target, they will not meet AYP” (August 1, 2008, Public Address).

Learning in New Mexico is now defined as a student’s ability to attend school on test days, test proficiently in the areas of Reading and Mathematics, and graduate high school within a state-defined 4-year cohort window. Teachers have grown increasingly frustrated as they experience their classrooms taken over by testing and their students begin to internalize its effect, as indicated by ArtDawg:

**AD:** well, um, you know the emphasis on test scores. Everything is geared toward the test scores, but you know I think some of the provisions of No Child Left Behind, such as the testing, I don't think really benefits the students. But there has been a lot of money put into the schools and it's where the professional development has come from. (02/02/09; 42-44)

ArtDawg is a white woman who has been teaching high school students at reservation schools for 21 years. She self-selected her pseudonym for this study. ArtDawg reports that she consciously attempts to implement a culturally relevant curriculum in her Humanities content area but found it overshadowed by directives to carry out a school-wide standardized curriculum in order to achieve AYP. She was upbeat and talked about her attachment to the students and her efforts to engage students in culturally relevant ways of knowing and seeing the world; she explained that she learns from them as much as they do from her:

**AD:** well, we're in a very unique situation, where you-- now like, like Native American cultural would be multicultural for other places, but it's not multicultural for our place like that. Let me give you like a real specific example. When I'm teaching how to draw portraits, I teach how to draw the facial features, and so I, so when I teach how to draw the facial features, I teach Native American features. So that when they're done doing their portrait, we have a bunch of Native American faces looking back at us (bubbly laughter) as opposed to like European type features, you know what I mean? So yes, that's one way I've taken

what I've learned, myself, personally and have adjusted it so it more addresses, you know, their world. (119-125)

ArtDawg lamented the changes she has experienced while teaching over the past 11 years at Valley Vista High School, stating: “the landscape of education has really changed.” When referring to new challenges in teaching, she considered herself to be “really open minded to it and I would feel like there's room for improvement and so I, I do really do try to um be a good team player and be a good soldier, and um get these successes going,” (02/02/09, 229-231) but states that she doesn't even remember when or how the change to more testing and more structured curriculum happened. She just knew that she'd been working really hard to implement all these changes in her classroom to help the kids succeed.

**AD:** ...I can give a practical example...writing scores are low, so everybody needs to work on improving these kids writing scores, so they want to implement having a journal entry or 5-minute writing activity in all your classes...I found a resource of bell-bell ringers, we call them bell-ringers...and they're on art subjects, um so they're talking about art, they're thinking about art, they're writing about art...I've taken my 5 minutes a day and applied it to where it also benefits my curriculum, too. (02/02/09, 243-247)

This demonstrates the subtle nature of state power in education, as it infiltrates the consciousness of even the most seasoned professionals and becomes second-nature, imposing in our memories that this was the way it has always been done. The first time I visited ArtDawg's classroom, in September 2008, she engaged students in visual displays

of art works from across the globe and students were enrapt in the content – the white board was covered with artistic images and student work. The next time I visited her classroom in May 2010, I walked into the room expecting the same type of engagement with art projects but instead I found the usually airy classroom physically divided between the strictly “Art” section and the crammed rows of desks in front of a white board, the “study” section. Students appeared disengaged in the rote task of non-content related vocabulary work, as part of the school-wide Read 180 curriculum focus.

ArtDawg had a list of words written on the white board in the cramped study section and students followed scripted instructions about how to define and use the words in sentences. There was still art content, but the literacy content took precedence as a result of the shift to accommodate AYP goals.

On the day of my follow up interview with ArtDawg, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, made an announcement about new funding available under the new “Race to the Top” incentive for failing schools.<sup>39</sup> New Mexico’s Public Education Department published a list of schools in New Mexico eligible to for apply for this grant. ArtDawg immediately asked if I’d seen “the list of 35 failing schools” and talked about how

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<sup>39</sup> Under President Obama, the United States’ Department of Education has created funding incentives to reform public schools across the nation. The four main areas of interest for this grant money include: “Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.” Please see the Department of Education website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>



disheartening that was for her and for the kids because they were really upset by it. “Can you imagine having your school be on that kind of list?” she wondered, and “what does that say about you?” She said, “the kids were really bummed, they took it hard” and she talked about how that could affect them negatively and damage their outlook toward school. “I mean, I thought we were doing good, really working to make change by bringing about best practices and all that.” She worked to reframe it more positively for the kids so they wouldn’t be so down on themselves.

ArtDawg was obviously upset by this distinction given to Valley Vista High School, but tried to counter it by helping her students take ownership of their futures by encouraging them to make “changes in what their school is like and how they approach it,” she said it was up to them “to make a difference for your younger brothers and sisters, siblings, nieces and nephews, you know everyone else who comes after you.” She hoped to “help them to be proactive and to own the distinction in a different way rather than just having someone come and name their school for them, they could make it something for themselves” (3/8/10). In this example, the authority of the state usurped the power to name and placed Valley Vista High School among the worst performing schools in the country based on what the state defined as sound educational practice: students’ ability to attend school on test days, test proficiently in the areas of Reading and Mathematics, and graduate high school within a state-defined 4-year cohort window.

Although Secretary Garcia admonishes the power of the state in this regard, referring to “the much needed changes to the NCLB Act,” she also pleads with New Mexicans by stating: “We cannot let the AYP label continue to destroy public confidence

in our schools and continue to demoralize our teachers and students. I implore schools and communities to not get discouraged by a lower AYP rating” (August 1, 2008, Public Address). After all, it was federal legislation that set the rules, made the playing field, and chose all of the moves by which Valley Vista High School could maneuver, and then penalized the school for failing to make the 37 leaps required annually for AYP.

SoulHistorian, a white teacher at Lava Bluff High School who self-selected his pseudonym, reflects on the way state power shapes his curriculum and alters his pedagogical framework. He uses a fitting metaphor as he describes teaching under the NCLB mandates:

**SH:** Sometimes it’s a hard sell to educators 'cause you get the older ones who say, "I've been through this, they've reworded it, renamed it, I don't think we're gonna like it." And very often, they’re right, they're not just complaining, they're right, this didn't work. And why did we retry it again when it didn't work two or three times, why did we try it? Well a new governor, new educational this, new president saying "No Child Left Behind" you know let's pump 97% of our funds into 3% of the kids, you know and or let's pump, let's pump 50% into this and the other 50% into that. And "oh, scores aren’t coming out right or the percentages are wrong" or you know "this group needs more attention," or "this one's at risk" and so "let's alter the recipe again" and a lot of us just say, with what happens in my classroom I can control, and you know, I'll try and teach them, and sometimes I'll use the tools you've given me, but you know I'm shoveling snow with a fork.

The state has given me a fork to shovel snow 'cause that's what I'm supposed to do

today, so the curriculum says, and no, I'm gonna use my shovel that I've had since I started because it's this wide (motions), you know but as soon as you come around I'll probably pull out the fork out and I'll be out there, you know, but I'm gonna use the shovel because the shovel is what gets things done. And even the kids will look at us and they say "why are you using a fork to shovel snow?" because I'm supposed to, it'll improve your scores. And they're looking at me like, "what?! That doesn't sound like you." (2/7/10, 137-154)

He talks about the ethical pull between outward professionalism and the exercise of personal agency to truly affect learning in his classroom. Educators in Bison Meadows and across the United States are being forced to negotiate these decisions, of course for some being led along the path forced by state power is easy, but for critical educators, finding a balance and resisting the push toward deskilling (Apple, 1995; 2003) is more difficult.

Soul Historian explains the internal debate teachers must encounter in their struggles to exercise agency. In their daily work, amidst all of the other decisions and responsibilities, the power of the state has forced teachers to make decisions regarding curriculum in ways that we are not prepared for in teacher education. He captures this struggle eloquently with another metaphor,

**SH:** I almost feel like a Buddhist, you know the Middle Path, you know, I don't know if you know anything about Buddhism, but you know there's those two extremes that I guess you can go to and it's human nature to go to. But the

middle seems to be, you know, at times, you know the fork may seem to be the thing to use other times, most often it seems the shovel that I've found most useful. But kind of in between is you know, I can I can make use of tools that I've made that I've used years ago that they provided for me, um, I guess its just do what works but also do what is required of me. Now, now there's paperwork, there's tests to do, there's fire drills, there are assemblies for social events, there are there are things in the course of the day that you have to do to get through to get through the day, and that you enjoy doing, the kids enjoy doing, and there's also those things that you don't like doing but you have to look at it every once in a while, you know, ok where am I - where am I in the curriculum where and I supposed to be today? Ok, I'm behind - I'm always behind! I'm always behind, but yet the kids are getting a foundation of knowledge, they're seeing me smile, I'm enjoying what I'm doing, they seem to be responding well to it, but then again, you don't always somebody might say "we did an exit interview with your students today, and yeah, they enjoyed your smile and they really liked, what-- your story, but if these were the objectives, they didn't get it" and then so you have to say "ok, maybe there's something to these theoretical ways of doing things, maybe I'm only getting to a few kids when I should be getting to more of them. Maybe I need to be using that fork, because with the fork, maybe you need to spend the time, instead of just broad sweeps of shoveling this and making that path, maybe you need to maybe you need to be specific to a group or a learning style, maybe you need to slow down a bit, maybe I need to wonder why they gave

me a fork for such a huge job. And sometimes I will examine that; I'll say why did they give me a fork? And some--every once in a while I come to the realization that "Aha, ok its useful, not always, and not what I thought it was used for, maybe I should look at the manual - 'use this fork for this' - I was using it to shovel snow! That's not what it was intended for. But then very often I'll go and I'll look through it and it says "when it snows heavily, use the fork" and I'm thinking "ugh! Not the best tool." (2/8/10, 167-194)

Soul Historian aptly demonstrates the unrelenting and pervasive nature of state power as it becomes inscribed in the consciousness of educators and students alike. He points out that even though we know that implementing the mandates of NCLB are not always best for our students, we are forced to adopt them into our practice. It is important to note however, that like many other critical educators, he has carved out spaces of resistance in his classroom, but must maintain a subversive stance when it comes to responding to the authority of the state policies.

Teachers, staff, students, and texts have adopted this language of NCLB in classrooms, daily conversations, and publications at Valley Vista High School. Benita is a Native woman, new to Valley Vista and a first year teacher. She describes how the discourse has shifted at her school in response to NCLB after we had engaged in an earlier conversation, off record, about a controversy involving the ways teachers refer to students by their testing categorizations:

**Benita:** I believe that the school has been affected in the sense that we have changed the way that the teacher's style is going to be conducted in the classroom,

the way that we, that the school [determines] the classroom structure. It's leading us toward meeting scores of raising of the Adequate Yearly Progress and meeting all these guidelines, and I'm not saying that's at the complete expense of knowing these students as individuals, but I believe that it's a large portion of it.

**NM:** you touched upon an issue of maybe conflict or potential conflict between achieving these test scores and achieving these standardized norms and knowing students as individuals. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Benita:** Sure. What I've noticed at the school, and I'm not too sure how common this actually is, that many of the students – instead of being referenced by their actual names, they've been given sort of numbers, in terms of the actual score that they've made in class, or their class ranking. And, so depending on “we need 13 number of students in order to get like something number of blank in order to pass.” And I understand that all those facts and figures need to be discussed, but I've seen more of the exception of how the meet actual students' needs and their ability to like, learn-- learn effectively in the classroom. And I believe the good side of that, is that I don't know if there's a direct correlation, because I haven't been here too long, but to see how, but I definitely know that the test scores have gradually decreased. (2/12/09, 23-35)

This state constructed and endorsed language has infiltrated our consciousness so that educators speak of “making sure that our students make AYP” (LW, 8/5/2009) instead of focusing on learning. Students now represent numbers or sub-groups and are often referred to as “bubble kids” by teachers and administrators as the new rhetoric

influenced by AYP to indicate their status as nearly proficient – or in need of extra support in order to help the school make AYP.<sup>40</sup>

When students are lumped into these sub-groups, discourse around their identities is shaped by their test performance, as one district employee recalls:

**Marla:** And I often wonder how those kids feel; I often wonder if the kids are being treated the same way because the remark of “the Native Americans are the ones bringing the schools down.” I wonder how they are being treated then because that's, that is the truth - Native Americans are put in a subgroup and they are said that we are failing; and that all of these Native American kids that come to this school, “if they weren't there we'd probably be making AYP.” (7/9/10, 110-114)

Marla is acutely aware of the disparaging comments she has heard from teachers, school personnel, and other parents in the Caldera schools about the perception that Native American students are the cause of schools' poor AYP status. Due to the racial subcategories that report testing data, raw scores and percentages are often misconstrued when interpreting data. Additionally, schools report their achievements in Bison Meadows using this discourse and are often labeled by their affiliation with one of the sub-groups identified on the “37 Ways to Miss AYP” chart. (The racialization of students embedded in this discourse is presented in the “Historical Factors” section later

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<sup>40</sup> See National Education Association publication by Hart (2010), “Is NCLB Intentionally Leaving Some Kids Behind?” for a discussion on the trend of “bubble kids.”

in this chapter.) Every time one of the schools came before the Bison Meadows School Board to report progress, the discussion always returned to AYP and what the school was doing to meet their AYP goals – improving truancy, working on parent involvement, raising the certification level of teachers, more testing, more reading programs, and more math programs were frequently reported as practices the Bison Meadows schools adopted.

For example, when the Board requested progress updates from schools in October 2008, Valley Vista was ready to demonstrate its adherence to NCLB measures of success. The school principal offered the Valley Vista solution to AYP progress, at the School Board meeting, as follows:

**Mrs. Fields:** We're testing in math every two weeks and the students follow their progress on graphs. Our campus improvement team is examining viable alternative education programs and we're planning more frequent parents' meetings. (10/21/08)

Of course, it's not enough to tout the programmatic changes; the Board insisted on results as Board member TM reminded the attendees at that same meeting, "VVHS hasn't made AYP in two years! We need a sense of urgency about this problem!" (10/21/08).

The jargon of NCLB has also been adopted by the Bison Meadows School Board. Again, Board member TM expresses his concern, at the School Board meeting, over the expectations of investing money into a "failing" middle school in the district:

**TM:** We're spending \$24,000 per student?? It's worth it to do [a feasibility study] - and we're not making AYP but yet we're spending a whole bunch of money?!



...but you know from a financial perspective *alone*, I think that it almost justifies it there in and of itself, you know. The fact that they're not making AYP...

(10/21/08)

This newly adopted lexicon has come to represent the power embedded in the federal legislation to change the ways educators think about and respond to schooling. An added layer of federal control is also part of the urgency TM called for in his critique of the status quo at Valley Vista High School. It is the threat of further state sanctions and privatization.

The threats of losing federal funding, being publically ostracized and taken over by the State are real and have become the driving forces behind the way education is done at Bison Meadows. Although the Bison Meadows Assistant Superintendent of Instruction dismisses the threat by stating: "When a school is in the Restructuring I phase, corrective action is needed and the district should have had help from the PED...The state has already said that it doesn't have the personnel to take over any schools, so now the state will train the local trainers" (CG, 4/13/09).

These sentiments resound with school administrators and faculty across the district, LW pleads with colleagues assembled at a faculty meeting to "please be mindful of the state standards and benchmarks; remember you are supposed to post them in your [class]rooms. We need to make sure our kids, our students, make AYP. We don't want to be taken over by the State" (8/20/08). The power of this NCLB rhetoric is palpable as it shapes curricula to align with "accountability measures" otherwise known as standardized testing. State mandated reliance on testing continues to affect the ways schools approach

every facet of schooling – testing dates for the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA) drive the school calendar, scope and sequencing of curriculum, extra-curricular activity plans, professional development, school repair schedules, and fiscal budgeting. For example, the State of New Mexico mandates when and under what conditions SBA can be given at schools; there is a limited testing window and the scripts for teachers proctoring these tests cannot be altered. Bison Meadows set aside 6 full days for testing in April 2009.

As expressed by Joel, a History teacher at Valley Vista, the level of frustration with testing encountered by teachers and students alike is unfair. He describes how testing assumes control over his agency in the classroom and defines his curriculum:

**Joel:** Well that's important, that's historically relevant, and that's something I would teach in my class -- around a month before school ended. But here it was on the standardized test we were taking we were still a month away from that [content] so of course, the kids knew nothing about that. It would have been incredibly valuable to know that this was part of the test material so that I could change my structure and hit that structure and hit that material before the testing. So the next year, I told the kids “ok, we're only to World War I, but I've gotta jump ahead a few years because this is coming up on the standardized test.”

(3/25/09, 64-69)

Testing is a recurring theme in all aspects of schooling at Bison Meadows. It has become functional in any conversation about schooling, at any level, with any person.

Testing is now an inescapable feature in the landscape of education and has been infused

in the daily language of schooling, sometimes used interchangeably with “accountability” so one has come to represent the other. Testing is the single most important measure of success for schools in Bison Meadows so much so that it shapes curriculum and it defines the new expectations of effective teaching. Joel comments on the divisive nature of testing and how it creates a culture of distrust between administrators and teachers:

**Joel:** Now they don't want you to teach to the test, but then what's the purpose of the test? You know, um I would love some guidance, I really would, but it, as a teacher, you feel like your supervisors think that you're trying to cheat. I just want to teach the kids what I'm supposed to teach the kids, it's amazing how 30 years ago, the relationship between the teacher and the administrator was like this: 'we tell you what to teach, you decide how to teach it.' Now everything is upside down and backwards; they want to tell us HOW to teach, but they don't want to tell us WHAT to teach... So, I'm frustrated... (3/25/09, 69-73)

It has become increasingly difficult for teachers to exercise agency in their classrooms because there is so much pedagogical management to contend with on a daily basis. Issues of power have infiltrated the daily existence of teachers and students in different ways.

The effects of power reach every level of schooling in the Bison Meadows School District. Sometimes the manifestations of power are subtle and become enacted by daily performances, but at other times the evidence of power is obtrusive and demands attention. The forms of power that operate in Bison Meadows School District represent this entire spectrum from the individual creation and maintenance of authority to the

overarching pressures of legislation. At each point on this continuum however, state power has influenced the structures of schooling at all levels at Bison Meadows. The following sections detail ways that state power functions through ideology, history, and policy to shape curriculum at Bison Meadows School District.

### **Historical Factors that Impact Bison Meadows County**

Struggles that define the educational landscape in the Bison Meadows School District have existed for years. Students who attend Bison Meadows schools experience hidden racism in various ways and from different positions on the spectrum. As the results indicate, many former students continue to experience these effects as adults. The following section demonstrates various attempts to address the historical inequities of the school district from different individuals and groups. I begin with a brief discussion to situate the border-town phenomenon that occurs in Caldera, where Bison Meadows School District is located. This phenomenon is then used to illustrate the hidden animosities manifested in current and historical issues in and around Caldera. This section concludes with evidence to demonstrate the impact of historical factors on schooling in Bison Meadows' two high schools.

**Border-town racism, Part I.** In New Mexico, evidence of reservation border-town violence reached epic proportions in 1974 with the horrific racially motivated murders of three Navajo men. News media portrayed this practice as “Indian rolling,” a term used to describe harassment and abuse of Native peoples, as a regular occurrence in a city located at the outskirts of Navajo Nation homelands in northwestern New Mexico

(Banish, 2004). As reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report of the 1974 murders,

The attack...added to an alarming litany of violent crimes against American Indians that is not unique to this region of northwestern New Mexico. Violence against American Indians, much of it motivated by racial hatred, is a pervasive yet obscure problem that is especially prevalent in so-called “border towns” – majority-white cities abutting reservations – where cultures clash against the historical backdrop of institutionalized racism, cultural subjugation, and genocide. (Buchanan, 2006, p. 2)

Media attention spotlighted this racial violence and dubbed the city “Selma, Alabama of the Southwest” (Buchanan, 2006; Yazzie qtd. in NMAC-USCCR, 2005). Indigenous leaders and citizens demanded immediate action. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights responded with an investigation in that same year and in 1975 released a scathing report detailing the social, political and economic inequities existing in that city (NMAC-USCCR, 2005). Such inequities have also reached the reservations that bound Caldera. I provide evidence of two different types of federal Civil Rights claims in Bison Meadows to exemplify two separate issues in the discussion of disproportionate allocation of school funding.

**Historical court cases.** The first issue revolves around a civil lawsuit filed by members of Indigenous communities against the Bison Meadows School District (at that time known as Caldera Municipal Schools) in 1976.

*U.S. Office for Civil Rights Case.* Charges against the school district included inequitable funding practices between its two component Junior/Senior High Schools. After four years of federal investigations, the court found a severe discrepancy in funding of Valley Vista High School (located on Pueblo homelands) compared to funding of Lava Bluff High School (located in the town of Caldera). As a former student and current employee of Bison Meadows, Henrietta recounts the impact felt by students that still lingers -

**Henrietta:** I was born within the school district. I've been educated by the school district and what I've seen is that we've always had to settle for seconds - for everything that [we need] both financially and [academically] - we're always second choice...like the orphan child. And...they thought [we] didn't have that learning capacity [at Valley Vista] that they say the west side of the district did have and so we were just given very minimum. Not just textbooks, um sports equipment, activities...budget. We were held to limits that I would say the other schools were not held to. (4/2/09, 18-23)

Indeed, students experienced significant differences in the quality of their educational programs, as the calculations broke down to a per pupil comparison of \$38.39 at the reservation schools and \$802.82 at the municipal schools. The case was finally settled in 1980 when the US Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found that Bison Meadows “did not provide Equal Educational opportunities for [Pueblo] students” (Cheromiah, 2004, p. 124). Unfortunately, as Henrietta points out, “Thirty years hasn't changed much, as far as I'm concerned. We still don't have the same number of classes, the same type of

classes offered, we're still held to limitations as far as textbooks, sports equipment, [and] curriculum” (4/2/09, 29-30). She laments the realities of enduring those hardships when she was a student thirty years ago and continuing to experience the inequities as an adult, despite the OCR decision. Henrietta expresses her disappointment, “it's a shame to say it hasn't changed. It's still the same” (4/2/09, 31-32).

This perception is evidenced by current students, teachers, community members, and has been discussed by the Bison Meadows School Board. In Bison Meadows, comparisons between the two high schools are often observed by Valley Vista constituents but not very often by those from Lava Bluff. At times, the noted absence of programs from Valley Vista that are offered at Lava Bluff has become contentious. School board member TM noted that academic support programs weren't in place at [Valley Vista] High School that were offered at Lava Bluff, he states, “This shows inequities between the two high schools and it's worth it for the board to look into the situation,” (School Board Meeting, 9/22/08). In this case, the GRADS (Graduation Reality and Dual-Role Skills) program was in the initial stages of implementation at Lava Bluff but students at Valley Vista did not have access to any commensurate program for pregnant and parenting students. These issues of inequities in programs and quality of educational experience have been expressed by parents and students regarding their choice of enrollment at Lava Bluff over Valley Vista. Boo, a recent graduate of Lava Bluff describes the factors that led to her decision to attend Lava Bluff:

**Boo:** I just knew that I needed the challenge and I knew from like my sister [who had attended Lava Bluff] that I wouldn't get it at the other high school.

