

Missing & Murdered Indigenous Persons Education Policy Options

STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
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