(8/9/10, 48-49)

Delilah, an educator and a Native parent who chose to send her children to Lava Bluff over Valley Vista, despite great hardships states:

**Delilah:** I chose [Lava Bluff] because I thought it was more challenging...and there was more variety of classes that they could choose from, than ...at [Valley Vista]

**NM:** OK. So when you say challenging, can you talk a little bit about what you mean by that?

**Delilah:** they offered them classes where they could go to the University - New Mexico State... and the teachers were there to help them and they encouraged them... they offered more challenging [approaches]...it was the same subject but [the teachers] tried to push them to the next level and it was, I thought it was more challenging, whereas from what I hear, the school at [VV]... [teachers] weren't really encouraging them to achieve higher. And I've [heard] that from several parents, so, it was on my mind when I was choosing which school to send them to.

**NM:** so you had the choice. And did you have to go out of your way to make the choice that you did?

**Delilah:** yes, it was really hard, it wasn't hard, but it was something I chose to do. I had to transport my kids, there was no bus transporting them up there.

Everything was out of our own pockets, provide for them to get up there, it was



gas, the vehicle and what not. And I did get some like, people thought I was too good for them, because I was sending my kids away from [the Pueblo] - to the other school, but was only because I wanted what was best for my kids. (8/6/09, 22-48)

Other parents from the Valley Vista side of the school district have echoed similar sentiments about the differences between the two high schools and how that awareness has influenced their decisions about which school to choose for their children. In an interview, Daisy commented about having the choice as a high school-aged student and consciously choosing to attend Lava Bluff because of the perception that it was somehow better, academically. She said that her son wanted to attend Lava Bluff, but without transportation, her family just could not accommodate his choice of schools:

**Daisy:** I think a lot of his choice to attend the other school within the district was a lot of influence among peers - that one school is better than the other. And I think a lot of the students get this from the parents. Their parents say that “one school is better than the other.” I think that’s what influenced his decision on that and so he was a little disappointed when he was not able to get into the school of his choice. He kinda thought as “well I’ll settle for this” [school, Valley Vista]. (45-52, 2/26/10)

These divisions are evident in the discourse of the Bison Meadows community, as the district is often referred to by parents and community members in two divisions: the east side and the west side, with Lava Bluff High School and the town of Caldera making up the west side of the district and Valley Vista and the Pueblos making up the east side

of the district. Many of the families from the east side opt for Valley Vista out of convenience and the hope that things will change or balance out for their children. However none of the families from the west side opt for Valley Vista; as a matter of fact, that option was never mentioned by any participants of this study at all. The OCR ruling weighs on the perceptions of many people from the east side of the district, but another ruling weighs on the perceptions of the west side.

*U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Impact Aid Funding.* The second issue involves a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that upholds the school funding formula used in New Mexico. References to the State equalization formula frequently appear in public addresses given by Superintendent Landovazo and are an ongoing discussion with the School Board as a crucial issue for Bison Meadows School District to pursue. Under state law, the funding in New Mexico public schools is based on the SEG or State Equalization Guarantee.<sup>41</sup> In 2000 two NM school districts, Zuni Public School District and Gallup-McKinley County Public School District, filed an objection against the NM Public Education Department (PED) claiming that the SEG was being inappropriately used to calculate funding in their schools, which relied heavily on Impact Aid monies

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<sup>41</sup> The 1974 NM Public School Finance Act (22-8-17 through 25) [NMSA] established the SEG funding formula to be applied across the state (Mondragon & Stapleton, 2005). It was updated in 1994, to allow an alternate method of calculation to certify “equalization” under the law. The SEG uses the 1994 formula that eliminates the top and bottom 5% school districts’ expenditures in the state then applies the formula to the remaining districts to compare whether there is a disparity within 25% in student revenues. If so, the state is considered “equalized” by the federal government.

from their students residing on Indian reservations.<sup>42</sup> The lawsuit claimed that the State's improper interpretation of the law (Impact Aid offset calculations utilizing a 25% disparity threshold instead of a per-pupil expenditure to establish equalization across the state) led the U.S. Department of Education to certify that NM had reached equalization in funding. This certification caused the two school districts to lose around \$20 million in their 2000 school budgets. Through a process of appeals, the case was finally heard by the U.S. Supreme Court (docket 05-1508) in January 2007. In April of the same year, the Supreme Court ruled 5:4 in favor of the US Department of Education and the NM Public Education Department upholding the right of the NM PED to interpret the ambiguous governing statutes in determinations regarding equalization of educational expenditures (Becker Gallagher, 2007; Walsh, 2007).

In Bison Meadows, federal Impact Aid pays for salaries of teachers, paraprofessionals, social workers, and therapists; "anything that deals with learning and teaching and the instructor's requirements, and funds are not as restrictive as Title VII [funding]" (Ms. Chee, 1/8/09). Impact Aid is also used to fund technology, equipment, textbooks, travel and professional development training. At a federally required Impact

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<sup>42</sup> "The Zuni Public School District is a New Mexico public school district located entirely within the Pueblo of Zuni reservation. It has virtually no tax base. Over 65% of the Gallup-McKinley County Public School District No. 1 consists of Navajo reservation lands which are also not taxable by State school districts. Under the Impact Aid Program (20 U.S.C. § 7709 *et seq.*) public school districts such as Zuni and Gallup impacted by a federal presence which reduces ordinary bonding and taxing capacity are entitled to receive Federal Impact Aid funding to offset this impact" (Becker Gallagher, No. 05-1508, p. 2).

Aid public hearing in the Valley Vista Performing Arts room, Ms. Chee, Bison Meadows Director of Indian Education, explained the predicament of Bison Meadows with regard to this issue:

In the State of New Mexico there's the equalization law - 75 percent of that [\$3,434,163.83 generated by Impact Aid for Bison Meadows in 2007], we give up to the state \$2.6 million and it gets redistributed statewide. The district gets to keep 25 percent – that turns out to be \$651,234.45. Our money goes to fund all New Mexico schools. This was passed by Congress some time ago, and New Mexico takes advantage of this equalization law, but not that many states take advantage of this law. Alaska, New Mexico, and Kansas - we're the only states that take this law into consideration. (1/9/09)

As Ms. Chee provided the overview of this data, she used power point slides and referred to the ten-page handout parents received as they signed in at the meeting. When one parent in attendance asked Ms. Chee whether or not we (Bison Meadows Schools) get any of our Impact Aid money back, she clarified by explaining the process in simpler terms -

All the money, 75% goes into a pot at the state, so now equalization law takes effect, every school in the state of New Mexico gets distributed some of that pot of money – all 89 school districts, whether they have Native kids in their schools or not. And they have a calculation of formula that determines how they are all going to get it back. I'll just share with you, April 2007 there was a lawsuit, the Zuni Public Schools and the Gallup-McKinley County Schools, and later Bison

Meadows joined the lawsuit against the State and the US Department of Education to get back that total amount of money... It went to the US Supreme court and of the nine judges, five voted against us and four voted for us. We lost by one vote and there's no where else to go to appeal it. The state will have to make some decisions to make some adjustments so we can receive more of our funding. (1/9/09)

Ms. Chee also briefly explained how the funding cycle works by a voucher system that allocates the 25% portion of federal funds generated by Indian students to the school district. In 2007, 86% of the total Bison Meadows American Indian population generated these Impact Aid funds because they live on Indian reservations. The remaining 14% of its Native population does not generate funds because they live in the city.

With regard to the equalization formula, Superintendent Landovazo laments the status of funding to date, at that same parent meeting:

As a district we don't feel good at the fact that the state takes seventy five percent of it (district Impact Aid funding). It just doesn't sit well with me. Our kids are the ones that are generating that kind of money. So even though we lost it at the Supreme Court level, we haven't given up yet. We're now working on trying to get the State to understand that that money is generated by our kids and it needs to stay here. I think that the State is moving in the right direction with its potential for this new funding formula that's being proposed – that's going to equalize things a lot more for communities like us. (Public Hearing on Impact Aid, 1/8/09)

Mr. Landovazo reports that he's encouraged by the prospect of an additional \$5 million if this new formula takes effect.<sup>43</sup> He's also hopeful that parents and community members will be instrumental in bringing about these changes through increased political activism. There does not appear to be an amendment to the plaintiffs in this court case, so whether Bison Meadows actually joined in on the suit is not evident. There is renewed effort by the school district and the Pueblo communities in Bison Meadows County to petition the State and federal governments for change in the allocation of Impact Aid funding. A further discussion of those efforts appears later in this Chapter.

Both of these court cases represent the status of rights for the Indigenous peoples served by the Bison Meadows School District. Throughout the discussion of Impact Aid in Bison Meadows, race is not acknowledged as a factor by any of the actors involved. The racist policies which uphold the distribution of Impact Aid funding are evident – policies which usurp the power of Native American sovereign states to determine how funding is used to educate their own children. White supremacy clearly delineates power in this situation and relies on paternalistic Indian policies reminiscent of the early days of Indian Education. As described in the opening discussion about border-town issues, the decisions regarding economic, political, and socio-historical inequities are being made

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<sup>43</sup> The New Mexico State Legislature is currently considering a change in the school funding formula. Under House Bill, section 8009, New Mexico would be allowed to apply federal guidelines for meeting per pupil expenditures based on a national level. This move would allocate one hundred percent of Impact Aid

outside of the control of people whose lives and livelihoods are affected. I return to the discussion about border-town racism to illustrate the next segment of these results as race relations shape the current backdrop in and around Bison Meadows Schools.

**Border-town racism, Part II.** Since the federal inquiry in Northwestern NM, race relations and civil rights have been tracked more closely and government intervention meted out in northwestern New Mexico. In 2004 a follow up forum entitled, “Confronting Discrimination in Reservation Border Town Communities” took place and the resulting report, published in 2005, includes the testimony of various people involved. Many people in northwestern New Mexico reported better overall conditions over the past thirty years at this forum. However as former NM State Senator Leonard Tsosie warns, “The overt expression of racism may not be there anymore and, therefore, gives us the false impression that it is not there” (qtd. in NMAC-USCCR, 2005, p. 11). Another way to describe the current state of race relations is “polite racism” as Larry Emerson’s testimony indicates this seemingly innocuous form of racism “characterizes a lot of what goes on now” (qtd. in NMAC-USCCR, 2005, p. 11). Emerson presents his terminology of polite racism in juxtaposition to the subordination of Native peoples by whites in the region and in comparison to previous levels of violence and blatant racism experienced historically. The hidden racism described by these two testimonies rests precariously under the surface in border towns like Caldera. Therefore a clear understanding of how

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monies directly to the school districts that generate those funds instead of giving 75% directly to the State (US Department of Education, Tribal Leaders Consultation, 5/3/10).

imminent racially motivated violence can erupt suddenly helps to view its appearance in Caldera in 2009 (discussed below) and its resurgence in that same northwestern New Mexico city in 2010.<sup>44</sup>

In July 2010, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission published a report based on ten months of testimonies collected from 25 public hearings in border-towns across the Navajo Nation, including the town of Caldera.<sup>45</sup> The lived experiences of people who offered testimonies supported Deyhle's (1995) findings that, "young Navajo men and women face a racially polarized landscape, in which historically defined racial conflicts between Navajos and Anglos continues to engulf their lives" (p. 406). I frame

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<sup>44</sup> In April 2010, a 22-year old developmentally challenged Navajo man was kidnapped by three white men in the same northwestern NM city. He was tortured by having a swastika branded into his arm and another swastika shaved into his hair. The District Attorney's office sought hate-crime enhancements on the charges filed against the three assailants ([www.krqe.com/pp/news/crime/da-seeknig-gate-crime-in-swastika-case](http://www.krqe.com/pp/news/crime/da-seeknig-gate-crime-in-swastika-case)). Similarly, in 2006 three white men assaulted and robbed a Navajo man and were charged with hate-crimes; in 1997 four white men brutally beat a Navajo man into brain hemorrhage. In 1998 a Navajo man was bludgeoned to death and in 2000 a Navajo woman suffered the same fate at the hands of the southwest's KKK – Krazy Kowboy Killers – all in the same northwestern NM border-town (SPLC, Intelligence Report, Winter 2006, Issue Number:124).

<sup>45</sup> The Navajo Nation spans across four southwestern states including New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona. Over 400 people attended the public hearings and 158 provided testimonies; of the four states, 12 hearings were conducted in New Mexico, two each in Colorado and Utah, and 15 in Arizona. Major border towns were identified as towns/cities having significant populations of Navajo people inhabiting and/or frequenting the town/city (NNHRC Report, 2010).



this discussion historically to demonstrate the salience of generational memory and to emphasize the reality of institutionalized racism.<sup>46</sup> It helps to set the context for the current and historical border-town phenomenon in Bison Meadows County.

Testimony provided by Larry Emerson at the 2004 forum on race indicated the existence of what he termed “polite racism.” The notion of this polite form of racism can also be identified as “Colorblind Racism” as discussed by Tatum (1997). According to Tatum, through the racialized socialization process, many people of the dominant race tend to internalize stereotypes portrayed as “normal” ways of being for people of color and to assume that their own ways of being are the norm. Often when colorblind racism is enacted, it becomes a cloaking device meant to dispel any recognition of differences

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<sup>46</sup> For example, the Preamble of the 2010 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Navajo Nation and the city of [Caldera], New Mexico cites a need “to address the historic issues of race discrimination against Navajo citizens, other indigenous peoples and minorities.” The MOA references historical relations between the United States and indigenous peoples stating, “we must never forget the tragedies inflicted against the Navajo people and other indigenous peoples within the United States individually and collectively and ensure their story is acknowledged and told in their own words” (NNHRC, 2010). The intentions of the MOA are to strengthen racial relations and provide a legal avenue for open communication and reciprocity between the border towns and the Navajo Nation. The mayor of one border-town refused to sign the MOA unless the historical references were removed, citing “negative overtones” (Mayor [ ] as qtd. by Childress, 6/17/10) and he portrayed his city’s race relations as being on par with other U.S. cities indicating that the human rights violations in his city were rare and there were “just a few specific incidents since then in a larger context of generally positive relations between Navajo and non-Navajo people” (Childress, 6/17/10).

and to assume that everyone is exactly the same. Although at first glance, this seems harmless, in reality it forces people of the dominant race to “think of racism as the prejudiced behaviors of individuals rather than as an institutionalized system of advantage” (Tatum, 1997, p 95) from which they benefit.

In Bison Meadows, the mindset of colorblindness seems to be a pervasive occurrence at Lava Bluff High School where there is a greater diversity of students than at Valley Vista. Students and parents affiliated with Lava Bluff often spoke in terms of being “normal” students and adopting a colorblind ideology aligned with the normalized experiences of others in the city school, as one Indigenous parent reports –

**Delilah:** my daughter had a friend from [the Pueblo] who transferred up to [Lava Bluff]. And it really bothered her for this student to be there because the girl spoke in colors. And [the daughter] got really upset and said, you know 'why are you always speaking in colors?' meaning, 'that black guy,' 'that white girl,' 'that Indian' you know she was the brown, white, the black, she was like talking in colors, and [the daughter] didn't like that. It really upset her. And she made quite a few friends in [Caldera]. When they wanted to participate in any extra activities or fun things activities, they had to go to [Caldera] to be with their friends, or their friends picked them up and they went to [the big city]. (8/6/09, 61-67)

Delilah demonstrates how this desire to be colorblind impacted her daughter and the social choices her daughter was then afforded once she adopted the ideology. She delves more into how her children came to view themselves while attending Lava Bluff -

**Delilah:** there was a counselor there for Native Americans, but my kids never really interacted with the Native Americans, it was always the non-native. So, and then culturally, my kids are not really into the Native culture, they're kind of, [my daughter] is now, only because of our doings at home, but as far in the school and stuff like that, if anything went with Native Americans or whatever, they were never really involved in that. They stayed away from clubs, events and stuff, we just didn't participate. They wanted to stay away from the Native American crowd, and I really don't know the reason for that, and all they would tell me is that they wanted to meet other people other than Native Americans. (8/6/09, 130-141)

For Delilah's daughter, the buy-in of colorblindness towards herself in this example represents the normalization of the status quo – to not see race in order to gain acceptance as “normal.” And inscribed with this ideology is the belief (or pretense) that equality exists while at the same time further silencing the acknowledgement of race as a factor in the daily lived experiences of every child in Bison Meadows. The problem with this ideological and discursive practice is the vanquishing of power so that only highly overt individual acts of prejudice are noted as racism, thereby cloaking the uneasiness felt in the face of the subtleties of institutionalized racism because they cannot be named. As Bonilla-Silva (2006) asserts, “a new powerful ideology has emerged to defend the contemporary racial order: the ideology of color-blind racism” (p. 25). The inherent danger of such an ideology is its indirect “slipperiness” to “justify racial inequality” (p. 25). Bonilla-Silva points out that it allows the dominant to believe “they are not involved

in the terrible ordeal of creating and maintaining inequality” (p. 26) by leaving a convenient escape route away from overt racism.

This notion also plays out in the classroom. When engaging in discussions with teachers about difference, colorblindness works to subvert the larger institutional issues that impact schooling. One interview excerpt with Mr. Timothy, a white teacher at Valley Vista helps to make this point:

**NM:** What methodologies do you use that are culturally relevant?

**Mr. Timothy:** in Economics, I take them through the interviewing process. They have to come up with a cover letter and resume. They have an authentic final product.

**NM:** and what do you consider most important for a high school student to learn before they leave Valley Vista?

**Mr. T:** I teach, educate, inculcate in them the desire to be better human beings; the subject matter is important, but also important is respect, tolerance, and other concepts that make humans get along with each other. If I can say that someone grew and my course helped, then I’ve accomplished a great deal. The subject matter is something peripheral, but I have to bring so much more to the classroom – management, style, getting the kids motivated. Cry with ‘em tears of joy, laugh with ‘em. It’s a part of life, as well. (3/25/09, 36-38; 69-76)

As Mr. Timothy demonstrates, avoidance of racialized discourse is normal and expected, even as he is relaying daily experiences with his students, ninety nine percent of whom are brown skinned. I purposely do not engage in a discussion about race as I wait

for it to develop organically. When he is finally pressed to recognize race, it appears to be from a safe distance, as indicated below -

**NM:** would you say that your classroom or this school represents cultural diversity?

**Mr. T:** it's not that diverse. We only have a few Anglo kids, a smattering of kids with Black heritage, Native kids predominate – [Pueblo], and maybe a mix of other Pueblos.

**NM:** how do you view multicultural education in your classroom and/or school?

**Mr. T:** when I'm teaching and getting into various points of view, of all players – this has to be taken into consideration. When I'm presenting, I do it from a dominant society perspective, then we talk about it. For example, Barack Obama means something to Blacks and to kids...

**NM:** So, then what would you consider, or how would you define culturally appropriate curriculum?

**Mr. T:** Kit Carson. When we teach about him in New Mexico history, it's not from the Navajo point of view, not from Apache, so we need to bring in resources to help teach more than the government view/whiteman's view prevails, so we need to introduce other points of view. (3/25/09, 83-94)

The rhetorical strategies engaged by Mr. Timothy represent what Bonilla-Silva describes as “semantic moves” to address race while “minorities are present or in public venues” (2006, p. 53) as part of a socialized discourse of racially colorblind ideology. In retrospect, I could have used several opportunities to engage in a discussion about race, as

Mr. Timothy did bring up racialization of his students and did speak of his own whiteness in coded terms – dominant society, and whiteman’s view.

I include this discussion within the displayed results in order to bring up another point about discourse, as well. The use of “discursive buffers” (Bonilla-Silva, p. 57) or disclaimers about personal views on race, and colorblind cultural racism can be seen in the following interview excerpt from Mr. Timothy’s interview:

**Mr. T:** these kids are at third and fourth grade reading levels, they’re poor readers and at five minutes, they max out. I’ve got to read literature, stories, then we talk. There’s no discipline to read, they’re socially promoted and reading, grammar, listening and questioning are missing.

**NM:** How do you accommodate for cultural needs of students in your classroom?

**Mr. T:** I just roll with it. Kids are gone a minimum of one-to-two weeks per semester for religious doings, feast days, funerals... a lot of kids are missing a lot of school. It’s not unusual for kids to miss 15-20 days. They go bonkers. I don’t make ‘em do exams, but I make ‘em do busy work to get points – to get credit – to graduate. Busy work like outlining, vocabulary, chapter question and answer... There’s one young lady, pretty bright, but missed January 5<sup>th</sup> to now (March 25<sup>th</sup>), 18 days. Senior. She’s going to graduate, so I try to accommodate them. I’m asked: ‘is there a way to do credit recovery?’ it’s a buzzword for giving enough [*word italics frame*] “credit” to allow students to graduate. We did that for two or three years, then the principal went out and it went out of favor. If you sanction them, I’ll get it accomplished. (3/25/09, 114-133)

This discourse brings up one of the issues I raised in my methodological design – my racialized impact upon the data collected from participants. I have conducted numerous interviews and found myself in uncomfortable situations where my perceptions of race influence the interactions I engage with others present, both my own racialized presence as well as others’ racial identities. In my experience, when my presence as a brown woman is clearly an issue, whites respond by demonstrating various levels of comfort. Almost always, there seems to be a need to bring up something related to my “Indianness” in attempts to ally with me, and in the case of some interviews, skirting around actually saying “Indian” or any other racial marker for that matter, are problematic. Often, I believe that people with whom I meet tend to feel the need to prove their lack of prejudice, as I believe was the case with Mr. Timothy. I do not exemplify Mr. Timothy’s interview as one case of individual prejudice or racist act, rather I present it to illuminate the naturalization of the discourse afforded by colorblind racism and how it is presented as a neutral act within the institution that has normalized it.

When juxtaposed with the discourse of parents and Native community members, race is always a predominant factor. For example, in my interview with David an active community member and former Bison Meadows employee, I asked him his opinion about one of the most important things a student should know. He replied without hesitation:

**David:** Well, where their roots are! The basic thing that you know - what has always been told to us: you're an Indian, you're always going to be an Indian no matter the environment you live in, you can't be changed, you can't erase your

color. You're always going to be that individual, wherever you go, you're always gonna remember where your roots were. (4/2/09, 456-460)

It is precisely this insistence on asserting one's identity as an attribute that leads minoritized people within a larger colorblind system to recognize its "slipperiness," as Bonilla-Silva describes the performance of colorblindness. When the identity assertion is not honored, but placed in a negative frame, the actors may begin to question their realities. To illustrate this idea, I present an interview excerpt from Marla, an active parent and Bison Meadows employee –

**Marla:** I would say that now that I work with the school, I see where [Caldera's] non-Native American kids get a lot of attention. And I would also have to go as far and say that working with [the Bison Meadows District] has given me a more broad view of where Native Americans stand as opposed to the non-Natives. You know, granted we have the Indian Ed office, but that doesn't necessarily mean that just because we have this support and this office, that our kids are gonna be treated good - because we're not. And I can say that when the element of cultural identity or cultural history of Native Americans wants to be implemented in a school, it's overlooked. And ...it's not welcomed. But, seeing how people are treated in [Caldera], it does raise flags. And I do see the separation of certain staff members to me. (7/9/10, 92-103)

Marla described her observations as a member of the school district in viewing behaviors of other adult employees. She expressed frustration about the institutionalization of a normalized discourse in the schools that does not allow for



different realities and experiences. Marla reflects on her personal experience with the subtleness of racism in the Bison Meadows District as an employee -

**Marla:** When you have a gathering and I walk into the room everybody stops talking. And I don't know, you know, yet on a personal basis I can sit and talk to somebody just like how we're talking now. But the moment that person gets with a group of Hispanics, or especially the whites, they stop talking [to me]. They totally change their demeanor, yet we were just having a really nice conversation. It's awful when you have the white folks talking behind our backs. And I can feel it - there's one other Native American lady at the school that I work with, and she feels the same as I... And the moment I walk in, the conversations stop... just working [at Bison Meadows Schools], I have experienced that. It's a hurtful feeling. (7/9/10, 103-119)

When the identity assertion promotes a positive frame for a racially marginalized group, as with Indian Education, the rules of colorblind racism seem to be contested, but in fact programs that operate under the auspices of culture serve to uphold colorblindness because culture does not equate with race and is a safe topic to address in classrooms.

When Marla asserts her Native identity, and experiences the ramifications of her racialized presence, such as at employee functions. The importance of her narrative is to raise the questions about how Indigenous students also experience those same rejections and how that impacts their schooling. State power, as represented by racial projects seems to operate within this school district as a leveling agent in support of colorblind racism.

**Racial landscape in Caldera.** Indeed the rules are slippery, and when they are broken, the subtle nature of racism takes a turn and the overt displays of racist rhetoric emerge from hiding just below the surface. The way these events play out in Caldera can be seen through the recent struggles over land issues and manifestations of racial violence. The racial landscape in Caldera and across Bison Meadows County is tenuous but recent events have brought longstanding historic animosities to the surface. Caldera is considered a reservation border-town, bounded by traditional Pueblo and Navajo land claims; it is also surrounded by Spanish land grants staked in the 1500s. One of the defining features of Caldera is its scenic mountain view; this mountain is the center of a recent controversy over public, private, and tribal interests. The designation of Caldera Mountain as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) by the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties in June 2010 brought forth an acrimonious divide that had been intensifying since 2008. In early 2008 a coalition of five sovereign Indigenous Nations successfully petitioned the State of New Mexico for temporary protective consideration over Caldera Mountain – three of those Nations’ children constitute high proportions of the Bison Meadows school population.

A brief discussion on the issue of race-making in New Mexico is important to this set of results. Nieto-Phillips (2004) provides a history of the racial hierarchies existing in New Mexico through the creation of a “Spanish” identity. It impacts Caldera because of the original settling of Spanish families among the Pueblos near present-day Caldera in the 1600s. The notion of a pure “Spanish” racial identity continues to pervade Bison Meadows County. Participants self-identify as “Spanish” or refer to people of certain

cultural ancestry as “Spanish” despite the current and historical existence of a *mestizaje*, or mixed race (usually “Spanish” and “Indian” parentage) families in Bison Meadows County. The creation of a racial category to which mixed race Mexicans could ascribe in Territorial New Mexico served the function of sustaining racial divisions that would allow American colonization to proceed uncontested. Gómez (2005) describes this “white category to include Mexicans under certain conditions...to buttress white supremacy” with the expectation that Mexicans would function as a “wedge racial group that reproduced the subordination of Pueblo Indians, Blacks, and nomadic Indians” (p. 13).

This racial terminology is commonly used to differentiate culturally different “Spanish” from whites in the county, though the white dominance this study discusses includes Hispanics as white in the operation of Bison Meadows Schools. It was important for the maintenance of political power to establish a caste system in Spanish colonial New Mexico which prompted many families to begin tracing their bloodlines to prove their racial purity and claim their political status (Nieto-Phillips, 2004). The purposeful creation of racial distinctions in New Mexico stemmed from ideological foundations wherein, “Spaniards thought of themselves as not just superior to Indians and Africans, but as progenitors of the One True Faith” (Nieto-Phillips, 2004, p. 24).

In Bison Meadows County, remnants of the caste system continue to influence socio-political structures and have played out in the racialization of the schools – with the Spanish/whites claiming power in the top rung and all others relegated to the lower rungs. Laura Gómez (2005; 2002; 2000) adds a legal dimension to help understand the necessity

of white alignment and the racial projects that pitted Indians, Mexicans, and Americans in Territorial New Mexico against one another. To put it bluntly, “Americans needed race in order to justify their brutal conquest of Mexicans and Indians” (Gómez, 2002, p. 1399). The racial political divisions created during the early years of this land are still prominent throughout New Mexico. The inherent structure of the racial castes in New Mexico placed “Spanish”/Mexicans struggling to align politically and ideologically with American whites while legally disenfranchising Indians (from various tribes) because they were considered “more inferior than Mexicans” (Gómez, 2002, p. 1399). Although Indians were categorized as one racial grouping, through the American racial project in Territorial New Mexico, divide and conquer techniques were employed to further divide alliances between Indigenous Nations by treating Pueblo peoples differently than “nomadic” tribes. Isolation and containment policies were in place for Pueblos while genocidal military conquest strategies were used for the non-Pueblo Indians (Gómez, 2000). Understanding of these racialized social systems in Caldera help to frame the TCP issue within the following border-town segment.

**Border-town racism, Part III.** In 2009, the border town phenomenon emerged as racial tensions came to a head. Reports of racially motivated beatings surfaced; eight Navajo men were targeted and severely beaten in retaliation for the Native “win” in the Caldera Mountain dispute. According to a local news report, the accused attacker “was overheard saying that he jumped one man because “the Native Americans had got [Caldera Mountain] and now they owed him” (KRQE.com, 7/24/09). At the same time, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission held its public hearing in Caldera. The

results of that hearing include testimony from the Vice-President of the NM Human Rights Coalition Education Fund, who stated “tolerance is a subject that needs to be taught, and not as a superficial subject about just living together; it really needs to address cultural issues and cultural backgrounds” (V. Candelaria-Martinez, qtd. in NNHRC, 2010). The Memorandum of Agreement resulting from this hearing in Caldera between the Navajo Nation and the City of Caldera can be seen as a symbolic victory for the interests of Indigenous peoples. Long-term results in the Bison Meadows schools remain to be seen on this front and do not appear in any of the latest efforts to standardize and align the curriculum. The deeper understanding that Candelaria-Martinez alluded to in her NNHRC testimony is still out of reach as long as there is no time left in the school day or the school year to focus on issues outside of the district curriculum that affect the lives of students.

In addition to the racial turmoil occurring within and around Caldera, other social factors continue to afflict the students at Bison Meadows. I turn to the Bison Meadows motto: “Every Student, Every Day, Building a Person for Life” as an example of the neutralizing power of colorblindness. This motto asks everyone in the district to buy into a system that assumes, or pretends, that each student arrives at their respective school with everything s/he needs to attain the same levels of academic achievement without regard for the structural barriers they face because of social, economic, political, or racial factors. As with the earlier discussion about colorblindness, here again this motto relies on the flawed perception of equality in access and opportunity and institutes a racist system than scapegoats those who cannot make the success of “building a person for life”

into reality. When those with differential opportunity are unable to achieve the ideal set forth in this racial project, it is assumed that they are the ones flawed and not the system. There is no acknowledgement of what Lewis (2003) discusses as the challenge to meritocracy through “uncovering the mechanisms that differently prepare children to come to school and differently reward them once they are there” (p. 156). Even though Bison Meadows School District gathers statistical data about their “at-risk” populations and conducts surveys to gain information about their students’ needs, these efforts do not address the underlying issues inherent in the societal structures reified by schooling.

In 2008, the Bison Meadows schools conducted a Youth Risk and Resilience Survey to examine “behaviors that contribute to the unintentional injury of young people” (Ms. Sisneros, School Board Meeting, 11/4/08). These youth behaviors were attributed to student choices and lack of education about health issues such as sexually transmitted infections and healthy diets.

Results of this survey indicated “that drunk driving, violence, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, tobacco use, alcohol use and drinking on campus have declined. Seat belt use, drug use and sexual activity among students under the age of 13 have all increased,” (Ms. Sisneros, 11/4/08).

Superintendent Landovazo commented on the survey results at that same meeting, “We need to raise the bar, but school behavior reflects community behavior” (11/4/08). His statement perfectly demonstrates the existence of Bonilla-Silva’s frame of cultural racism (2006) by portraying the “presumed cultural practices as fixed features” and blaming a “culture of poverty” on having “inappropriate values” (p. 40). When taken into

consideration, all of these factors contribute to the experiences and final outcomes of schooling in Bison Meadows. As Lewis (2003) points out, different outcomes cannot be solely attributed to personal choice or cultural deficiency, but “rather, it is the larger systemic, structural, and institutional processes that produce racial inequality both in school outcomes and beyond” (p. 187).

Exactly how the Bison Meadows School District can begin to address these structural inequities outside of the schools remains to be seen. As long as the continued tendency to blame the student for his or her predicament exists, there is little room for dialogue. “Every Student, Every Day, Building a Person for Life” is noble in its intent; its reliance on individualism supports institutionalized racist assumptions, as Blau (2003) asserts, through colorblind liberalism “the conception of a person’s moral worth depends on natural abilities, talents and accomplishments, which justify unequal returns...Advantage amplifies inequality and inequality tends to reinforce advantage” (p. 26). And through the discourse of colorblind racism, these inequities are deemed fair and just because everyone has the same chance at success. This performance of power underscores the existence of normalized racism described by Tsosie and Emerson in their testimonies to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in 2004. It has affected the opportunities available to people of color in Caldera as well as Bison Meadows School District, as I demonstrate in the next segment.

**School level historical factors.** Finally, I present the matter of administrative turnover to illustrate historical factors affecting education at Bison Meadows Schools. One of the most pressing issues expressed by employees, parents, and community

members involves school leadership. Historically, both Bison Meadows high schools have experienced turnover in principals and prior to Mr. Landovazo, in superintendents. Soul Historian, a teacher at Lava Bluff, expresses the frustration of the administrative revolving doors as they affect morale and curriculum, “My experience was probably in the first couple of years, it was kinda the Wild West around here. We had a lot of principals; we had a lot of turnover” (2/8/10, 87-89). He reflects on the difference that stability in administrators has made for the school -

**SH:** A [stabilized] staff really makes a place and the kids respond to that, there’s culture of caring and progress here, it was here before maybe, [but] in the first couple of years it felt like we just had a warm body in the school, and I wouldn’t say the first couple of folks (administrators) we had were very professional. Until Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Singer [came here] and [did] a lot of follow up on things, more meetings than I care to say we've had need of, but meetings where you get together...and just the culture changed. (2/8/10, 122-130)

Teachers find it increasingly difficult to perform their duties when the revolving door of administration becomes unpredictable. The administration situation is also experienced at Valley Vista, as Joel, a longtime teacher reports –

**Joel:** I've worked in the district for 20 years - 14 years or so at the mid school in [Caldera], then about 5 years here, 5 or 6.

**NM:** And in that time, what has been your experience with the administration in terms of longevity for administrators in the district in the schools that you've worked?



**Joel:** we go through waves. We go through time periods when the administration turns over rapidly, and we go through time periods where the administration, you know, hangs on for a few years. [Previous] superintendent was here for 6 years, [Mr. Landovazo] is going to be on longer than that, but the other superintendents were gone relatively quickly. I've had administrators that served as my principal for no more than four-and-a-half years - never had the same principal for more than four-and-a half-years. The one I had for 4½ years was the most dishonest, most cruel, malicious person I've ever worked with, so it seems like the best people are gone the most quickly.

**NM:** why do think that is?

**Joel:** as... a person who likes to study human behavior, I think that school districts are like any other organization. There are only a few motivations that people have: power, accomplishment, association, and power tends to rank high among administrators. A lot of them want to be in control and when you want to be in control, either you subjugate people and you control them or you fight with them... And if you fight with them and you fail, well, then you're moved on down the road. If you take the place over and you control people, then you get to stay around a long time, like any other business. (3/25/09, 14-30)

At the beginning of the present study, Valley Vista High School principal, Mrs. Fields a white woman, was still new to the school and the community; she had been in the field over thirty years and most recently came from a remote school on the Navajo reservation in northwest NM. Mrs. Fields was just the latest in a string of school

administrators to come and go from Valley Vista. In general, there is unpredictability in school administration across the district but most noticeably at Valley Vista; during the initial year of the study alone there were four new principals (one at each high school and two elementary schools). Joel offers his theory on the politics of leadership in Bison Meadows –

**Joel:** I view principals as kind of migrant workers - they come and go. The best one I ever had was only my principal for a year and a half. She got promoted to assistant superintendent and then within a year run out of [the school district]. The school ran like a Swiss watch - with a part time principal, one counselor and teachers. That's it. The same school now has a full-time principal, a dean of students, two counselors...and it's not running anywhere near as good as it was before. So what does that tell you? It tells me that good, quality people are a threat and you have to get them out of the system or else the less competent, less capable ones look bad. I'm sorry if that sounds arrogant, but that's my personal observation. (3/25/09, 84-90)

I asked Joel about the teaching support he receives from administration. He reported that his pedagogy and curriculum no longer change in response to the building administrator. He describes his pedagogical transformation in response to the number of changes he's experienced during his tenure at Bison Meadows Schools -

**Joel:** you know, I don't even look for support anymore, I don't. I just hope I get a supervisor who stays out of the way and doesn't throw roadblocks in my path. As far as support, I told you I had the ONE good principal, who I thought was

supportive. Every single principal since then, and before that, every other principal I ever had -- if they just don't throw obstacles in my path, I'm ok. When that ONE principal was actually supportive, actually kicked up funding money, helped get things done, helped improve the school... it shocked the hell out of most of us. It really did. (3/25/09, 94-98)

The outright changes in leadership at Bison Meadows are apparent to the general public. However, the issues described by Joel lie underneath the surface and work to shape the ways teachers interact with colleagues and students in their schools.

Another issue discussed by Indigenous parents and community members is the representation of Native people in administrative positions within Bison Meadows. I asked Marla about the Director of Indian Education, Ms. Chee's role in the district -

**Marla:** I don't think she has a say in how its run (the School District), but I do know that because her office brings in money, I know that she does advocate for the kids. Sometimes it's more so for Navajo because Navajos get a lot more than what Pueblos get...but at the same time, I think... that she knows...Indian Law...inside and out - she knows what these kids are supposed to be getting... (7/9/10, 317-321)

I asked Marla to talk about the dynamics of power in Ms. Chee's administrative position. Marla indicated the reason Ms. Chee even has a voice in Bison Meadows is because she brings in a large amount of funding. Marla pondered the fate of the Bison Meadows Indian Education office if it were to lose funding, "I think the whole program would be cut. Because that program runs off of Impact Aid and...506 funds where the

students that are enrolled...have a Certificate of Indian Blood number that also generates funds” (7/9/10, 326-328).

In terms of providing a forum for the three Indigenous Nations surrounding Bison Meadows, strong Indigenous representation in positions of power – Director of Indian Education and two Native representatives on the Bison Meadows School Board – have helped to bring about changes for the betterment of school to tribe relationships. For example, at an Indian Parent Advisory Committee meeting, Mr. Landovazo comments on the work of Ms. Chee as a driving factor in bringing about more involvement of tribal leaders with Bison Meadows –

I can tell you that I’ve been in the district for a while and a few years ago and we were really struggling and the IPP (Indian Policies and Procedures) was not current and the application was not getting in on time, they were not providing this kind of feedback to the communities and to the tribal leaders! It was becoming more of a rubber stamp thing where people were just submitting the application and it was being brought to the governors and asking them to sign it and they didn’t even know what they were signing. Well, that no longer happens.

(1/8/09)

Mr. Landovazo credits Ms. Chee with bringing about these changes in the ways the District operates in collaboration with the tribes.

Aside from the Director of Indian Education, the two school board members, and one middle school principal, there are no other administrators in Bison Meadows who represent Indigenous identities. There are more Native teachers at Valley Vista than Lava

Bluff, and across the district there are fifteen Native paraprofessionals, but as Marla pointed out, the educational assistants are only present because Impact Aid funds their existence in the School District. Ms. Chee presented the U.S. Department of Education Formula Grant application to parents, which included a budget sheet listing “Personnel” costs paid through Title VII Indian Monies at just over \$259,085 in school year 2007-08 and \$259,433 the following school year. At the Public Hearing for Impact Aid on January 9, 2009, Ms. Chee also stated that “Impact Aid pays for salaries...teachers, social workers, therapists...”

Parents and community members recall repeated attempts by one Native person from the Pueblo to attain an administrative position. This person got as far as serving as interim Vice-Principal at Valley Vista, but returned to the classroom when that position was eliminated in favor of a Dean of Students position, staffed by a non-Native faculty.

Turnover rate of administrators is a weighty issue in Bison Meadows. It has only been within the past ten years that administration at Lava Bluff High School has begun to stabilize, but tenure for principals at Valley Vista continues to be problematic. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Fields’ leadership role at Valley Vista ended just two years after it began. A new principal had been selected to lead Valley Vista for the school year directly following this study. He was also brought in from outside of the community. Mr. Singer, a (non-Native) local community member, continues in his position at Lava Bluff High School.

Discussion of historical factors that impact education in Bison Meadows School District continues to be a litigious issue at the close of the present study. There is

disagreement between participants over whether historical issues are valid in the contemporary examination of schooling and the socio-political issues that affect schooling. Participant narratives and the current legal debates demonstrate the existence of overt border-town racism in Caldera and across Bison Meadows County and the “polite racism” experienced in Bison Meadows schools. This section has provided a broad historical overview of Bison Meadows County in relation to the larger picture situated in New Mexico and against the backdrop of education in the United States.

### **Hidden Curriculum**

Michael Apple’s numerous works (1991; 1995; 2000; & 2004) critique state power as the driving force behind every movement in U.S. schooling, affecting every level of education. As described earlier in this chapter, the difference between state power and individual power or local authority is based on the systematic and institutionalized significance of the power. State control is far reaching and deeply embedded in every aspect of a school system, it requires conscious and/or coercive compliance with its demands and it is inescapable.

In his 1995 *Education and Power*, Apple describes the operation of state power through schools as the ultimate proving ground for ideological transformation. He maintains, “schools act as sites of ideological production and reproduction” (p. 28) through both the content of the curriculum and the pedagogical means of delivery. So, through the actual mode by which instruction is delivered, Apple asserts that hidden curriculum becomes embedded in the commodification of culture, thus producing consumerism and aiding in the maintenance of hegemony. Apple states, “In ways that are

not inconsequential, teaching is a labor process,” (p. 31) it becomes a site of reproduction designed “to control and rationalize the work of both teachers and students” (p. 31). He differentiates between work considered “mental” versus that which is “manual.” Teachers are thrust toward the manual, technician process of labor by the state’s reliance on scripted, individualized curricular materials that also move students toward a time-clock, task completion version of “work” by performing on standardized assessments. Apple contends that these are all measures of control in the maneuverings of a hidden curriculum in schools.

The hidden curriculum in Bison Meadows is represented by standardized curriculum policies handed down from the federal NCLB by the NM PED. The most prominent scripted curriculum operating in the District during the present study was the national “Read 180” program. At the onset of the study, Valley Vista was transitioning from its previous “AR” (Accelerated Reading) program in favor of Read 180. Its implementation requires specialized training and data tracking. Mrs. Fields provided a brief update during a staff meeting -

Mrs. Fields: OK, Read 180 is in the process of being set up... we have to follow the guidelines exactly...this is the pilot program this semester, we hope that next semester will be going two hours, two hours, two hours -- with every child which we’ll be able to serve all at once. Better than what we've got now but we're hoping the test scores go up and every child not proficient in reading will be in that in the English class so everybody got that straight? (1/7/09)

The school day schedule at Valley Vista included a 30-minute “Reading period” sandwiched between lunch and morning classes; every teacher was assigned a roster of students grouped according to their reading scores. The content area class periods were 85-minute blocks. During the pilot-phase Mrs. Fields field described at the staff meeting (2008-2009), only the students who scored lowest on the STAR test were targeted for Read 180. The program went school-wide in the following school year.

Although the Read 180 was framed as a crucial component in raising students reading scores, the transition school year did not provide structure for its implementation. I offer an example of the Reading Period from one observation in a tenth grade Language Arts classroom, reproduced from my field notes:

[Teacher] wraps up the orated reading lesson of Huxley’s *Brave New World* and begins to engage students in discussion by asking students to return to a page from chapter 3. The lights in the classroom are still dimmed. She asks students to consider “What is whisking away? If you’re familiar with those words and belief systems? Huge aspects of history – religious beliefs, and people who made monumental changes...” Some students shift in their seats, others tilt their heads, and a couple of them furrow their brows in anticipation of joining this discussion. [Teacher] pauses and then reminds them they have a few more minutes “then the bell’s gonna ring.” As soon as one young woman begins to utter a response, there is a voice on the intercom instructing everyone to go to Reading Period for the math placement test. Students quickly gather their belongings and race out the door as [Teacher] shouts a them, “finish reading chapter 3, it’s pretty long!”



[Teacher] then remembers the stack of papers Mrs. Fields delivered during first period. She peruses the stack while a new group of students leisurely shuffles through the doorway, some asking the teacher about the activity for the day, some asking to be released to attend another class, some recognize me in the classroom and seem happy to see me, but confused as to my role in their classroom and openly ask “what are *you* doing here?!” or “are you teaching this class now?” These fifteen students are considered the “low readers” and placed in the class based on their STAR test scores.

The lights are still dimmed and the several students rest their heads on the tables. [Teacher] announces that they will be taking a math placement test; she is then interrupted by the intercom with a long-winded overview of the testing procedure and explanation of two errors on the test. The students seem confused because they have not received their test sheets yet and cannot relate to the corrections the overhead voice is describing; many of them are not listening to the announcement, but are not overtly causing disruption. Finally students receive their tests and begin working though the problems, each student has been randomly assigned to take one of four possible tests. There is a lot of complaining from students about the test – they say it’s confusing, it’s written weird, the math symbols on the page don’t look right. Many rush through the test and turn it in then spend time socializing at their tables. No one mentions the incongruence of taking a math test during Reading Period. They leave the room when the bell chimes. There is no formal reading instruction during this period today. (3/25/09)

The stack of papers Mrs. Fields handed to the [Teacher] included a memo from the counselor and the pre-assigned student test sheets. The memo lists 11 “Reasons for the reading class time” which actually only gives two reasons for the use of Reading Period: “1. All students have a reading class. 2. All students will test at the same time. This eliminates the chances of students telling their friends what is on the test.” The rest of the items on the list explained procedural issues, including “6. Ten additional minutes will be given to take the exam...additional time was added to the beginning of the reading/advisement class. Second hour will be ten minutes shorter” (MEMO, 3/24/09).

There are several underlying messages evident in this scene. The overarching message communicated here is that testing is important. The power of testing drives the daily operations of curriculum; reading is a key factor in a school’s AYP designation, therefore a stringent reading program is enacted. However, mathematics is another content area that is tested and its performance also drives the school as well. So although there is apparent competition between the two content areas, they still represent the same objectives – sort kids so they can test better. Secondly, I present this scenario to illustrate the role of state power in deciding the frames of school on a daily basis. This is evident in the alteration of the school day schedule and the management of the in-house testing protocol demonstrated by pre-assigned tests for students (the memo claimed this was to assure legibility in handwriting), elimination of opportunities to “cheat,” and taking ten minutes away from a content area class in order to test students. Also, the hierarchical power alliances played out in the school made these determinations without consulting teachers, thereby excluding their voice and setting them up to respond to these demands

at a moment's notice (the memo was drafted March 23, dated March 24, and delivered to teachers two hours prior to expected implementation on March 25).

The hidden curriculum is also evident in classrooms and across the school grounds. For the most part, the hallway walls are bare at Lava Bluff and Valley Vista, but the items that do end up posted on the walls include accolades to student athletes and honor roll recipients. There are trophies to honor the athletic teams prominently displayed immediately inside the front entrance to the Valley Vista High School. There is a bulletin board immediately upon entry into Lava Bluff High School that also honors student athletes and showcases student achievements such as news articles that recognize academic honors. These displays and the inherent messages of motivational posters and public service announcements posted in corridors and meeting spaces serve as the hidden curriculum of public spaces. The messages conveyed include promotion of individual merit and team achievement for the good of the school, as indicated by the Lava Bluff motto: "Home of Scholars and Champions."

In the less visible spaces of individual classrooms, there are usually posters related to content on the walls. There are also items of personal significance to individual teachers in most classrooms as well; many teachers opt to display their diplomas and awards thus giving students a message about individual accomplishment, merit and definitions of success. In Mr. Timothy's classroom at Valley Vista, nearly every available space on the walls is covered with content related posters. He displays social studies themes and iconographic imagery of American history – presidents, monuments, and federal systems. His classroom uses themes to differentiate the curriculum on the

walls: Government, Economics, Sociology, World History, personal accomplishment, and student information including expectations (class rules). In Soul Historian's classroom at Lava Bluff, the walls are also covered in historical content related posters – Medieval images, travel posters, maps, and coats of arms. He also has three-dimensional images – globes and artifacts of European history. The curriculum expressed here is more global and concerned about identity and place.

There are some images representative of student's cultural or racial identities in both public and semi-private spaces. Usually, the identity markers are ascribed by whoever holds responsibility for their display. For example, "Indian" images present in Mr. Timothy's classroom include an historic National Geographic poster depicting "Indians of North America" and a collage poster with images of "Great Chiefs." There is also another public service poster depiction of contemporary Native imagery, "Verb: It's What You Do. Native Style." None of these posters is displayed within any of the themes chosen by Mr. Timothy. They appear outside of those content-related institutions represented by this hidden curriculum. Marla is one of the study participants who sees the insides of many classrooms. She reported several instances of what counts as abiding by the NM Indian Education Act's stipulations for cultural representation in classrooms –

**Marla:** what I know from that Act is all of our Native Americans are supposed to be getting a fair and just education that embeds their culture and their identity whether its through language or through bringing in cultural aspects of their livelihood - whether they're Navajo or Pueblo, or what have you - that they are supposed to be able to bring that with them [into the schools]. And sometimes,

that doesn't happen. I could say actually maybe ninety nine percent of the time that's not happening in the public school setting. It's been even referred to at certain meetings like at the IPAC meetings or at the PAC meetings or at school board, that according to that Indian Education Act these kids should be [encouraged to be] aware of their surroundings or their heritage. And what they (teachers) consider our kids being ingrained or embedded with their culture is hanging up a picture of a hogan or a tee pee... That's not embedding it into them!  
(7/9/10, 174-184)

All of these instances demonstrate the ways hidden curriculum works so subtly that it often goes unnoticed. Marla's example is but one occasion when the illogic of hidden curriculum is noticeable from her perspective, but is a normalized discursive practice embedded in schooling so that when it is enacted, people from dominant groups fail to see its prejudicial nature. These "normal" practices of curriculum policy and implementation are value-laden examples of hidden curriculum's politics, as I demonstrate in the following segment.

### **Policy and Curriculum**

In response to my question about how teachers make decisions regarding their content area curriculum, several teachers reported that they felt a sense of agency in their choices, but offered those choices bounded by state legislation. For example, ArtDawg explains her process of curricular decision making -

**AD:** it's pretty much what I as an artist and a teacher feel is important for the [students] to know. Now the state does have standards and benchmarks that we

have to attach to what we're doing, but just about, I mean everything fits... And how I determine it is that I ask the students, what is it that they wanna learn...it's their curriculum, and I will teach them what, of course there are some kind of basics that I do need to cover with them, as far as skills and...vocabulary, and that kind of thing, but yeah, I let the kids determine a lot of the curriculum of what they're interested in doing. (02/02/09, 190-198)

The fallacy of agency in making curricular decisions is a phenomenon discussed by Apple (2000) as he describes the systematic deskilling of teachers through measures that move teaching away from its role as a professional field and refashion it into a technician role. Apple claims that teachers have become laborers, much like factory workers, and the current hierarchical powers shape teaching so that it responds to mandates that limit freedom to actually *make* curriculum. Through this process, “teaching methods, texts, tests, and outcomes are being taken out of the hands of the people who must put them into practice. Instead, they are being legislated by national or state departments of education or in state legislatures...” (pp 116-117). This is demonstrated by Joel, a teacher at Valley Vista -

**Joel:** It seems to me that the education field is just like any other field. If you work for Boeing and you're building airplanes - you can get the Boeing policy manual out and you can try to follow that, or you can do what your foreman tells you. If you do what your foreman tells you, life is good you're smiled upon and everything goes along smoothly. You get the policy manual out and you start telling your foreman "you're not supposed to do it that way, you're supposed to do

it this way" and the next thing you know, you're tagged as a trouble maker, somebody who is not a team player -- that's another code phrase for, you know, upsetting people. Education works like any other business - the people at the top are in charge of EVERYTHING. I cannot think of one time when I as a teacher that I have had input into anything - curriculum, how the district is managed, nothing. I've been part of text improvement teams... the only legitimate input I have in how the district is run is this - I'm part of the collective bargaining team. Now that's real. (3/25/09, 45-56)

Joel talks about his daily life as a teacher and how it is impacted by everyone else. About the role of teachers, Apple states "the daily lives of teachers...are becoming ever more controlled, ever more subject to administrative logics that seek to tighten the reins on the processes of teaching and curriculum" (2000, p. 114). These top-down decisions are clearly perceived by teachers in the Bison Meadows School District.

One example of this perception came out of a conversation as I chatted with a group of teachers during an observation at Valley Vista. One teacher reported to me that she didn't have a good experience with the [Bison Meadows] school system when she went through it as a student and she's having a similar not-too-good experience now that she's going through the system as an adult. She says that all of the decisions are made at the top and then the people at this level have to implement them. This teacher was frustrated because she said there are so many difficulties and so many controversies with the [Bison Meadows] school board and the decisions that they're making regarding

curriculum. According to this teacher, a lot of the curriculum decisions are negatively impacting the students and the faculty here at this particular school (Field notes: 9/8/09).

The latest efforts to manage curriculum came during the 2008-2009 timeframe. During this time, Bison Meadows adopted a curriculum alignment stance for all schools, Kindergarten through grade 12. They started with the Language Arts curriculum in 2008 – a committee of administrators and Language Arts teachers, were selected to complete this process. Initially, Bison Meadows did not make it an inclusive effort, as Henrietta, a teacher at Valley Vista recounts –

**Henrietta:** I had to bring that to the principal's attention when they started [the Language Arts curriculum alignment], I don't know how I heard that they were doing something or it was in the website and I spoke to our department head. And I said "don't you think you should be there?" and she said "what do you mean?" "They're having a curriculum alignment meeting and we've got no representatives from [Valley Vista]!" So I went to the principal, or emailed her and I [said] "I understand they're gonna be writing the curricula for the school district...I think our department head should be there." So otherwise, I think if we hadn't done that we probably really wouldn't have been asked for any input. And when [the department head] did get there (to the district meeting), it was all based on their needs (Lava Bluff High School). They had all these contents, we were just poetry, and then there were things that we just don't even have access to in this community. So they had all this in their curriculum alignment for their side, and we were going to be forced to follow that same pattern, too. (4/2/09, 302-315)



Henrietta talked about the course of action their Language Arts department followed during the curriculum alignment phase. She said the department head went to the meetings and brought input to and from the groups. Ultimately, however, the final recommendations had to be presented to administrators and approved by the Bison Meadows School Board, thus evidencing the exercise of administrative power in this process.

The Language Arts curriculum was adopted and put into effect during the 2008-09 school year; it was one of the secondary documents I examined, as the Social Studies alignment process was based on this Language Arts pilot. The document was created to align the entire Language Arts scope and sequence, to align vertically grade to grade, as well as align perfectly in support of the NM Grades K-12 Language Arts Standards. Teachers were asked to put the pilot into action during the 2008-09 school year, but it was not mandated as stringently as the was entire consortium of core-subject curricula put into place during the 2009-2010 school year. It was not as forceful as the next phases, which I participated in during June and July 2009. The remaining core subjects also went through the curriculum alignment process during the summer and were implemented in school year 2009-2010. With the added weight of all four core subjects - Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies - in the alignment scheme, Bison Meadows was better able to manage the implementation of curriculum in its schools. Math and Reading continued to be the most important focal areas, but with the addition of eleventh grade Social Studies to the standardized State testing plan, it too became a subject worthy of attention.

During the summer of 2009, Bison Meadows teachers were recruited and paid stipends to attend week-long work sessions in order to help the district align curriculum for each core content area in each grade, K-12. Teachers were selected based on their recommendation from the department heads at each school. Some department heads attended, while others did not, likewise some schools were represented and some were not. One member of the School Board was also invited to attend as a participant, as she was a former mathematics teacher. The work sessions were led by a professional, paid education consultant, Ms. Browning. She guided committee participants through the steps of curriculum alignment using Marzano's methodology of organization for each content area.<sup>47</sup> We met separately, according to content area with Mathematics in early June, followed by Science in late June and Social Studies in mid-July, 2009. All of the meetings took place in the Lava Bluff High School computer lab.

Mrs. Browning led the committees through the group process one step at a time. In each content area meeting, the high school committees always faced what they perceived as a monumental task in culminating the alignment from kindergarten through grade 8. They also felt that since their classes were so specialized, it was also a difficult task. Typically, while K-8 committees completed their work in a matter of days, the high

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<sup>47</sup> Robert Marzano is an educational consultant whose work has garnered attention through his research on instructional strategies and standards-based assessment; he has authored and edited textbooks and curriculum in school districts across the United States and he offers his services to train educators in his methodology.

school teams labored after others were finished and often returned for work beyond the allotted week.

During our work in the summer 2009, the committees were charged with developing common benchmarks, language, and pacing guides that were aligned to the NM State Content Standards and Benchmarks. The District insisted on short-cycle assessments in each core content area. In order to produce data in support of these alignment procedures, each grade and each subject committee team was also assigned to create common competency based tests. This is where managerial control gained its strongest foothold. As schools implemented these aligned curricula, the standardization of content and pacing took precedence in classrooms across the Bison Meadows District. Each student in each grade was expected to be learning the same content around the same time period. Teachers were expected to prove this by proctoring the short cycle assessments within a prescribed window of time. The data generated from these assessments was then aggregated and made public on the district website.

As Soul Historian described the experience with his snow shovel example, it was difficult to deeply engage students in content while at the same time defer to the test driven atmosphere created by the short cycle assessments. The NM Standards Based Assessment was the intermediary for federal mandates stating that schools must prove proficiency. When teachers at the committee meetings brought up objections to “teaching to the test,” Mrs. Browning repeated her mantra: “you are not teaching to the test, you are teaching to the standards.” But teachers continued with their committee work despite the incongruence in their stated opposition to this new teaching approach.

This example demonstrates the power of Federal and State legislation on the ways curriculum is enacted in Bison Meadows classrooms. The state empowers a system that shapes how the school district approaches education. It involves the management of teacher's time in their own classrooms and, in effect legislates their practice through district mandates by the creation of a public monitoring system.

### **Neo-liberalism**

Past and present neo-liberalism shapes public opinion and state policy, which affect the ways curriculum is addressed in New Mexico school districts. From the earliest days of the Bison Meadows School District, the creation of mine workers, loggers, and service industry workers drove the curriculum. The renewed debate caused by the TCP designation has brought corporate and private economic interests head to head with Indigenous land claims and have reminded us of the operation of race in and around Caldera. With the closure of the uranium mines in the 1980s and the current reliance on private correctional facilities and the service industry, neo-liberalism still affects public opinion about what an educated person completing Bison Meadows schools must be able to do. The overarching message inherent in the federal NCLB legislation points to the continued production of a workforce that can compete in a global market economy. These messages are reinscribed in the New Mexico Content Standards as they mirror the requirements of NCLB and in turn fall in line with testing requirements mandated for schools in the Bison Meadows School District. Hegemonic influences continue to shape how we educate our children across the United States and those pressures can also be felt locally in New Mexico.

One of the most influential aspects of the hegemonic bloc includes the influence of neo-liberalism. The effects of neo-liberalism can be seen in the marketization of education from the textbooks to the curriculum to the interactions we engage our students with. It shapes the outcomes of schooling and drives the focus on consumerism and work with severe limits on what counts as knowledge. Mr. Landovazo, Bison Meadows Superintendent, makes this clear in his address to the School Board:

You'll see things that schools are working on in regards to problem solving, in regards to working together, in regards to respect, in regards to more reading, more math, better communication, attitude, staff-members working as a team... these are the kinds of things, folks, that we're hearing from our employers that a lot of our graduates are lacking. A lot of the employers and people in today's workforce are lacking some of these skills. So it's really good for me as a superintendent to see that not only are we focusing on the importance of math and the science and the reading and the other things, but we're also focusing on the development of that child... Attendance is the other thing - and you hear that from our employers all the time, "We get employees that just are not consistently at work." So it's good that the schools are kind of focusing on the things that make these students better candidates for employment in the future - regardless what they decide to do. (1/9/09)

Neo-liberalism functions to normalize economic processes so that they become commonsense, acritical issues.

Apple (2004) claims that this type of ignorance confines the ways we see and understand our place in the world. He states that -

It sets limits on the range of interpretations we give to define our economic, cultural, and political system. Instead, we substitute an uncritical notion – one distributed by schools, the media, and other mechanisms of an effective dominant culture – of pluralistic democracy which does not provide an adequate definition of how interest and power actually operate in an advanced corporate economy. (2004, p. 150)

To examine our place in this corporate-driven world, we need to think in terms of structure and the relations of the systems which shape schools.

The infiltration of corporate interests seeps into daily life at the schools in Bison Meadows through curriculum materials, but also through the academic, social, and sport programs students are exposed to through school. Militarization via Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is also evident as a viable career option for graduating students, and is supported by the large-scale correctional facilities that now operate in the county. The availability of economic opportunities continues to influence not only career choices in Bison Meadows County but curricular choices, as well. This is evidenced by the addition of “Criminal Justice” as a dual-enrollment option along with fields of study emphasizing the service industry, such as Lodging and Management, and Culinary Arts. The other career fields offered to Bison Meadows students are Elementary Education and Precision Metal Work/Welding.

Casino corporations now affect the economy in Bison Meadows County, as both the Pueblos in the county operate gaming facilities, thus driving the service sector among the major employers of graduating students and their families. During the latest School Board elections, the corporate interests of casino profits helped to sway the elections in favor of the newest School Board member, who is also the President of a local casino enterprise. During the elections, speculations arose among voting constituents about the outcome as representative of political and economic interests since large profits would follow only one person on the ballot, out of a total of five candidates while one candidate brought classroom teaching experience, and another was a former Board member. The profits garnered by large scale casino gaming operations have helped to provide program support for athletics at Valley Vista High School. There is also potential for the Pueblos to affect change as members of a localized power bloc. Whether that occurs, may be left up to the structures already in place that limit self-determination and operations of schooling, as discussed earlier in this Chapter.

Corporate interests have a hand in deciding what curriculum is implemented in schools. For example, in Bison Meadows, the pre-packaged curriculum sets, textbooks, and teaching materials represent hundreds of thousands of school district dollars. Recent changes in graduation requirements also reflect this focus – the new class of ninth graders entering high school in 2009 will be required to earn more credits in mathematics, a credit in career clusters, workplace readiness or language other than English and their electives credits are reduced. The choices for electives include courses such as service learning and financial literacy. Curriculum programs offered at Valley Vista such as “GEAR Up”

are totally driven by focus on vocational programs and developing service industry careers. The impetus for the national GEAR Up (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is to get more under-represented students into higher education. Not only are programmatic influences evident, but curricular materials used throughout Bison Meadows have been impacted by neo-liberalism as well.

In addition, the state of New Mexico helps create a neo-liberal agenda with millions of dollars of funding offered in competitive grants for schools who meet criteria such as Lava Bluff and Valley Vista – falling under the categories of “Restructuring” but also willing to engage in the curricular programs promoted by the government as commonsense approaches to education. For example, the Reading First program is touted as a research-based cure all for the academic woes of failing schools. If schools apply for federal grant monies, they must do so under the conditions that they implement federally funded curricula such as Reading First. Bison Meadows accepted such a grant prior to the present research but as demonstrated in this chapter, there are numerous reading programs that have been purchased and implemented in Bison Meadows schools. Of course, the corporations that benefit from Reading First sales are part of the hegemonic bloc that drives curriculum in this state, as well. Toward the end of the current research, additional federal stimulus dollars became available to schools such as Valley Vista and Lava Bluff whose test scores indicated they seriously needed improvement. Valley Vista’s bid for stimulus monies in Obama’s Race to the Top Grant was unsuccessful, however. As a neo-liberal project, grant funding has come to stand for the promotion of curricular and ideological agendas to which schools must ascribe if they are to access



additional funding in the economic downturn we experience currently. Additional focus on reading, math, English language and test scores is what drives the economy of testing and curricular publishing through the sustained efforts of neoliberal projects.

Textbook companies represent million-dollar industries and exert high pressure influence over whose knowledge is presented in schools and under what conditions.

Loewen (2007) reminds us that “publisher pressure derives in part from textbook adoption boards and committees in states and school districts. These are subject in turn to pressure from organized groups and individuals who appear before them” (p. 215).

The process in place to adopt textbooks is driven by corporate interest and supported by State policy. In order for a school to adopt a textbook, it must first be approved on the NM textbook adoption list. This represents the narrowing of interests and the power of elite groups to decide what counts as the knowledge we will represent in our local schools.

At a presentation by one textbook representative to the school district, the spokesperson for the textbook company offered some insight about the inner workings of the NM PED. He said “all of our textbooks and materials meet the requirements of the State. There’s an evaluation committee up there (Santa Fe) and they decide if the books available meet the state standards. If yes, then it’s put on a list and you are allowed to look at it” (S.H., 1/25/10). Educators and textbook committees apparently are not afforded the right by the state to evaluate textbooks on their own.

Another way corporate interests shape curriculum for schools is by the use of in school marketing, cleverly disguised in curricular content. For example, in Caldera, the

local businesses sponsor contests and offer incentives to help market their products. The 2008 contest asked 5<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Bison Meadows schools to participate in a naming competition for the Christmas parade. The winners would be allowed to help decorate the town Christmas tree. The ulterior motive: “The winning school will help decorate the Christmas tree and this will draw people downtown, which is the mission of [the organization]” (School board meeting, 10/9/08).

Neo-liberalism clearly operates to shape the ways curriculum is designed and implemented at the Bison Meadows high schools. Examination of the inherent messages in the curricular offerings, resources, and materials available for students based on legislative limitations is crucial as articulated by Spring (1998) “for understanding how advocates of neoliberalism...can advocate government control of the school curriculum” (p. 128). Each of the concepts related in the organization of this results chapter demonstrates the mechanisms by which curriculum operates in Lava Bluff High School and Valley Vista High School.

While at the onset of this research, it seemed important to examine neo-liberalism as a predominant force that shapes schooling in the Bison Meadows School District, the data led me to focus more on the historical factors during the present study. Because of the critical nature of this research, a full analysis of the hegemonic role of neo-liberalism is important for future research in order to provide a holistic view of the state of education at Bison Meadows School District.

## **Conclusion**

In this section, I synthesize the findings reported above and draw implications that inform the content of Chapter 5. As a whole, the high school curriculum at Bison Meadows School District has been affected by federal legislation at far greater consequence than state legislation. Evidence presented from a socio-historical perspective informs the operation of power within the Bison Meadows School District at various structural levels. The historic patterns of racism factor into every part of the operation of schooling in the district currently

The results reported above represent 22-months of fieldwork, between 2008 and 2010, reported in participant observations, interviews, descriptions, and analysis of the ways high school curricula is created, understood and implemented in Bison Meadows School District. The school district responds to two seemingly disparate sets of legislation in very different ways. Despite the passage of state legislation (NMIEA) regarding appropriate educational practices for American Indian students, the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind primarily shape public schooling. The research shows that participants desire a more direct, formal tie between school and culturally meaningful education, but see standardization and individualization for cultural relevance in competition.

The chapter demonstrated a synthesis of systems-level observations and findings across the Bison Meadows School District and its high school curricula. Themes which emerged included the hidden curriculum embodied in the instruction and policy that affect Native high school students; reception and implementation of policy and

curriculum within the school district; historical factors within the district; and the response to imperatives of neo-liberalism throughout the district. The results indicate that every aspect of curriculum in the school district, from inception to implementation, is driven by the inexorable adherence to federal legislation. The data also reveal the implications of this study, which include the need for more local control and community empowerment to influence the curriculum within this school district.

This research is important because the macro-level forces that shape policy have a direct bearing on the ways schooling is done in the district. Additionally, the perceptions within the public sphere of education and in the communities served by the schools also affect school district policy. A discussion of the findings and implications for future research, as well as recommendations for immediate attention are presented in the next chapter. Implications for further study are derived from the analysis of classroom observation and school-site curriculum documents. These implications are reflective of district level policy that determines whose interests are served in the creation of and functioning of curriculum for the students whom state and federal legislation is intended to help. A discussion of the hidden discrepancies in curricular implementation with different populations of students also appears in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

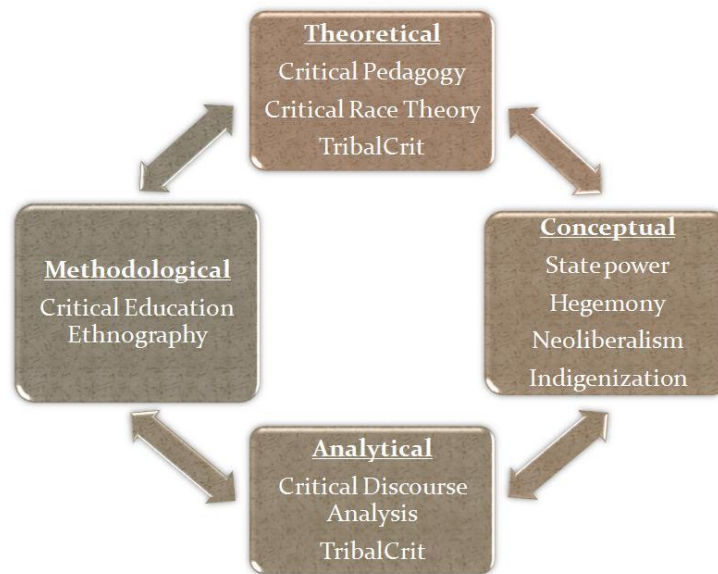
### **Conclusion**

In this final chapter, I provide an overview of the problem investigated. I then briefly review the methodological framework and procedures used in the collection of data. Finally, I offer a summary of the results followed by a discussion of the major implications revealed by the present study. In order to situate the impetus for the research, I first begin with a reflection on my original goals for embarking on this journey.

My personal and professional interest in conducting this research was to gain a Critical understanding of the underlying forces that shape schooling in the Bison Meadows School District. Through this understanding, I hoped to become a transformational leader in the field of schooling for Indigenous children because I am already engaged in making curricular decisions in that field. Through this research, I have found that the critique of my own experience in this school system was not unfounded. The participants of this study who invited me into their schools and classrooms helped me to reaffirm this Critical consciousness. I hope that I have honored their narratives and represented their struggles through their daily experiences portrayed in the Bison Meadows School District. Their stories confirmed the assumptions I had made as I entered the research locale. Figure 6 below provides an overview of my theoretical and conceptual frames as they influenced the data collection process and analysis of data in the present study. In this introduction, I review my research

assumptions and I restate the problem that brought me to this research. I then discuss my results with the application of Brayboy's CRT frame, followed by the implications of the study and suggestions for future research in this area.

Figure 6 Overview of Frameworks



As I stated in Chapter One, local control over the education systems that serve children from distinct communities is crucial in compelling those schools to appropriately meet the needs of the children they serve. This can be accomplished by offering quality curricula that is culturally relevant and academically sound. Additionally, it is incumbent upon NM public school systems that serve diverse populations to continually strive to provide inclusive and effective curricula that promote appreciation and tolerance of all

students in order to avoid the pitfalls often associated with rigid focus solely upon data-driven accountability (Wood, 2004; Trujillo & Alston, 2005).

In light of the current NCLB legislation that our schools in NM must respond to until its reauthorization in 2014, the rhetoric of education has turned toward “improving and strengthening accountability, teaching, and learning by using State assessment systems designed to ensure that students are meeting challenging State academic achievement and content standards and increasing achievement overall, but especially for the disadvantaged” (PUBLIC LAW 107–110—JAN. 8, 2002 115 STAT. 1425, §1001). There is an underlying threat in the implementation of the law by states and school districts which is directly tied to funding and public surveillance. States must rely on scientific measures of learning to “evidence” quality teaching by demonstrating performance in Mathematics and Reading through one-size-fits-all “Annual Measureable Objectives” defined by NCLB. These types of requirements lead to the quantification of learning that can only be evaluated by standardized test measures. Since the federal law (and by default State law) chooses to limit its definition of official knowledge as math and reading scores, American Indian leaders across the nation have voiced concern over the NCLB legislation claiming that it forces schools to cut tribal culture and language classes in order to meet the requirements for “more important” subjects taught in school (McCarty, 2008). Despite proposed gains in reading and math under President Bush's school reform law, it does not address the needs of Native communities as evidenced by forcing out those cultural and community programs intended to sustain Indigenous languages and cultures (NIEA Preliminary Report, 2005; Trujillo & Alston, 2005).

Adequate Yearly Progress or “AYP”, according to NCLB, drives the public perception of school performance. All schools are mandated to reach full proficiency in all AYP measures by the school year 2013-14. New Mexico created a public surveillance mechanism that divulges disaggregated data sets as indicators of “sub-groups” (by race, language, special needs, socio-economic status) standardized testing participation, attendance and/or graduation rate. Each school district is issued a report card, which appears for public scrutiny published by the NM Public Education Department.

The structure of the American school continues to pre-ordain success for a limited few by relying on the strength of gatekeepers through hegemonic social and economic systems as the operant of power (Spring, 2005). This is especially poignant in New Mexico high schools that serve Indigenous youth. Spring (1995) writes that in schools that serve minorities, there has been little opportunity for the community to participate in the allocation of funds or creation of curriculum; instead such decisions were made by the “elite school boards, educational administrators, and teachers unions” (p. 451). Additionally, Apple (1995) reiterates the concept of hegemony as a process controlled by dominant groups in order to maintain the consensus of those under rule.

The future of education for Indigenous youth is bolstered by current efforts to Indigenize education and to move the foundations of learning toward experiential knowledge (Cajete, 1994; Benham & Cooper, 2000; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Indigenous nations have forged legislation aimed at maintaining languages, lifeways, and cultural sovereignty by adapting and exercising political power in the realm of public policy. With concerted efforts to exert sovereign power,



Indigenous nations cultivate teachers, administrators, and traditional ways of knowing into school settings by creating foundational curricular change to the ways we do education (Reyhner & Eder, 2004; McCarty, 2008).

An important part of the present study includes an examination of the Bison Meadows School District response to the New Mexico “Indian Education Act” (NMIEA). NMIEA was established by the State legislature in 2003 and created the Division of Indian Education as a State-level entity; the Act was revised and expanded in scope in 2007. The primary goals of the Indian Education Act are to provide support for the creation and maintenance of culturally relevant ways of teaching, advocacy for Indigenous languages, stronger political ties between NM sovereign Indigenous Nations and the New Mexico State government to shape education for Indigenous students from pre-K through college, and increased involvement of Indigenous parents and communities in the education of their children (NM Public Laws 2003, ch. 151, § 1. [22-23A-1 to 22-23A-8 NMSA 1978]).

It has been an arduous task to implement the NMIEA as the NM Indian Education Division and the State Public Education Division (PED) work to agree upon the meaning and scope of its application. Many State level agencies and several NM school districts without American Indian populations are still unclear about the NMIEA. The push for meaningful implementation of the NMIEA in all school districts had not reached statewide scope, as it continued to build capacity (Richard Nichols & Associates, 2006). A push for permanent legislative funding within the NM budget has helped to bolster NMIEA’s scope by providing funding provisions to its implementation, thereby

increasing the weight of the NMIEA in school districts who depend on federal Impact Aid monies (Richard Nichols & Associates, 2006).

The Indian Education Division employed additional staff to help support the provisions of the Act and awarded grants to “Exemplary Programs,” displaying efforts to incorporate the NMIEA in the daily lives of students at their sites. Five school districts that serve large numbers of Indigenous students have implemented more culturally relevant programs and pedagogy in many of their schools, as exemplified by the numbers of projects reported annually; four of those projects are currently under way in the Bison Meadows School District. Other indicators of exemplary status of school programs include culturally relevant variable school calendars, Indigenous bilingual programs, increased development and use of Indigenous measures of success for students, and the development and use of tribally designed certification for language instruction (NMPED, Indian Education Division, 2009).

NMIEA legislation for schools that serve Indigenous communities is relatively low priority in relation to implementation of federal education policy and its weak structure for enforcement. In comparison to the federal mandates, the NMIEA sanctions are relatively small, mostly in the form of loss of federal impact funding for American Indian pupils in the district, but evidence from this study shows the ease with which districts can get away with “faking” its compliance measures, although there are specific and strict guidelines for NM schools regarding the participation of tribal communities with schools to meet the needs of students served within the districts. The reporting procedures merely require acknowledgement by the sovereign leaders via signature (Code

of Federal Regulations, Title 34—Education, Chapter II – Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, Part 222 – Impact Aid Programs). As indicated by the Superintendent at Bison Meadows, previous administrations in his school district were not fully compliant with the intent of the law and obtained signatures without full consent of the tribal governors in the district.

Presently, schools that serve Indigenous students generate the most federal funding in the form of Impact Aid monies. These include both large urban public school systems and smaller rural public schools. Economic factors drive school operations and policies and schools continue to vie for operational monies while the tribal, State, and federal governments cannot seem to agree on issues of appropriate funding. As the monumental institution of schooling in the public sphere has been shaped by over one hundred years of trial and error, we find that these modern schools must operate within the constraints of federal policy and accepted practices of schooling.

In the state of New Mexico, 89 public school districts serve a wide range of students. There are large populations of Indigenous students at 23 of those NM school districts which account for nearly all Native American students enrolled throughout New Mexico. Many statistics reported under current guidelines that measure success are bleak – pointing to high rates of drop-out and poor testing performance. However, the statistics also report some promising trends in the State of New Mexico with regard to its Indigenous students. There are indications that attendance rates are sufficient in nearly all of the 23 districts, eight of those school districts have included culturally relevant dates in their school calendars, and at least half are fulfilling requirements or are making efforts to

consult with tribal governments (NMPED, Indian Education Division, 2009). The Bison Meadows School District falls under these categorizations with 41.1% of its total student population identified as “American Indian” represented by 919 Pueblo students and 475 Navajo students (NMPED, Indian Education Division, 2009).

The curriculum in Bison Meadows and participants’ responses to its inception and implementation constituted a large part of the present study. The research also examined the amount of local control in the Bison Meadows School District and its response to two sets of legislation – federal NCLB and State NMIEA, as described in the next section.

### **Review of Methodology**

Because of the complex nature of schooling and its many hidden influences, I chose to approach this problem with a Critical lens. I realized that in order to address the main question guiding the research – what is the role of state power in a public school curriculum affecting Indigenous Pueblo youth? – I would need to investigate multiple levels of the issue: historical roots, social undercurrents, political ideologies, and present discursive practices of schooling in the Bison Meadows locale. The framework of Critical Educational Ethnographic Methodology gave me opportunities to delve deeply into the issues present at the research locale. Examination of variables using Critical perspectives allowed me to untangle some of the complexities in the school district and to see more clearly the connections to the larger socio-political institution of schooling.

Carspecken’s (1996) framework for Critical Ethnography in Educational Research appealed to me. It allowed me to seek answers to the guiding questions I posited at the beginning of the present study: How is state power embodied in current curriculum,

instruction and policy that affect Native high school students? How are policies and curricula received and implemented at the two high schools (one located in a small border-town and the other on reservation land) in the Bison Meadows School District? What historical forces affect the way policy and curriculum are implemented within this public school district? In what ways does neo-liberalism affect the ways curriculum is addressed in New Mexico school districts? I also needed to apply an Indigenized way of analyzing the data in order to derive meaning from the Indigenous participants' perspectives.

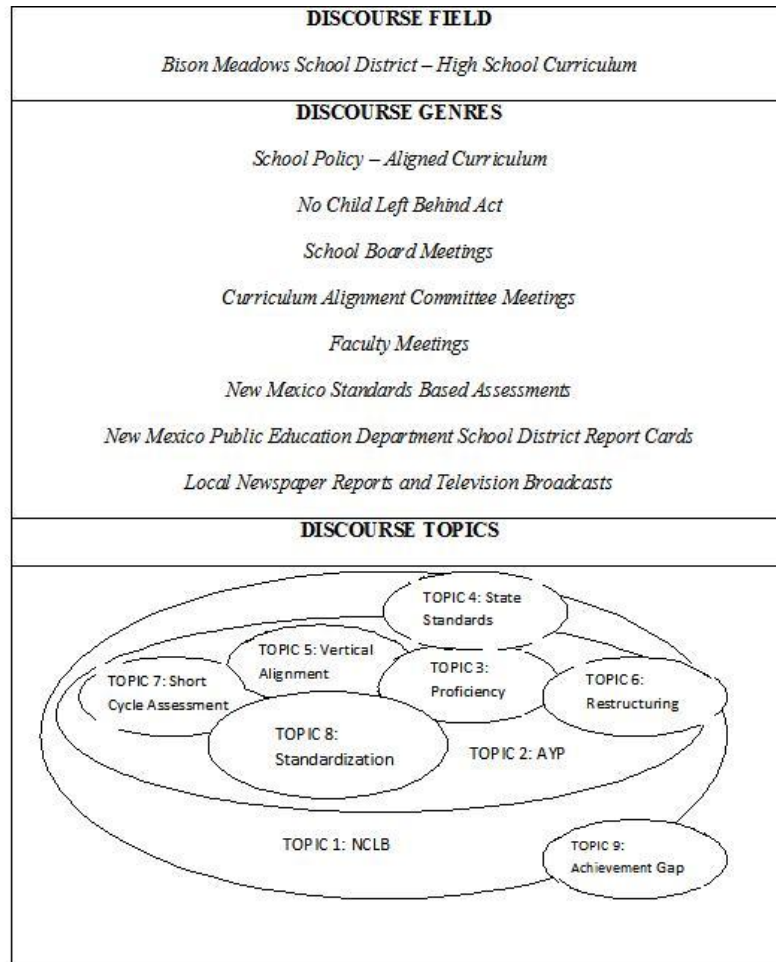
Critical Ethnographic methods supported my needs to approach the research using various data instruments and employing various lenses of critique. I chose to use the Critical Educational Ethnographic framework articulated by Carspecken (1996) as the main methodology for the present study. I also employed the lenses of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) in my analysis of the data. I outline the implementation of these methods below.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a method of analysis used to help aid understanding of the meanings inherent in the language used within a particular context (Gee, 2009). I chose CDA to unmask the dialectical relationships between discourse, ideology, and power (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2006) evident in Bison Meadows School District. CDA assumes that language and meaning constitute not only words, but rely also on social, contextual relationships that influence and are influenced by status and power. In the present study, I considered the various ways language is enacted within the Discourses of the school district through social practices of

participants and the material artifacts to which they respond. Also, I used Critical Indigenized lens outlined by Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) (Brayboy, 2005) to help me refocus the politics and action of this research to a Native perspective so that the present study could understand the realities of the participants within their contemporary, lived experiences (Emerson, 2005 & 2006; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Smith, 1999).

Throughout the analysis process, I applied Critical Discourse Analysis to the larger data sets from the school district in order to help deconstruct hegemonic ideologies, identify power relationships, and understand the discourse of reproduction in language and action. I used the texts embedded within the units of analysis including genres, discourses, and styles, as demonstrated in Figure 7 below. Although each data set does not appear in this format throughout the report of findings and discussion, this example demonstrates the manner by which themes emerged from the data to inform the results of this study. From the emergent discourses, I was then able to code the data for recurrence and assign a measure of importance accordingly.

Figure 7 Illustration of CDA Applied to High School Curriculum in Bison Meadows



To further exemplify this demonstration, I refer to the narrative from Boo, a Lava Bluff High School student in her portrayal of the underlying purpose of short cycle assessments for students. She depicted the standardized assessments as a primer for performing on the statewide standards based assessments, and indicated the importance of “the box.” This box, Boo refers to is the answer box which appears on the standards based assessments for students. Boo also reported that students had to learn that a two

part answer must have two complete sentences with two periods, otherwise it wouldn't count as correct in addressing the test question even if a student answered the question. According to Mrs. Browning, the consultant for the Bison Meadows curriculum alignment process, teachers needed to stress to students the importance of containing answers on the tests inside of the boxes otherwise any part of the response would not be counted on the assessment.

Another point that further illustrates the power of standardization and testing evident with the application of CDA comes from the counselor at Valley Vista, who explained that incoming ninth graders must complete placement tests prior to their enrollment. For example, the counselor stated that if incoming students did not take the math placement test seriously, they would be relegated to the math class that the test score indicated during freshman year. The counselor stated that the Bison Meadows district policy did not allow for students to demonstrate proficiency in order to be placed in a more appropriate math class even if the student was initially placed in a lower level math class than s/he was capable.

By examining the discursive genres, I was able to make analyses that indicated the discursive styles established throughout the district. Testing in both standardized format and localized district formats held the most value for measures of student performance and determined placements in classes throughout their high school years. The discursive styles as a result of these genres became evident in the expectations set out by the testing language to include performance prior to, during, and post testing. The discourse style of a student in Bison Meadows School District, then became one who takes tests seriously,



performs inside of the boxes, and relies on measures of test scores in order to set goals and ascertain his/her own learning in each content area tested. I explain my use of CDA during the stages outlined below.

Carspecken (1996) includes five stages in his description of the critical educational ethnography. I used these five stages in order, and returned to initial stages over time as new data emerged. The stages are as follows: Stage One - Building a Primary Record; Stage Two – Preliminary Reconstructive Analysis; Stage Three – Dialogical Data Generation; Stage Four – Discovering System Relations; and Stage Five – Conducting Systems Analysis (Carspecken, 1996). I detail my application of these stages in the next section.

In stage one of this research project I compiled a primary record of data including field notes, observations, and documentation of material culture. At least once per week, I observed public meetings, classrooms, and hallway interactions at the Bison Meadows School Board Room, Valley Vista High School, Lava Bluff High School, school and district websites, and other public venues over a period of 18 months. I read and noted policies and laws affecting instruction; I examined textbook content and curriculum practices including NCLB, NMIEA, district curriculum guides, teacher's manuals, lesson plans, US History textbooks, NM History textbooks, teacher's handbooks, student's handbooks, district reports, and bylaws for district parent organizations. In stage two, I analyzed the primary record to help me establish a dialectic relationship between the site and the data which pointed me in the direction of further data collection. I re-read the thick description from stage one's primary record and considered the roles of power

represented by people and ideologies in the Bison Meadows School District. I examined relationships and I extrapolated meanings from the contexts situated within the schools and across the district in order to establish patterns worth investigation in the present study. From these reconstructive analyses, I followed through with additional types of data collection as detailed below.

Next, I invited participant dialogue in stage three by gathering qualitative data through trend surveys, interviews, and participant observation. I surveyed 95 high school students, and a combination of 89 adults representing parents, community members, and district employees. I also interviewed 21 adults (four parents, four community members, and 13 school district employees) and five high school students over a period of 22 months. I conducted participant observation during my involvement in school assemblies, faculty meetings, and district curriculum alignment work sessions over a period of 7 months. To help validate my results, I asked participants to comment about the trends that I found among the survey results. Also, I returned interview transcripts to participants for their validation and I engaged in dialogue with participants to ascertain meaning in the social context of my participant observations. With this amassed data, I coded and categorized the results into themes including hidden curriculum and neoliberalism, policy and legislation, race relations, power and hegemony, historic factors, and desires of the community. I used these themes to help me understand the systems in operation at the Bison Meadows School District. The coded data often overlapped into more than one theme which I considered as I analyzed their meanings in the next stages.

I followed up with stages four and five by examining the systems relationships and using categories such as social, historic, and political systems to infer meaning within the structure of schooling in the Bison Meadows School District through an analysis using CDA and TribalCrit. The results offered later in this chapter present a detailed discussion of the findings from stage five. I applied the methods of CDA in stages two through five, as I interpreted discursive patterns and meanings in spoken and textual data. Throughout the entire process, I employed an Indigenized lens from TribalCrit to help me understand the realities of the Indigenous participants of the present study. The findings are summarized in the following section.

### **Summary of Results**

Findings from this study indicate support of previous research regarding the effects of federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. NCLB fashioned an omnipotent federal government system that dictated the meaning of education to schools across the United States – it established the parameters for what counts as knowledge and legislated the standards to determine whether children appropriately displayed that knowledge and whether schools adequately promoted the “learning” of that knowledge. Pepi Leistyna (2007) asserts, “As a direct result of this new agenda, school administrators, teachers, parents, labor unions, and communities are stripped of any substantive decision-making power in the nation’s public schools” (p. 99). The federal mandates ignore the US Constitution which never stipulated power to the federal government over the educational future of the country. This legislation also overreaches its bounds by forcing states to mandate testing in the areas of mathematics, reading and

more recently, science. Bison Meadows has also added standards based Social Studies testing in the past two school years.

The arm of the federal government reaches far into every school and community through this legislation and supersedes local and state control over public schooling with harsh economic consequences that greatly threaten every school in the country, even imposing limits on the tribal sovereignty of Indigenous nations within the United States. The power embodied within this legislation is currently impacting the study site and appears to be in direct opposition to the goals established by the 2003 NMIEA. The mandates of federal power shape the way school is done in every school district in New Mexico, thereby operating from the top-down and effectively reaching directly into the classroom via state-sponsored curriculum.

The ideals of accountability and data-driven results are exemplified in the current models of professional development and training supported by many districts' policy via programs including the Baldrige business model and Total Quality Management in schools. Once schools begin to strive to meet AYP as stipulated in standards set forth by NCLB, districts seem quick to latch onto programs and policies that garner results in quantifiable terms. These types of pre-packaged marketing schemes attract enough interest, especially from increasing numbers of school districts that are struggling to raise standardized test scores and to boost marketability to the business sectors in their communities by bolstering support for a free market economy through the appearance of quality education, high standards, and strong management (Spring, 1998).

There is relatively little left to exercise of personal agency when teacher contracts are issued with the full expectation of meeting each standard for effective teaching, with statistical proof in “data-driven” districts consumed by accountability under the auspices of NCLB. Power continues to be exerted from the upper echelons of district administration through various means, as well, such as control over the types of professional development opportunities determined acceptable within a district-approved standardized professional development plan intended to further district goals and objectives, which are also shaped by NCLB. This type of ‘professional development’ serves as a hegemonic device, especially evident in its intent to normalize the status quo and to support with rational ‘data’ the reasons for the existence of educational policy, they also serve to frighten teachers into compliance and make their logic seem like common sense (Apple, 2000).

The growing movement of education to adopt business principles through “Quality” practices, as defined by E.B. McLanahan: “[Quality is] A mindset, an attitude, structured common sense, a journey” (Applying Quality Workshop), and accountability through data-driven results in schools which has shaped the way we do school. Teachers are, of course, in the middle of the movement are at risk of being swept away by it. In other words, top-down school administration policy decisions serve to shape the future of a market driven system of education (Spring, 1998). The discourse of quality is heavily infused with hegemonic phrases and invites everyone to join in, under the veiled threat of loss of capital if they don’t. Loss of capital is represented by both economic and human forms of the public school employees and students (Bourdieu, 1977).

In critical examinations of school policies, I have noted the discourse utilized and the influence of national policies to shape curriculum and expectations within the school district. Through the move toward standardized curriculum, or alignment to State standards as Bison Meadows terms their newest trend, teachers are informed what knowledge is legitimate and what the bounds of their personal agency to act should be. According to Joel Spring (2005), the “rhetoric of democratic elitism” (p. 288) calls for only a very few to be able to decide the importance of issues with regard to school operations and policies, therefore the establishment of a small and privileged group to sit on school boards has taken hold of the school oversight along with top-down management starting with a school superintendent at the top rung, teachers in the middle, and regimentation of a student’s day at the bottom.

### **Discussion of Results**

The results indicate power operates at differing levels in Bison Meadows School District, but that all versions of power are influenced by the overarching theme of state power. The state is made up of common interests represented in this case by the institution of schooling; its function defines what counts as knowledge and it works to enforce that ideology through the enactment of federal legislation to control the schools.

The difference in quality between the two high schools at Bison Meadows is a salient topic that surfaces in nearly every conversation and across all venues of discussion from the School Boardroom to the classroom to the sports field. Indeed, it is more than just a perception on the part of people from the east side of the school district. Parents, students, and teachers report many different influences over their affiliation with either

Valley Vista or Lava Bluff when given the choice. There is continual comparison between the two schools, just as rival siblings compete for attention these two schools compete for students, funding, and programmatic support. It is evident in the school mottos – one encourages students who make it to high school graduation and one encourages students toward competition and enduring academic achievement – Valley Vista teaches the basic formula, “Higher Achievement + Working Knowledge = Success & Graduation” while Lava Bluff is “Home of Scholars and Winners.” Reliance on a meritocratic system will continue to give one school the upper hand and fuel the antipathy in Bison Meadows. This rivalry will continue to be problematic as long as the power of the district is seated in Caldera, as long as students and communities outside of Caldera continue to be marginalized, and as long as NCLB helps to maintain the status quo at Bison Meadows.

The federal legislation that pushes both schools more toward standardization purports to even-out the playing field by leaving no child behind, but its effects have worked to create more tension and more disparity between the schools. This is the result of the law’s failure to take socio-political, historical factors into account when redesigning the landscape of schooling across Bison Meadows. When the State NMIEA asserts its requirements, they are often aligned with goals of the federal NCLB and cannot escape measures of success that point to quantification of learning. Undeniably, every aspect of curriculum in the school district is driven by its inexorable adherence to federal legislation, even when it is couched in the language of cultural relevance and authentic assessment.

I offer insight to the results using an Indigenized lens with the application of TribalCrit to frame this discussion. The tenets of TribalCrit articulated by Brayboy (2005) help me organize the analysis of data. The mechanisms of schooling in Bison Meadows, as framed in Chapter 4 (namely power, historical factors, policy, hidden curriculum, and neoliberalism), are influenced by socio-political and historical developments in the research locale. As Brayboy points out, these tenets are not exclusive and oftentimes overlap in their scope and meaning therefore, I have focused on the four main tenets of TribalCrit that best fit the scope of this research in the following discussion – Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation; U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, white supremacy, and a desire for material gain; The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens; and . As Brayboy pointed out, these tenets are not independent of each another and I briefly present t all within the context of this discussion. I then follow with further analyses presented in response to the remaining seven tenets posed by TribalCrit.

***Tenet Six: Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.*** The existence of state power operating in and around the Bison Meadows School District has been fashioned by longstanding processes of colonization that have set the backdrop for the locale in the present study. Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2005) describe colonization as “formal and informal methods (behaviors, ideologies, institutions,



policies, and economies) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands, and resources” (p. 2). Additionally, Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird assert that “Colonizers engage in this process because it allows them to maintain and/or expand their social, political, and economic power” (p. 2). As demonstrated in Chapter 4, colonial ideologies impact the lives of people living in and around Bison Meadows County.

From the historical Spanish land claims over Indigenous homelands to the current political debates surrounding those same sacred spaces evident in the TCP conflict in Bison Meadows County, the social and political setting is contrived under tense racialized conditions. Colonial ideologies are intertwined with racism, as Gómez (2000) points out, “an ideology of white supremacy in order to justify colonization of the area as both inevitable and beneficial because of the presumed racial inferiority of its native Mexican and Indian peoples” (p. 1132). Therefore the necessity of racial divisions and wielding racism via state power became commonplace in New Mexico for substantive and political gain (Gómez, 2002). The mere structure of government systems operating in the research locale including federal, State, Tribal, and local governance is modeled after a colonial structure. Federal legislation dictates the ways political entities and Indigenous nations should respond to its power.

The findings of this study indicate that ideological competition between federal NCLB and NMIEA creates inequities in the Bison Meadows School District through setting NCLB components such as AYP as the measures of success. Not only does this system represent interest convergence (see further discussion later in this chapter), but it

also sustains a colonial system of schooling. As stated by Pewewardy (2005): “colonial educational practices and philosophies are still supported by the dominant educational power structure in this country” (p. 140). Pewewardy claims that “most K-12 schools in this country have been consistent in their original design by graduating students with a value system that is basically Eurocentric, individualistic, competitive, and materialistic” (p. 140).

Results show that standardization drives the curriculum in Bison Meadows Schools. NCLB insists upon measures of success based on standardized testing; the State of NM insists on standards-based curriculum and Standards Based Assessments (SBA) to “prove” that Bison Meadows schools is educating students “the right way” (Apple, 2001); the school district insists on standardizing the curriculum by vertically aligning it K-12 to meet the NM State standards; and the schools insist on students’ demonstration of their proficiency in fitting the standard form through increased testing. Throughout all of the current efforts to standardize schooling in Bison Meadows, Indigenous students experience increased pressure for individual achievement and competition as mechanisms of assimilation into the dominant society. Lava Bluff student, Boo recalls the implementation of standardized quarterly assessments in her school. Here she talks about learning how to fit the standardized format –

What we also learned from that too is that when they grade ‘em, if they specifically say like “give two examples,” you HAVE to give two examples. That if you just give like a full sentence, one full sentence - that just counts as one answer. You have to have at least two periods in there showing that you gave two

examples. And to just clearly specify what you're talking about. We learned that quick, I think maybe after the second one – after the first one we learned that because we went through it in all the classes. (8/10/10, 74-79)

One ultimate goal of implementing these assessments is preparing students to take the NMSBA. As Boo demonstrates, assimilation to proper formatting takes precedence over demonstration of knowledge in order to perform competitively on these exams; students' expressions of knowledge and learning are only valid if they conform to the expected individual standard. This is often at odds with a collective Pueblo epistemology, as expressed by a Bison Meadows community member,

**David:** if [students are] given an opportunity to go and see what is within this world... [I say] go and do it. That way [they're] gonna see what is out there and what changes are out there and what [they] can bring back to change not only [themselves] but within the community...then when you come back...you'll be able to be the governor, be a teacher...whatever you want that's your desire and that's what you're gonna bring back to your [Pueblo]. (4/2/10, 460-472)

Indigenous participants frequently speak in terms of “we” and not “I” when envisioning the future for their children and their purposes in this lifetime.

The hidden curriculum at Bison Meadows teaches students a meritocratic ideology that ignores race, class, gender, and other factors that marginalize youth and encourages them “to learn more so they can earn more” (Mrs. Fields, 1/9/09). The only way for students to perform well on the standardized tests is to standardize the knowledge they perform as extensions of their student identities. The concerns expressed by tribal

leaders in the Pueblos around Bison Meadows County point to the disappearance of a collective sense of responsibility to maintain cultural integrity and language at the expense of academic achievement created through the process of standardization. Comments from a Pueblo leader indicate the state of education for his children in Bison Meadows County and in New Mexico, in general,

We have a lot of concerns about the education for our young people at home (meaning the Pueblo), about the education they're not getting. And truly one of the issues that we'll be talking about is the language, the language of who we are as [Pueblo] people. (USDOE transcripts, 2010, p. 15)

These concerns over culturally inappropriate practices in public education have been articulated by the tribal leaders in Bison Meadows County, I assert that this slow loss is exacerbated by the standardization of curriculum to meet NCLB mandates.

As Spring (2007) writes, "the primary emphasis in the [NCLB] legislation is on the acquisition of English rather than support of minority languages and cultures" (p. 135). The data show that reliance on NCLB to shape the schooling experiences of all students in Bison Meadows Schools maintains the power of the state to mandate what counts as the official knowledge. It also appropriates power to express sovereign rights from the Pueblos in Bison Meadows County in deciding the best form of education for their children. Pueblo Governor Walter Dasheno (Santa Clara) expresses this trend as it relates to Pueblo students in New Mexico, "Too often under No Child Left Behind, the focus on prescriptive reading and mathematics instruction and standardized tests have precluded incorporation of native language instruction or tribally based curricula in core

subject areas” (USDOE transcript, p. 33). These are prime examples of the affects of colonization at the research locale and the ways colonialism becomes enacted in practices of assimilation.

*Tenet Two: U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, white supremacy, and a desire for material gain.* The most significant examples of imperialism and struggle for material gain evident in the present study are the ongoing conflicts over Impact Aid funding allocations and Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) designation. One directly impacts schooling (federal Impact Aid monies), while the other impacts the social systems that influence schooling (designation of Caldera Mountain as TCP) in Bison Meadows County. The operation of racism is inherent in this claim of TribalCrit. In the present study, racism is operationalized as a social, political institution and includes both whites and Spanish identities in the dominant group. I rely on Bonilla-Silva’s (2001) articulation of racism that contrasts the commonsense notion (racism is attributed to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals) with a structural definition:

Racism [is] rooted in the fact that races in racialized societies receive substantially different rewards. This material reality is at the core of the phenomenon labeled as racism. Actors in superordinate positions (dominant race) develop a set of social practices (racial praxis if you will) and an ideology to maintain the advantages they receive based on their racial classification, that is, they develop a *structure* to reproduce their systematic advantages. Therefore, the foundation of racism is not the ideas that individuals have about others, but the social edifice erected over racial inequality. (p. 22)

The two issues discussed in this section are impacted by larger systems outside of the Bison Meadows School District. The disputes both involve expressions of tribal sovereignty and demonstrate the racialized power of the superordinate groups to employ mechanisms of the state in attempt to maintain their power. They also represent complex issues of neoliberalism in that material gain is embedded in the political conflicts. Leistyna (2007) states, “Neoliberalism is a political and economic ideology that works to largely eliminate government’s power to influence the affairs of private business” (p. 97). In this case, schools are viewed not only as extensions of the state, but they also represent private economic interests.

Legal conflict over Impact Aid funding is at the forefront of this discussion because it directly impacts schools in Bison Meadows School District. A recent (2007) U.S. Supreme Court decision upheld the power of the State to determine how Title VII Impact Aid funds, generated by American Indian student enrollment, are divided in New Mexico. The School Equalization Guarantee (SEG) allows the State to “equalize” its funding formula. Schools with the highest American Indian student populations (that generate the most federal dollars) are forced to hand over seventy-five percent of these monies to the State Public Education Department to be redistributed across other districts in New Mexico.

Indigenous leaders across the state continue to raise the issue of Impact Aid, as stated by Santa Clara Governor, Walter Dasheno, “We recommend that the U.S. Department of Education encourage public school districts with significant Indian student populations to involve tribes in determining the best use of impact aid funds in order to

best benefit those students” (USDOE transcripts, 2010, p. 32). Bison Meadows School District is among the fifth largest districts in New Mexico (89 school districts total) with a large American Indian student enrollment of 1,482 pupils or 41.1% of its student population (NMPED, Tribal Education Status Report SY 2008-09). Bison Meadows reportedly joined the efforts of the Zuni and the McKinley County Public School Districts to challenge the State’s interpretation of Impact Aid funding allocations after the Supreme Court ruling was made, largely because the District stands to lose upwards of \$2.6 million to the SEG each year.

The imperialist nature of the funding formula in New Mexico to usurp federal monies generated by Indigenous bodies in the schools was supported by the U.S. Supreme Court decision to uphold its practice (docket 05-1508, January 2007). Although controversial for many reasons, the legal debate over this decision pointed to the Supreme Court’s practice of upholding the *intent* of a law rather than the verbiage (Walsh, 2007). The local struggle is now couched in the language of alliance between the Bison Meadows School District and its Indigenous constituents, as Superintendent Landovazo stated, “Our kids are the ones that are generating that kind of money...We’re now working on trying to get the State to understand that that money is generated by our kids and it needs to stay here” (1/9/09). This use of alliances works well for the school district, as it hinges on the strength of Indigenous leaders and communities for support. On the other hand, when the strength of Indigenous leaders and the exercise of tribal sovereignty do not fit the dominant group’s scheme, it is perceived as threat as demonstrated by the TCP struggle in Bison Meadows County.

The current threat of Indigenous sovereignty perceived in Bison Meadows County revolves around the contentious issue of land ownership and the rights ostensibly held by claims to that land. Although the issuance of emergency protection over Caldera Mountain by TCP designation in 2008 does not directly affect the way schooling operates in Bison Meadows, it shapes the ways the racialized system responds to its students. Longstanding hostilities re-emerged and influenced the development of new racial divisions in Caldera. Many of the battles in this larger conflict took place in the news editorials, town council meetings, and street violence in Caldera. Undoubtedly, Bison Meadows students experienced the racial divide brought about by the TCP designation in their daily interactions at school.

Much of the enmity brought out by the Caldera Mountain dispute involves two very distinct epistemologies over land use set in opposition. It is a case of collective rights versus individual rights that again brought the State into the argument as a deciding legal force beginning with the temporary protective order in 2008 and ending with the final designation as a TCP on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties in 2009. According to one news article, “the [TCP] decision ended a 16-month-long process that became a battle pitting Native Americans and environmentalists against mining companies, Anglo ranchers and Spanish land grant communities” (Paskus, “Dueling Claims” in High Country News, 12/7/09). The Indigenous claims to the land on Caldera Mountain stem from ancient traditions that honor the mountain as a sacred space while the individual land-owner claims to the land stem from purchase and grant agreements issued as legal documents to use the land as private property. Interestingly,



the TCP designation does not afford tribes any type of veto power over proposed land use, nor does it restrict public use of the land, but the way the designation has played out in the public arena has shaped its galvanizing effect as a racially divisive issue.

Paskus (12/7/09) describes the public hearing process for the original TCP protection claim. The fervor over threats to private property were incited by public commentary in the local newspaper, but eventually forced the State of New Mexico to admit that it engaged in inappropriate proceedings thus prompting a second hearing June 14, 2008 in the town of Caldera amidst extreme hostilities. Helen Davis, a reporter for a regional newspaper, indicates that a clear awareness of potential violence was evident outside of this hearing as protesters displayed signs outside of the meeting and heavy police presence from State and local law enforcement agencies set the tone. Paskus quotes a Pueblo Governor who describes writing to the NM Governor “requesting a neutral location for the meeting due to the “level of hostility and potential air of racism experienced by our council/community members and as exhibited by local community members of [Caldera and a nearby village]” (12/7/09). The relocation plea was denied by NM Governor Richardson and the hearing took place as planned at the Lava Bluff High School gymnasium. These public proceedings were attended by about seven hundred people, who sat in opposition toward one another based on their TCP beliefs, as described by Davis,

With an eerie sense of cowboys and Indians facing off pervading the room because many Native observers wore traditional clothing and cowboy hats dominated head gear in the stands across the gym.

Both sides wore the same big green badge saying “It’s our mountain, too,” and shared many of the same sentiments: The mountain should be sacred and should be accessible to everyone but reserved different ideas of what that meant or what the designation meant. (The Independent, 06/16/08)

The operation of racism clearly pervades the TCP issue in Bison Meadows and influences the actions of groups and individuals, but ultimately works to uphold the state power of dominant groups.

Although the TCP designation can be seen as a “win” for the Indigenous tribes, the decisive authority over land on Caldera Mountain does not rest with the tribes who consider the mountain sacred. Paskus reports that regarding development of lands on the mountain, tribal consultation is required, but “Final decision-making remains with the state and the U.S. Forest Service” (12/7/09) and that the TCP designation does not totally protect structures and archaeological sites because they “can even be destroyed if development is in the public’s best interest” (12/7/09).

Deloria (1991) reminds us that “The relationship between education and lands and political status is really the area of cultural conflict which has not been resolved in this half-millennium of contact between Indians and other peoples” (p. 49). Therefore it is important to consider this discussion of the TCP issue in the present study. Consideration of the TCP issue and the Impact Aid issue help bring deeper understanding of epistemological differences as they play out in public venues including the classroom and the courtroom. Because, as Deloria forewarns, the “white majority has chosen education as the field in which the difference in cultural perspective must be worked out, then

Indians have to be particularly alert as to the nature of education and what non-Indians seek to accomplish with it” (pp. 49-50).

*Tenet Three: Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.* The subject of liminality has been discussed by postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988) as a spatial metaphor to indicate physical space, consciousness and/or political space between two identities or places that acknowledges intersecting, plural realities. Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) uses liminality in her description of borderland identities. Anzaldúa speaks of the liminal space in her mestiza consciousness between india/mexicana, and “american” and the split caused by failing to acknowledge the intersections of identities. She writes that “people who inhabit both realities are forced to live in the interface between the two, forced to become adept at switching modes” (p. 59).

Additionally, Brayboy (2005) uses liminality to explain the space occupied by collective Indigenous identities. He writes -

Currently, the different circulating discourses around what it means to be Indian as well as what constitutes American Indian education establish a context in which American Indians must struggle for the right to be defined as both a legal/political and a racial group. (p. 433)

Because Indigenous Nations in Bison Meadows County exist in a liminal space between federal paternalism and independent nation-state status, they operate outside the bounds of a political entity but also represent more than just a special interest group. Like the Impact Aid issue and the TCP issue, other concerns involving schooling for

Indigenous students in Bison Meadows County must be mediated by the involvement of federal entities.

In order to pressure Bison Meadows Schools to equitably meet the needs of its Indigenous students in the 1970s and 80s, tribal nations were required to exert pressure through the federal Office for Civil Rights. Tribal petitions and efforts to change the system from the school district level were not enough to wield power over the Bison Meadows Schools; therefore tribes were forced to revert to the federal system to enforce Civil Rights laws.

Similarly, Bison Meadows operates under Indian Policy and Procedure (IPP) guidelines set forth by federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title VII Indian Education and Title VIII Impact Aid law. The IPP is intended to force school districts into compliance with the federal laws regarding Indian Education because schools have historically demonstrated their inattention or blatant disregard for involving Indian parents and communities in their schools. The IPP for Bison Meadows clearly states that “each school in the [Bison Meadows Schools] has revised their school Goals to meet the unique student needs academically, socially, emotionally and culturally” (BMSD IPP, 1/20/09). However in the latest self-assessment survey completed by parents and students in Bison Meadows Schools, high school students reported an equitably distributed response range from “Poor” to “Great” when asked whether the teachers, principals, and other adults at their schools “treat all of the students in the school well, no matter what their background is” and parents tended to rate the Bison Meadows Schools with a split between “Poor/Fair” and “Good” (NM CLASS Self Assessment – Secondary Students,

BMSD website, retrieved 2/4/10) which indicates that students cultural needs are not being met across the board.

And finally, the border-town violence phenomenon must be dealt with through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The local Chief of Police refutes claims that the 2009 brutal beatings of eight Navajo men in Caldera were racially motivated. He testified at the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission Race Relations Hearings in Caldera in July 2009 but offered no strong support for the case of human rights violations, instead passing it off to his police sergeant for discussion. The Chief of Police had previously been quoted as stating that despite the ongoing FBI investigation “his department has determined that [the assailant’s] actions were not racially motivated” and that in his 22 years on the police force, he “doesn’t believe that the violence in his town was related to the TCP designation and the controversy that followed” (Paskus, 12/7/09). At the same time, the police sergeant was quoted as saying “to just go drive down the street and see the first person you see and beat them that bad is definitely a hate crime” (KOAT.com, 6/30/09). As extensions of the state, these police officers represent the disjointed discourse of racialized violence in Caldera. This case also offers an example of how Indigenous Nations are limited in their scope to provide legal pressure over criminal cases involving their own people.

Deloria (1969) seems to refer to this liminal space when he writes that “to be an Indian in modern American society is in a very real sense to be unreal and ahistorical” (p. 2). Within the limitations superimposed on their realities, Indigenous peoples in Bison Meadows Schools are caught in a cycle of defending their rights to exist as sovereign

nations and exerting their sovereignty through conventional legal means. The Indigenous Nations operate within the federal system and must respond to federal policies; however the mandate of reciprocity for tribal law is nonexistent. Porter (2005) states, “the most direct control over our nations has been exercised by the U.S. government through its Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)” (p. 89). Porter also describes the absolute power the BIA exercises over Indian affairs and asserts, “Indian nations today have governments that cannot take any lawful action without the permission of the secretary of the Interior” (p. 89).

There is no stipulation in government-to-government action in New Mexico that holds the State government accountable to tribal laws, but tribes are required to abide by State and federal laws. One Pueblo Councilman made this clear in his remarks at a government-to-government meeting, “the state will mandate requirements...A lot of times, like NCLB, disregard tribal sovereignty by forcing students to comply with state and federal guidelines” (Zuni Pueblo Councilman, 10/10/07). In this liminal space, tribal sovereignty is confined and the concept of liminality described by Anzaldúa becomes necessary in Indigenous Nations’ adept performance of switching modes.

The results clearly indicate a strong desire by the Indigenous communities served by Bison Meadows School District for language revitalization and culture programs. Participants also express a strong desire to address the inequities between the two high schools in the district so they will not feel the need to choose between one that is on traditional homelands, but ranked among the 35 worst schools in the state, and the more

rigorous and challenging municipal high school that offers a wider variety of academic, sports, and social programs.

Participants suggest that stronger tribal involvement and presence in the schools and within the school district will help bring about these changes. Already, many parents point to the increased level of effectiveness that one of the Pueblos in the present study has over its expression of tribal sovereignty and involvement in the schooling of its children. There were concerted efforts to get the Pueblo language and culture program implemented at Valley Vista High School and through sustained tribal efforts, the same language program is offered as one of the “Foreign Language” credits needed for graduation. This same Pueblo also has a hand in the discipline of its students in Bison Meadows Schools by creating a direct link with the truancy office and principal’s office of Lava Bluff High School and providing the necessary traditional follow up at the Pueblo. It is through these types of balanced alliances that Indigenous Nations can impact the education of their children.

Tribal leaders have stated the needs for more tribal collaboration and meaningful involvement in the creation and maintenance of sustainable, culturally relevant practices for educating Indigenous students in New Mexico. Joe Garcia, renowned Indigenous leader, talks about the nature of consultation as opposed to collaboration,

It never said decide, negotiate, compromise, or come to some kind of conclusion. And so by that very definition of consultation, people could listen to us, but they don’t need to take action...that’s why we’re looking at collaboration. Nation-to-

nation collaboration is a better term because that means working together.

(USDOE transcripts, 2010, p. 13)

Meetings between the State and the tribes include prayer and pleas for State leaders to seriously consider the needs of tribal communities.

In 2009, the “State-Tribal Collaboration Act” was signed into law by NM Governor Richardson. NM Secretary of Indian Affairs, Alvin Warren, describes the collaboration agreement as “a national model for institutionalizing mutually beneficial policies and protocols between state and tribal governments” (State-Tribal Leaders Summit Report, April 2010, p. 1). The Collaboration Act is a positive step toward strengthening the sovereignty of 22 Indigenous Nations in New Mexico. Education is one of the major agenda items in discussions between tribal and state leaders. At the first NM State-Tribal Leaders Summit in May 2009, the three most pressing education issues presented by the tribal coalitions included SEG and Impact Aid funding allocations, higher education for Native students, and quality of education for elementary and secondary Native students. Tribal leaders expressed concerns regarding the educational needs of Indigenous students on both an academic and culturally responsive levels. The push for establishing permanent funding for the maintenance of Native language and culture programs in schools is a priority (State-Tribal Leaders Summit Report, April 2010).

Similarly, at the Tribal Leaders Consultation with the U.S. Department of Education in May 2010, tribal leaders represented many of the same nations present at the State summit. These leaders also voiced many of the same concerns. Governor Everett



Chavez (Kewa Pueblo) brought the point of sovereignty, autonomy, and self-determination home when he said “if we’re going to be in control of our destiny, we have to be in control of our education” (U.S. DOE, transcript, 2010, p. 7).

In his discussion of decolonizing Indigenous governing structures, Porter (2005) states “Being under the control of a foreign sovereign is, by definition, a violation of inherent right of self-determination of the occupied people” (p. 89). Porter points to the way such a government impacts Indigenous desires to maintain language and culture initiatives. He states that many tribes, because of the federal structure of government, are constrained by BIA systems of control over federal Indian law’s “twofold mission of establishing the legal bases for American colonization of the continent, and perpetuating American power and control over the Indian nations” (p. 105). Santa Clara Pueblo Governor, Walter Dasheno recommends that tribes “strengthen tribal control and education” and states “we want to have more control over the education of our students whether they are in public schools, tribal schools, or BIA schools” (USDOE transcripts, p. 33). In New Mexico Indigenous leaders of the Pueblo Nations, Navajo Nation, and Apache Nations are faced with navigating through and overturning State and federal government constrictions to regain power and express self-determination over educating their children.

***Tenet Five: The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.*** The auto-ethnographic account of schooling experiences presented in Chapter 1 helps me to discuss the combination of these tenets. Ko’styea, my great-grandfather, melded his *K’awaikamet* education with his

Carlisle education in the 1880s. His example demonstrates the strength of retaining Indigenous knowledge while using the westernized knowledge of schooling to engage in education in its truest sense. My great-grandfather held onto his *K'awaika* roots and used his experience with western industrial schooling to strengthen his skills as an agriculturalist, a carpenter, and a statesman. Through his experiences and the hardships endured by my own parents to achieve westernized education while maintaining a strong bond to traditional culture and homeland, the importance of education has continued to influence my endeavors in schooling. Through conscious efforts I have come to view learning as the melding of our Indigenized values and culture along with westernized schooling.

As Indigenous peoples, we continually strive to balance our lives according to the influences and examples we learn from our grandmothers and grandfathers. We learn to constantly adapt and respond to the contemporary social pressures we experience in school and work. Two participant narratives illustrate the adaptability of students in their struggles to honor their Indigeneity in school. An Indigenous parent, Daisy recounts the knowledge passed down from her elders that she imparts on her high school aged son. She expresses the importance of learning to adapt so -

That he's able to balance his education AND his culture together. As Native American [parents], that's what we have to do! We have to teach our children to be able to balance that white world, as far as your job, and then your roots - your Native American roots whether it be within your kiva or in the church, we have to

be strong enough to be able to bring the two and balance them out so that you're able to take care of BOTH. (2/26/10, 183-188)

Many times for students Bison Meadows High School, that balance involves overcoming internal and external struggles. It involves understanding that we need to refit our Indigenized lenses of schooling to include space to meet the demands of schooling while balancing our tribal responsibilities at home (meaning our traditional sacred spaces).

Boo, a Lava Bluff student articulates this practice as she experiences it in school. She described the extra effort Indigenous students must make to keep up with schoolwork and participate in their cultural responsibilities outside of school. There is a process students must use to take cultural leave from school; it involves student initiative to gain permission for extended absences from school as well as their completion of forms to gather schoolwork prior to taking leave from school. Boo states,

We would try and do that (cultural leave process) as well as getting ready for our own religious ceremonies and stuff...So on a cultural basis, it all worked out, its just that if you're a student athlete, too you also knew that if you were going to be missing practice and if you do choose to miss practice, you're going to miss the game. It was kind of hard because you have to also worry about your position – but if you were, that you're not that type of person to be like “oh she's gonna take my spot” or “oh he's gonna take my spot” or this and that, I mean it's a team and that's just pretty much what it is. It's fine, like you learn how to get used to it, like it is kinda hard, but I got ok with it. (8/10/10, 125-136)

Boo explains that along with the added pressures to complete work prior to being gone (because there would be no time to do schoolwork while engaged in traditional ceremonies) students also faced social pressures when they missed out on team sports. In order to balance both school and home, students are required to undertake complex ontological shifts.

The choices that students make to follow tradition are becoming increasingly more difficult as schooling becomes increasingly more regimented so that if they miss out on a week's worth of classroom time, their chances of academic success become threatened. These lived realities are part of the challenges Indigenous youth face as students engaged in schooling and as young adults trying to uphold their centuries' old traditions as participating tribal members.

Participant narratives serve as data in the present study. They are powerful in their meanings and express Pueblo epistemologies in ways that written English cannot describe. This type of data brings a depth and richness to the present study that quantified results could never produce. As bell hooks explains, we come to theory through our lived experiences and practice our theory in the ways we make sense of the world and the actions we take based upon our theorizing. hooks (1994) points out that "we may practice theorizing without ever knowing/ possessing the terms" (p. 62) because we are in the midst of living it.

Brayboy (2005) relies on Freire's idea of praxis, "the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (2002, p.79) to describe action based upon theorizing, "praxis involves researchers who utilize theory to make an active

change in the situation and context being examined” (p. 440). The use of participant narratives actively engages this research in the dialogue regarding schooling and curriculum as the narratives link historical, social, and political experiences and perspectives that inform the present study. Many of the participant narratives are spoken with the intention that engaging the dialogue is indeed a form of praxis.

Evidence from the tribal leaders’ voices and from the participants interviewed for this study demonstrates theory and practice. They offer what Wilson (2005) describes as a “reaffirmation of Indigenous epistemological and ontological foundations...[as] a central form of resistance to the colonial forces that have consistently and methodologically denigrated and silenced them” (p. 71). The action represented by the present study then can be seen as the creation of theory representing the experiences of Indigenous youth in Bison Meadows School District and the movement toward Indigenization of their classrooms and schools. As Noah demonstrated, his vision of best practices would involve an Indigenous perspective,

**Noah:** I would WANT to make a project on my history and where I come from, and I would like to present it to the people who don't know who I am or who we are, as Indian people.

**NM:** What would that look like?

**Noah:** I think it would look great.

**NM:** what kind of stuff would you use?

**Noah:** I would use traditional heritage, everything, language...

**NM:** do you think you'll ever have the opportunity to do that here?

**Noah:** yes. (4/29/09, 164-173)

It is promising to know that students like Noah see a space in the curriculum where they can carve out a niche to self-identify and to use their Indigenous narratives to bring about awareness and change for the future of schooling in their district.

It is up to the youth to continue to express their desires for culturally relevant education, the tribal leaders to ensure their voices are heard and acted upon, and the teachers to incorporate it into their praxis. One example is demonstrated by ArtDawg who, not unlike many teachers at Valley Vista High School, consciously chose to teach Native students because of the rich opportunity to implement culturally relevant curriculum.

**ArtDawg:** you know I've always tried to focus on the needs of the kids, absolutely. You know some kids want to...do weaving or do beadwork or to we talk about a contemporary Native artist, you know people that we maybe have not have heard of but I try to do that all the time. You know what's unusual is trying to teach them about French impressionists long time ago, in another country, that's really kind of the unusual thing, but I teach about Navajo painters, I've always done that, taught culturally [responsive to their needs]. (02/02/09, 263-268)

Many teachers at Valley Vista acknowledge a need for a balanced curriculum that is rigorous and responsive to students' cultural needs, one that exposes students to dominant, western knowledge as well as honors and validates Indigenous knowledge systems.

An important way to incorporate Indigenous knowledges and honor the community commitment of Indigenous students is to provide culturally based education that is meaningful in a realistic sense through community based education. Tiffany Lee's (2007) study of community based education "showed the educational effect on students' achievement in academic content and the connections that students make between this knowledge and their communities' current realities and interests" (p. 197). This is important to Indigenized education as we work toward change in the ways we deliver curriculum to children.

Cajete (2000) contextualizes this idea of Indigenous education as he describes learning that values Indigenous knowledges. He refers to one of the "Pueblo metaphors of Indigenous education" (p. 181) in explaining the purpose of education -

There is a shared body of understanding among many Indigenous peoples that education is really about helping an individual find his or her face, which means finding out who you are, where you come from and your unique character. That education should also help you to find your heart, which is that passionate sense of self that motivates you and moves you along in life. In addition, education should help you to find a foundation on which you may most completely develop and express both your heart and your face. (p. 183)

Theory, knowledge, and action are embodied in an Indigenous approach to education. They are intimately linked and represent the spiritual nature of learning and teaching. As a Bison Meadows community member David states, the most important things students from Bison Meadows must know include -

Where their roots are. The basic thing that you know what has always been told to us, you're an Indian, you're always going to be an Indian no matter where the environment you live in, that you can't be changed, you can't erase your color. You're always going to be that individual, wherever you go, you're always gonna remember where your roots were, and from the school you came from, [and] who your parents are. (4/2/09, 456-460)

David's statement reflects the ways theory is put into practice from an Indigenized standpoint as he speaks to Cajete's process of finding one's heart and face.

There were discrepancies in the results between programmatic operations and public perceptions in Bison Meadows. Bison Meadows School District has received funding from and been recognized by the NMPED, Indian Education Division for its exemplary programs in Indian Education. The State defines an exemplary program as one that has proven to be effective in the education of American Indian students over a length of time. There are nine characteristics that a program must meet in order to receive funding and recognition by the State. They include family and community involvement, effective leadership, prudence in spending, high curricular expectations, display of cultural competence, Indigenous language maintenance, scrutiny of curriculum delivery, and demonstration of increased trust between schools and their affiliate communities (NMPED, Indian Education Division, 2009).

Bison Meadows is recognized for its four "Exemplary" Indian Education programs however it is important to point out that only one is at the high school level and it is the only one specifically targeted for Pueblo youth. It is also the only one being



implemented at the reservation school and it is limited in its scope due to the constraints of Pueblo government agreements with the school district so that it is not available to all Pueblo students (see the discussion offered below). The other three take place in schools located in and around the town of Caldera. Two of the other three programs are specifically bilingual Dine' oral language projects targeted for Navajo elementary-aged children. The third is a middle school program intended to build "cultural competence in urban setting with total school implementation of oral history theme" (NMPED, IED, 2009, p. 38). This middle-school initiative involved a mix of students enrolled in a Language Arts/History project, its scope extended beyond American Indian oral history to include multiple cultural perspectives representing students enrolled in the class.

Other practices in Bison Meadows required by NMIEA such as the cultural calendar seem like nice perks for non-Native students and employees, but are not necessarily seen as meaningful gains by Indigenous participants, as one parent mentions – "And they get maybe the days off for the feast, half days whatever, but there's no cultural tie between that school and the two Pueblos that it serves" (Daisy, 2/26/10, 191-193). Also, the inclusion of parent advisory committees seem to be instituted for social purposes since they are not allowed to operate as oversight committees nor do they exert any meaningful power within the Bison Meadows School District. Bison Meadows claims these observances of State NMIEA legislation, when in effect they represent interest convergence (Bell, 1980). The idea of interest convergence stems from Critical Race Theory and describes the perception of benefit between Black and White interests. Bell argues that whites, as the dominant power group, allow for instances of Black

“progress” so long as that progress benefits white interests or does not threaten those economic or political interests. As Bell (1992) describes this phenomenon in terms of racial themes, he states whites’ “Selections and rejections reflect preference as much as prejudice” (p. 7) as outward displays to prove non-discrimination. I apply the same principals in my analysis of the present study.

Interests of Native students and the NMIEA converge in Bison Meadows with the overarching push toward AYP through inclusion of Indigenous language programs for Navajo and Pueblo students as separate pull out programs that can be hidden from the mainstream curriculum. These programs are actually used as ways to improve the overall NMSBA test scores by targeting the Native American subgroup that ostensibly has negatively affected the whole district’s AYP performance. Likewise, invitations for Indigenous parents to sit on committees and join parent groups in order to listen to the ways legislation affects their children is a nice way of offering communication, but does not in any way promote activism within the school district. These practices appear to be honest efforts to include the American Indian constituency as a primary contributor to education in Bison Meadows, but are in fact disingenuous maneuvers to placate the NM Indian Education Division through positive reporting by the Bison Meadows Director of Indian Education. In these ways, interest convergence works to maintain the status quo in the school district by showing non-discrimination.

Despite this seemingly excellent environment for display and maintenance of Indigenous cultures in Bison Meadows, it is interesting to note that most of the participants representing Indigenous perspectives felt like their Indigenous cultural

knowledges are not valued in the schools. Both adults and students recalled instances of racialization set in negative tones during the school day and throughout the school district. Marla, a school district employee, recounted times when she personally experienced alienation and wondered how students experienced similar instances of hidden racism. She also remembered hearing overt statements from teachers that racialized the AYP failure rate of schools attributed to the Native American subgroup. Noah, a student at Valley Vista claimed that his school represented a diversity of students from different cultural backgrounds, but that the cultures of his teachers did not represent diversity. Noah reflects on his experience with racialized hostility,

**NM:** do you think that your teachers plan things into their lessons that include or honor your own [Pueblo] cultural heritage?

**Noah:** uh, not really.

**NM:** why do you think that is?

**Noah:** I would say it would have some difficulty from the teachers, especially if they're Spanish or White, they wouldn't know how to pronounce the words or know what it means, so we would have to have a lot of Native teachers here...that know the language and that won't make fun of it like they do (referring to his current teachers). (4/29/09, 151-162)

The power of discourse evident in Bison Meadows helps to minimize and normalize these experiences and creates cognitive dissonance for the participants. They describe unease about their perceptions brought about by dominant discursive practices meant to quiet the conflict.

One case, in particular, expresses this discursive practice very well. Daisy, a VVHS parent, describes an incident with her son -

**Daisy:** to be honest, I don't feel there's any cultural opportunities within the school. I know this first hand because the village where my family is from, my son is heavily involved within our culture - our religion. And he had to go and ask one of the teachers - and it's sad because the teacher himself is a Native American from within the two Pueblos the school serves. He advised his teacher that he was gonna be taking part in religious doings within his community and would like to know if he could get work that he would be missing on the days that he was gonna be gone. The teacher asked "well, why are you gonna be gone so long?" and [the son] advised him, "I'll be entering the kiva for a week." And the teacher told him, "well I think your education is more important than you going into the kiva." [We were discouraged] because my son was already going to him (the teacher) in advance to ask, "what work will I need to catch up on?" so that he doesn't let the education fall behind - that he's able to balance his education AND his culture together. You know, and as Native Americans, that's what we have to do! We have to teach our children to be able to balance that white world, as far as your job, and then your roots - your Native American roots whether it be within your kiva or in the church, we have to be strong enough to be able to bring the two and balance them out so that you're able to take care of BOTH. And that's what I taught my son... and so it was...upsetting for me to have to hear...his teacher who is also a Native American...to have to say that to my son. (2/26/10, 173-193)

The hidden and overt messages embedded in this example underscore the racialized experiences of students in the Bison Meadows School District. On one hand, the district claims to embrace cultural knowledge and practice, but turns to enact rhetorical strategies in response to anticipated divergence from normalized expectations. This enactment works by swaying the cognitive dissonance toward support for the state interest and leaving the Indigenous students and parents upset but with no meaningful recourse. It is also evident in the content of purportedly culturally relevant curriculum in the district, such as offered through culture studies elective classes.

Both high schools offer broad “Native American Studies” electives courses, which look very different at both schools. Much of the difference can be attributed to the teachers responsible for implementing the curriculum – the teacher at Valley Vista is an Indigenous woman and the teacher at Lava Bluff is a white male. There is one Native American Studies course offered at Lava Bluff and it is generally approached as a history of colonization. The course offered at Valley Vista is presented as a survey of contemporary struggles in response to historical oppression, entitled “Native American Literature.” Pueblo high school students at Lava Bluff openly wonder why they do not have more cultural and language maintenance programs in addition to the Native American Studies courses, as indicated in a student poll that appeared in the student newspaper. One Pueblo student responded that he would like a Pueblo language “class because [Valley Vista] has it, why can’t we? The reason why I would like this class is because I want to learn my language more and for me to become a fluent speaker in my own language” (Z.A. quoted in F.S., “What Elective Would You Choose?” 1/19/2010).

As evidenced in the results, there is clearly a desire on behalf of Pueblo (1) students and parents for courses in traditional language and culture that parallel those offered for Pueblo (2) students at Valley Vista.<sup>48</sup> There is also a desire from Pueblo (2) students attending Lava Bluff High School for the same language and culture offerings given their relatives at Valley Vista. These concerns remain outside of the present study because I perceive them as issues related to the exercise of sovereignty. I include the concerns expressed by participants as a way to honor their voices and to bring the issues to light for discussion within their communities, but not as part of the larger implications of the present study.

### **Implications**

The present research uses a similar approach to educational ethnography as Deyhle's (1994) study of Navajo students' experience with racism in their border-town school in that it considers the historical context that shapes the current research setting. It adds to the knowledge of the operations of racialization in a border town school and the experiences in a more contemporary setting. It also adds the dimension of Pueblo perspectives in its examination of the physical curriculum process and the operation of the hidden curriculum.

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<sup>48</sup> Lava Bluff High School is located on traditional homelands of related Pueblo peoples; both Pueblos send their children to this school. However, the current political boundaries stipulate land claims for Pueblo (1) thereby creating a distinct political separation, and oftentimes cultural divisions, between the two Pueblos.

It also adds to the ethnography of Pueblo students at the Indian High School by Peshkin (1995) by including an Indigenized lens to look at the ways Pueblo students experience a high school curriculum from varying levels. The present study offers a Critical lens to examine many of the same issues that Peshkin described in an acritical frame, such as racialization of Indigenous students, cultural competence and survival, and historical foundations of schooling for Indigenous Pueblo youth.

Theoretical implications for this study include its use of TribalCrit as an analytical lens to connect personal and community stories to qualitative theory. My inclusion of participant narratives as tangible data is important to this theoretical perspective. Also important is the recognition of cultural knowledge, knowledge of survival, and academic knowledge as non-competing forms of knowledge. In the present study, I have attempted to apply TribalCrit by privileging and equalizing these ways of knowing in a dialogic relationship to strengthen the research.

Finally, an added dimension that examines the role of state power embodied in legislation adds to the theoretical discussion about schooling for Indigenous Pueblo youth. It problematizes hegemonic forces that shape schooling and uncovers hidden agendas in the curriculum and policy produced by the state through its discussion of conflicting legislation at Bison Meadows – NCLB and NMIEA.

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Pueblo (2) students reside in a different political jurisdiction. Lava Bluff High School is built inside the Pueblo (1) land boundaries.

The present research shows the need for curriculum that is both rigorous and culturally relevant for students in Bison Meadows, but most especially for the Pueblo students attending the Valley Vista High School and Lava Bluff High School.

**NM** so if you, what's the BIG change that you would make for the way that you learn, for the kind of things that you learn in this school, if you were in charge of the whole school, what's the biggest change you'd make (pause) as far as learning goes?

**Noah:** more experienced teachers who actually work in the field and actually know what they're talking about.

**NM:** do you think that you haven't had those kinds of experiences too much yet?

**Noah:** no, not yet. (4/29/09, 204-211)

Noah's response indicates the general feeling of many Indigenous students in the Bison Meadows School District. They know that they want to be challenged, and sadly they know that are often are not. Boo recalled her decision to attend Lava Bluff over Valley Vista as one influenced partly by family tradition to be a "Desperado" – the team mascot – but mostly by the fact that she "wanted more from a high school that would physically, mentally, emotionally challenge me, also not only to prepare me just for high school but for after that, which is college" and as far as her perception of the schooling offered at Valley Vista, she said "I wanted something out of the ordinary. I didn't want the same thing over and over again...I didn't see much of a challenge [at VV] myself" (8/10/10, 33-37). These student perspectives lead to the question of designing and implementing a



rigorous and culturally based curriculum, just as Daisy alluded to in the experience she portrayed about her son.

The real strength of fully implementing a culturally relevant curriculum that meets the needs of the local communities is to strengthen the identities of the students whom it will affect and to give them a strong base from which to draw once they learn to experience academic success in high school and post-high school endeavors. As a decolonizing project, the present study might persuade children and adults to think in terms of strength and not deficit when constructing and implementing curriculum that is academically rigorous and culturally relevant. It could allow them to take pride in the contributions of Indigenous ways of thinking and knowing. If the affects of this research are enduring, I would hope to influence teachers and learners to meld Indigenized habits of mind with the practice of schooling.

Also, as a decolonizing project, this research may help teachers and learners to recognize the systems of power inherent in the institutions of schooling so they may be better able to navigate through them instead of becoming disengaged by the daunting tasks of the educative process. Marla talks about the challenge of following through with such an approach -

**NM:** what are some other things that might impact the curriculum that you're aware of?

**Marla:** some other things that impact the curriculum...I think it would be the lack of enthusiasm in teaching the curriculum. I know that teachers today are bombarded with paperwork and they say that's a lot of the reason why they can't

get things done, so in order to teach the curriculum, you have to have the teachers get the buy in. They have to know what they're teaching, when they're teaching it and how they're teaching it and if those resources or that education isn't provided for them, they're not gonna know how to teach it. And I think a lot of the times what happens with the curriculum is the people who create it - the dictators - the ones who create it are usually the ones who affect it, but yet they're not in there seeing what's happening; they're not monitoring what the teachers are doing, and as far as administrators, the same thing if you don't have a good leader who's monitoring what they're teaching as far as curriculum, then anybody can get off and say that "I did do this" and if these evaluations are not paid attention to more you know from administrators to teachers then anybody could be teaching whatever they want and then just kind of you know maybe forge what they really taught or not taught. (7/9/10, 210-225)

When it comes to assuring that teachers and administrators follow the intent of the NMIEA, for example, it will take vigilance on the part of the Indian Education department as well as increased involvement of parents and tribal leaders.

### **Recommendations**

We are seeing a stronger Indian Education Division (IED) with increased power to levy changes for culturally appropriate education of New Mexico's Indigenous children. The efforts of the NMIED are also bolstered by the recent State-Tribal Collaboration Act. These changes are possible due to the work of the Indian Education coalitions in the state of New Mexico. The State NMIEA is indeed finding ways to challenge NCLB and to

promote Indian sovereignty in select New Mexico school districts, such as Bison Meadows. However, the sovereignty to educate children by Indigenous nations in New Mexico will continuously be threatened without a strong voice. Therefore sustained efforts to create and maintain local control of Indigenous education in school districts that serve our children is crucial and can only be accomplished by the increased participation of parents and tribal governments.

An interesting trend also emerged from discussions with participants at the research site that indicated little reliance on actual content or subject fields to exemplify that learning had been accomplished upon completing one of the high schools at Bison Meadows. Overwhelmingly, the participants interviewed both formally and informally indicate that the most important thing to learn in high school is a sense of who you are as a person. That data does not seem to fit with the results reported herein, and is perhaps worth examining in further detail.

One Pueblo parent suggests that there is a bias toward the Navajo programs offered in Bison Meadows even though there are relatively equal numbers of Pueblo students and Navajo students enrolled in the school district. There is speculation that because the Director of Indian Education is Navajo, she works harder to promote programs for her own people. Instead of falling victim to the racially divisive “divide and conquer” tactics, coalition building and increased awareness of the power of Indigenous alliances might be the key to increased autonomy to educate our children in Bison Meadows. Some questions that might help future research in Bison Meadows include:

- Would the implementation of an Indigenized culturally relevant curriculum for both Navajo and Pueblo students look different if there were equal representation in the Indian Education directorship, similar to the way representation is stipulated in the Bison Meadows Indian PAC?
- Do the perceived identities and home locales of Indigenous students bear on the ways they experience schooling? Is there a qualitative difference in identity development of urban Natives compared to Native students who maintain their ties with traditional homelands on a daily and ongoing basis?
- What has greater influence in choosing Lava Bluff or Valley Vista – culturally relevant specific to Pueblo (2) curriculum or academic rigor? Why do those perceptual differences exist?
- How can grassroots efforts to increase involvement of tribal leadership in the Bison Meadows schools work to benefit its Indigenous students?
- How can the Indigenous Nations of Bison Meadows County come together to establish Indigenized culturally relevant, rigorous, and tribally operated secondary schooling for their children?

With the possibilities for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA) under President Obama, Indigenous leaders across the United States must come together to strengthen their combined power. As Governor Walter Dasheno suggests, to “support the recommendations of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Education Association that tribal education departments as former components of tribal government be fully recognized in the ESEA similar to state

agencies” (USDOE transcript, 2010, p. 33). We cannot honor the work of our Indigenous elders who have preserved our rich knowledge systems if we continue to operate under the current hegemonic system of education without contesting its underlying assimilative nature. It is incumbent upon the new generation of Indigenous scholars to continue the struggle for emancipatory Indigenous education as our legacy to our children, in honor of our grandmothers and grandfathers.

## Appendices

## Appendix A

### ADULT PARTICIPANTS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Delilah	Parents
Daisy	Parents
Marla	Parents/District Employee
Victor	Parents
David	Community members
Flora	Community members
Nathan	Community members
Henrietta	Teachers/Community
Benita	Teachers
ArtDawg	Teachers
Joel	Teachers
Mr. Timothy	Teachers
Soul Historian	Teachers
Mr. Landovazo	Administrators
Ms. Fields	Administrators
Mr. Singer	Administrators
Mr. Hawkins	Administrators
Ms. Sisneros	Administrators
Ms. Chee	Administrators
Mrs. Castañeda	District employee
Ms. Browning	District employee

**Appendix A– Adult Participants**

## Appendix B

### STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

	Age	School	Race
Noah	15	VVHS	Native - Pueblo
Joanie	16	VVHS	Native – Pueblo
Marty	18	LBHS	Native – Pueblo
Kaleb	18	VVHS	Native – Pueblo
Boo	17	LBHS	Native – Pueblo

Appendix B - Student Participants



## Appendix C

### LIST OF CURRICULUM ARTIFACTS

<b>Title</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
New Mexico Indian Education Act	State law	2003, Rev. 2007
No Child Left Behind Act	Federal Law	2001
New Mexico Grades 9-12 Standards and Benchmarks: --Math --Science --Social Studies	State curriculum guidelines	2009  -Math no date (revised edition awaiting official approval)
Bison Meadows Aligned Curriculum: -Language Arts -Social Studies	School District Curriculum documents	2008 2009
Bison Meadows Content Curriculum Map	School District curriculum document guide	2005-2007
Indian Policies and Procedures – Bison Meadows	School District Indian Education guideline	2008 2009
Lavash, D., <i>A Journey Through New Mexico History</i> . Sunstone Press, Santa Fe	Textbook	1993
Binder, <i>NM State Studies Program</i> . About Books, Las Cruces, NM	Curriculum Guide	2004
Roberts, C. & Roberts, S. <i>A History of New Mexico</i> , Teacher’s Resource Binder	Curriculum guide	2004
Cayton, Perry, Reed, Winkler, <i>America Pathways to the Present</i> , Prentice Hall	Textbook	2005
Spielvogel, <i>World History Modern Times</i> , Glencoe	Textbook	2005
Read 180	Curriculum	
Bison Meadows Student Handbook -LBHS -VVHS	School publication	2008 2009
Bison Meadows Teacher Handbook	School District publication	2008 2009
Bison Meadows online	Website	Updated weekly/monthly 2010
Lesson Plan: Judicial Branch, American Government	Teacher created materials	Updated 2009

**Appendix D**

**CONSENT FOR SURVEY**

**CONSENT FOR MINOR TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY**

**Dear Parents & Guardians,**

I would like to ask your child to participate in an anonymous survey at school in your child's History class. My name is Natalie Martinez; I am a graduate student, from the College of Education – Language, Literacy, and Socio-Cultural Studies department at the University of New Mexico. I am from the village of Paguate and I am also a teacher at the middle school in Laguna. I would like to get your child's input for a research project that I am doing to complete my degree at UNM about the experiences of Native students learning in a public high school.

Your child will be given the survey in his/her History class. There are twenty questions that I will ask your child to respond to on this survey. It will be anonymous and your child's name will not be used in any of the writing that I do about this survey. The survey should take less than 20 minutes of your child's class time.

Please sign this form indicating that you give your child permission to participate in the survey. If s/he decides not to participate after s/he turns the permission form in, that's ok. His/her grade will not be affected in any way by participating in this written survey. I will offer your child a small snack to say thank you for completing the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me, Natalie Martinez, at (505) 352-9612 or my professor Glenabah Martinez, PhD at (505) 277-6047. If you have other concerns or complaints, contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, 1717 Roma NE, Room 205, Albuquerque, NM 87131, (505) 277-2257, or toll free at 1-866-844-9018.

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT**

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I give permission for my child to participate in this survey. I request a signed copy of this form.

Name of Child (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER**

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly providing informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study

Natalie C. Martinez  
Name of Investigator / Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator / Date

OFFICIAL USE ONLY	
APPROVED: 11/20/09	EXPIRES: 11/19/10
The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board	

## Appendix E

### ASSENT

<b>ASSENT FORM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS</b> Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School
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#### ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

1. My name is Natalie Martinez. I am a student at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. I am from the village of Pagate and I am also a middle school teacher at Laguna.
2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how you experience lessons and teaching that include your culture (culturally relevant education) at your school.
3. If you agree to be in this study, I will spend some time observing what is happening in your classroom and how the teacher presents lessons to you. Please keep in mind that your participation in this study will not affect your grade in your class in any way.
4. You might be uncomfortable by having someone watch what is happening in your classroom, but I am not here to judge your behavior. You might also be concerned that I will use your name, but I am only here to watch the lessons taking place inside your classroom and will not use your real name on anything that I write down.
5. If you decide to participate in this project, you will get a chance to help us make your experiences in high school different by changing the ways curriculum is presented in this school or school district. You will also have the chance to make changes in school experiences for other students in this school district.
6. Please talk this over with your parents/legal guardians before you decide whether or not to participate. I will also ask your parents/legal guardians to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if they say "yes", you can still decide not to do this.
7. If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.
8. You can ask any questions that you have about the study at any time. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, or if you don't understand something on this form, you can call me at (505) 352-9612 or ask me the next time you see me.
9. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parents/legal guardians will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Name of Researcher: Natalie C. Martinez

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher / Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix F

### PARENT CONSENT

Parent Consent – HS Curriculum Study

<b>CONSENT FORM for PARENTS / LEGAL GUARDIANS</b> Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School
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#### CONSENT FOR MINOR TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

- **INTRODUCTION:** I have invited your child to participate in a research study that I am conducting as part of my requirements for school. I am Natalie Martinez, a graduate student from the College of Education – Language, Literacy, and Socio-Cultural Studies department at the University of New Mexico. I am from the village of Paguate and I am a teacher at the middle school in Laguna. The results of this study will contribute to the dissertation that I am writing for my Ph.D. degree and may be published at a later date. I will be interviewing several students, parents, school employees, and other adults in this school district. Your son/daughter indicated that s/he would like to volunteer in the study based on his/her response to a previous survey.
- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The major purpose of this research study is to understand how a school system decides what is important to teach and what those decisions mean for students. Specifically, I am interested in finding out how the students, including your child, make sense of lessons and teaching in their schools. I chose this school district because it serves a large number of Native American students.
- **PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES**
  1. I will conduct observations of Social Studies lessons being taught in your child's high school.
  2. I would like to schedule a personal interview with your child based on his/her willingness indicated on the initial student survey.
  3. The interview will take place at the school, or any other location that is public and will allow us to engage in a conversation. Your child will have the option of attending the interview alone or bringing a friend along.
  4. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. I will make a CD of your child's interview and will give it to you once I have written it all down.
  5. I will ask your child to give me his/her opinion by responding to approximately ten questions. I will ask your child about the kinds of lessons and classroom experiences s/he has had in this school district.
  6. The interview should last about one hour. We may agree to have a second interview about different issues raised in the first interview, but at a later date which would last 30-60 minutes.
  7. I will not ask your child to participate in any kind of activities that may physically harm him/her.
  8. You and your child will have the opportunity to review his/her responses to our interview and make any changes or corrections after I have transcribed the interview, but before I include it in my dissertation. You may review a copy of the completed dissertation at the conclusion of this study.
  9. Your child will not receive monetary payment for his/her time and participation in this study, but I will provide him/her with a snack and juice during the research study and a gift card for a meal at a local restaurant when we meet for our interview.

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- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

1. Your child may be asked to give up between one-two hours of time to participate in this study.
2. Although there is minimal risk involved in this research study, you may feel the need to seek the services of local outreach or support facilities, including but not limited to the district grievance system, health and mental health services through the ACL Teen Center, tribal social services, or local practitioners.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

1. Your child's participation in this study may give him/her an opportunity to express his/herself regarding the research matter.
2. It may also give your child the chance to contribute toward change within the school or school district that may improve the ways culturally relevant curriculum is offered to students in the school district.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Any private information that identifies your child as a participant in this study will be coded and a pseudonym will be used in place of your child's personal identification. All audio recordings and notes used in this research that may identify your child will be kept away from the school in a securely locked file. The information gathered from your child will serve educational purposes and will be returned to you at the completion of this study.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your child can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you give your consent for your child to participate, you or your child may withdraw at any time without penalty. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions s/he does not want to answer and still remain in the study. A list of questions that I will ask your child is attached; if you have any questions or concerns about any of these questions, please contact me so that we may discuss your concerns.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS AND REVIEW BOARD**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me: Natalie Martinez at (505) 352-9612 or my professor, Glenabah Martinez, PhD at (505) 277-6047. If you have other concerns or complaints, contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, 1717 Roma NE, Room 205, Albuquerque, NM 87131, (505) 277-2257, or toll free at 1-866-844-9018.

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**SIGNATURE OF PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN**

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I give permission for my child to participate in this study. I request a signed copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent / Legal Guardian (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent / Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER**

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly providing informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study

Natalie C. Martinez  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Investigator / Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator / Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Appendix G

### CONSENT FOR TEACHERS

Teacher Consent – HS Curriculum Study

<b>CONSENT FORM for TEACHERS</b> Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School
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#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

- **INTRODUCTION:** I have invited you to participate in a research study that I am conducting as part of my degree requirements. I am Natalie Martinez, a graduate student from the College of Education – Language, Literacy, and Socio-Cultural Studies department at the University of New Mexico. I am from the village of Paguate and I am a teacher at the middle school in Laguna. The results of this study will contribute to the dissertation that I am writing for my Ph.D. degree and may be published at a later date. I will be interviewing several students, parents, school employees, and other adults in this school district. You indicated that you would like to volunteer in the study based on your response to a previous survey
- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The major purpose of this research study is to understand how a school system decides what is important to teach and what those decisions mean for students. Specifically, I am interested in finding out how the teachers and students make sense of curriculum in their schools. I chose this school district because it serves a large number of Native American students.
- **PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES**
  1. I would like to schedule a personal interview with you based on your willingness indicated on the initial survey.
  2. The interview will take place at the school, or any other location that is public and will allow us to engage in a conversation.
  3. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. I will make a CD of your interview and will give it to you once I have transcribed it.
  4. I will ask you to respond to approximately ten questions. I will ask you about the kinds of lessons you plan, the classroom experiences, and the general experiences you have had in this school district.
  5. The interview should last about one hour. We may agree to have a second interview about different issues raised in the first interview, but at a later date which would last 30-60 minutes.
  6. Once the interview is complete, I will ask you if I may follow up with a classroom observation.
  7. If you agree to the observation, we will agree upon a date and time based on your preference and I will come to your classroom at that time to conduct an observation.
  8. I will conduct an observation of your high school Social Studies classroom as you implement a regular lesson. I will also observe the environment of your classroom and the text materials that you use in this lesson, as well as those available for use in your classroom.
  9. I will take handwritten notes during this observation. I will not record this observation in any other way. You may request a copy of the template I will use prior to the observation.
  10. I will not ask you to participate in any kind of activities that may bring physical harm.
  11. You will have the opportunity to review your responses to our interview and my notes on the classroom observation. You may choose to make any changes or corrections after I have transcribed the interview and written the observation report, but before I include it in my dissertation. You may review a copy of the completed dissertation at the conclusion of this study.
  12. You will not receive monetary payment for your time and participation in this study, but I will provide you with a gift card for a meal at a local restaurant when we meet for our interview.
- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

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1. You may be asked to give up between one-two hours of your time to participate in this study.
2. You may experience public or district perceptions regarding your participation or non-participation in this study.
3. Although there is minimal risk involved in this research study, you may feel the need to seek the services of local outreach or support facilities, including but not limited to the district grievance system, health and mental health services through the local health system, social services, or local practitioners.

• **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

1. Your participation in this study may offer you an avenue to express your opinions regarding the research matter.
2. It may also give you the chance to produce change within your school or school district that may improve the ways culturally relevant curriculum is implemented for your student population.

• **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Any private information that identifies you as a participant in this study will be coded and a pseudonym will be used in place of your personal identification. All audio recordings and notes used in this research that may identify you will be kept away from the study site in a securely locked file. The information gathered from you will serve educational purposes and will be returned to you at the completion of this study.

• **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You have the option to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

• **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS AND REVIEW BOARD**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Natalie Martinez at (505) 352-9612 or Glenabah Martinez, PhD at (505) 277-6047. If you have other concerns or complaints, contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, 1717 Roma NE, Room 205, Albuquerque, NM 87131, (505) 277-2257, or toll free at 1-866-844-9018.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have the right to request a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Participant (please print)                      Signature of Participant                      Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly providing informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study

Natalie C. Martinez  
 Name of Investigator                      Signature of Investigator                      Date

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## Appendix H

### CONSENT FOR ADULTS

Adult Consent – HS Curriculum Study

<b>CONSENT FORM for ADULTS</b> Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School
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#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

- **INTRODUCTION:** I have invited you to participate in a research study that I am conducting as part of my degree requirements. I am Natalie Martinez, a graduate student from the College of Education – Language, Literacy, and Socio-Cultural Studies department at the University of New Mexico. I am from the village of Paguata and I am a teacher at the middle school in Laguna. The results of this study will contribute to the dissertation that I am writing for my Ph.D. degree and may be published at a later date. I will be interviewing several students, parents, school employees, and other adults in this school district. You indicated that you would like to volunteer in the study based on your response to a previous survey
- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The major purpose of this research study is to understand how a school system decides what is important to teach and what those decisions mean for students. Specifically, I am interested in finding out how the teachers and students make sense of curriculum in their schools. I chose this school district because it serves a large number of Native American students.
- **PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES**
  1. I would like to schedule a personal interview with you based on your willingness indicated on the initial survey.
  2. The interview will take place at the school, or any other location that is public and will allow us to engage in a conversation.
  3. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. I will make a CD of your interview and will give it to you once I have transcribed it.
  4. I will ask you to respond to approximately ten questions. I will ask you about the general experiences you have had while serving or being a member of this school district.
  5. The interview should last about one hour. We may agree to have a second interview about different issues raised in the first interview, but at a later date which would last 30-60 minutes.
  6. I will not ask you to participate in any kind of activities that may bring physical harm.
  7. You will have the opportunity to review your responses to our interview. You may choose to make any changes or corrections after I have transcribed the interview, but before I include it in my dissertation. You may review a copy of the completed dissertation at the conclusion of this study.
  8. You will not receive monetary payment for your time and participation in this study, but I will provide you with a gift card for a meal at a local restaurant when we meet for our interview.
- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**
  1. You may be asked to give up between one-two hours of your time to participate in this study.
  2. You may experience public or district perceptions regarding your participation or non-participation in this study.
  3. Although there is minimal risk involved in this research study, you may feel the need to seek the services of local outreach or support facilities, including but not limited to the district grievance system, health and mental health services through the local health system, social services, or local practitioners.

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- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**
  1. Your participation in this study may offer you an avenue to express your opinions regarding the research matter.
  2. It may also give you the chance to produce change within your school or school district that may improve the ways culturally relevant curriculum is implemented for your student population.
  
- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Any private information that identifies you as a participant in this study will be coded and a pseudonym will be used in place of your personal identification. All audio recordings and notes used in this research that may identify you will be kept away from the study site in a securely locked file. The information gathered from you will serve educational purposes and will be returned to you at the completion of this study.
  
- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You have the option to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.
  
- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS AND REVIEW BOARD**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Natalie Martinez at (505) 352-9612 or Glenabah Martinez, PhD at (505) 277-6047. If you have other concerns or complaints, contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, 1717 Roma NE, Room 205, Albuquerque, NM 87131, (505) 277-2257, or toll free at 1-866-844-9018.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have the right to request a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Participant (please print)                      Signature of Participant                      Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly providing informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study

Natalie C. Martinez                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Investigator                      Signature of Investigator                      Date

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**Appendix I**  
**SURVEY FOR STUDENTS**

**SURVEY for STUDENTS**  
 Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER**

Please read and respond to the following statements to the best of your ability. If you have questions about what you are being asked, please raise your hand and you will receive help. You may circle the number or symbol for each statement.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Don't Know
1) I learn about many cultures and different people at school.	1	2	3	?
2) I learn about the history of my own culture(s) at school.	1	2	3	?
3) I learn about the history of only one culture in school.	1	2	3	?
4) My teachers tell me what I should learn about in school.	1	2	3	?
5) I get to decide what I want to learn about in school.	1	2	3	?
6) My school principal tells my teachers what to teach in school.	1	2	3	?
7) I like the textbooks we use in History classes at this school.	1	2	3	?
8) My History textbooks tell the truth about history.	1	2	3	?
9) My history textbooks tell the history of people from my culture(s).	1	2	3	?
10) My History teacher uses readings and materials besides the book.	1	2	3	?
11) I have been on field trips to learn about history.	1	2	3	?
12) My History teacher brings guest speakers into my classroom.	1	2	3	?
13) I would like to change the way students are taught in school.	1	2	3	?
14) I would like to learn more about other cultures in school.	1	2	3	?
15) I would like to learn more about my own culture(s) in school.	1	2	3	?
16) I feel like my own culture(s) is (are) valued at my school.	1	2	3	?
17) I can freely represent my own identity at my school.	1	2	3	?
18) I can express my opinions about what I learn at my school.	1	2	3	?
19) I have valuable knowledge from my home & community.	1	2	3	?
20) I feel like school is teaching me how to be someone I am not.	1	2	3	?

Do you have any comments about any of the questions above? Please write them here: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be interviewed about your comments? Yes No  
*If you said "Yes", please give your name to your teacher or to Natalie Martinez.*

**Thank you for completing this survey!**  
**When you are finished, please give your survey to the student in charge.**

## Appendix J

### SURVEY FOR ADULTS

**SURVEY for ADULTS**  
 Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School  
 DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER

Please read and respond to the following statements. Circle the number that best fits each statement.

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1) I feel that teachers make decisions about curriculum offered in this school district.	1	2	3	4	5
2) I believe that parents and community members have input about curriculum offered in this school district.	1	2	3	4	5
3) I feel that school principals make the ultimate decisions about the curriculum offered in this school district	1	2	3	4	5
4) I feel that school district administrators make the ultimate decisions about the curriculum offered in this school district.	1	2	3	4	5
5) I believe the State of New Mexico Public Education Division makes the ultimate decision about curriculum offered in this school district.	1	2	3	4	5
6) I believe the Federal government impacts the way curriculum is offered in this school district.	1	2	3	4	5
7) I feel that each school in this district makes its own decisions about the curriculum offered at its own school site.	1	2	3	4	5
8) I believe the local school board makes decisions that impact the way curriculum is offered at schools in this district.	1	2	3	4	5
9) I think the textbooks used in this school district offer diverse well-balanced perspectives.	1	2	3	4	5
10) In my opinion, textbooks used in this school district include materials that are applicable to students from local communities.	1	2	3	4	5
11) I believe that supplemental readings and materials used in classrooms must be approved by school district administration prior to use.	1	2	3	4	5
12) I am aware of a public process to select textbooks and teaching materials for use in this school district.	1	2	3	4	5
13) I believe students, parents, and community members can freely represent their own identities at schools in this district.	1	2	3	4	5
14) I believe students bring valuable knowledge to school from their homes & communities.	1	2	3	4	5
15) I think schools in this district take all local communities into consideration when creating and implementing curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5

Would you consider an interview to follow up this survey?                      YES                      NO  
*(If "Yes", please write your name and telephone number on the attached card and return it to Natalie Martinez before you leave today.)*

**Thank you for completing this survey!**  
**When you are finished, please return your survey to the collection folder.**

**Appendix K**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**



**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for STUDENTS**  
Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School

**Baseline questions:**      What grade are you in?  
   Where do you live?  
   Do you like school?  
   What are your plans after high school?  
   Do you consider yourself to be from a certain culture or cultures? (what would those be)

**Grand Tour:**      What are some of the reasons you chose to attend this high school? Did you have a choice about which school to attend? What are the best things about your school?

**Legislation**

Do you know how your teachers decide what to teach you in history classes? (Could you guess how they decide?)  
Have you ever heard of laws or rules that teachers and schools must follow when they teach high school students?

**Perspective**

What are the most important things a high schooler should learn?  
Do you think that the students in your school to represent cultural diversity?

**Implementation/Agency**

Do you feel that your own history and identity are valuable parts of who you are as a student here?  
Do you think that your teachers include lessons that honor your cultural heritage? How can you tell?  
Have you ever had an experience at school where you were really proud of your cultural identity? Tell me about that time...  
Have you ever had an experience at school where you were really ashamed or embarrassed about your cultural identity? Tell me about that time...  
Have you ever had an experience on a test when you knew there was more than one answer because you were taught differently at home than you were at school? Which answer did you give? Why? What happened as a result?  
Has there ever been a time when you disagreed with the history that you were being taught in school because you learned it differently at home? How did you deal with that situation?

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for TEACHERS**  
Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School

**Grand Tour:**      Would you please talk about your experience with schooling in this district?

**Legislation**

Has your district or school been affected by the No Child Left Behind Act? In what ways?  
Are you familiar with other legislation that impacts your curriculum? Have you had experience with the NM Indian Education Act?  
Are there other things that impact a school's curriculum?  
How do the state and federal laws impact your classroom?

**Perspective**

Do you view the concepts of schooling and education to be synonymous? Please explain.  
What are the most important things a high schooler in this district should learn?  
Do you view the students in your school to represent cultural diversity?  
What are your thoughts about multicultural education?  
What would you consider appropriate curriculum for culturally diverse students?

**Implementation/Agency**

What determines the curriculum that you implement in your classroom?  
What are some ways that you implement the district curriculum into your classroom?  
Do you feel the need to respond to or include federal and/or state mandates into your curriculum?  
How do you incorporate those?  
Do you feel compelled to implement curriculum that is responsive to the needs of your students?  
How to you incorporate such a curriculum?  
Are you able to balance the mandated curriculum with the individual and/or cultural needs of your students? How have you accomplished that?

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for ADULTS**  
Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School

**Baseline:** How are you involved in this school district?  
How long have you been involved in this position?  
Have you been involved in this school district in any other ways? (explain)

**Grand Tour:** Please tell me why you have chosen to be involved with this school district.

**Legislation**

Are you familiar with legislation that impacts the curriculum in your school district?  
Has your district been affected by the No Child Left Behind Act? In what ways?  
Have you had experience with the NM Indian Education Act? In what ways?  
Are there other things that impact a school's curriculum?  
How do the state and federal laws impact your school district?

**Perspective**

Do you feel that this school district is meeting the needs of all students from each community it serves?  
What are the most important things a high schooler in this district should learn?  
What would you consider appropriate curriculum for culturally diverse students?  
Do you view the students in your high schools to represent cultural diversity?

**Implementation/Agency**

Who determines the curriculum that is implemented in this district's high schools?  
Do you have the opportunity to help select books and teaching materials to be used in the schools?  
Do you have the opportunity to participate in the creation of curriculum to be used in the high schools?  
Have you ever participated in lessons or curriculum, in any way, at either of the high schools, as an adult?

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL for ADMINISTRATORS**  
Research on Culturally Relevant Curriculum in High School

**Grand Tour:** Would you please talk about your experience with the high schools in this district?

**Legislation**

Has your district or school been affected by the No Child Left Behind Act? In what ways?  
Are you familiar with other legislation that impacts your curriculum?  
Have you had experience with the NM Indian Education Act?  
What other things impact a school's curriculum?  
How do other state and federal laws impact your schools?

**Perspective**

What the most important things a high school student in this district should learn?  
Do you view the students in your high schools represent cultural diversity?  
What are your thoughts about multicultural education?  
What would you consider appropriate curriculum for culturally diverse students?

**Implementation/Agency**

What determines the curriculum that you implement in your high schools?  
What are some ways that you communicate the content and expectations of district curriculum to your high schools?  
Do your high school students in this district have needs that are not addressed by the federal and/or state mandates?  
What communities does your district serve?  
How does your district curriculum respond to the needs of the students from all communities that it serves?  
How do you include federal and state mandates for curriculum along with meeting student needs in this district?

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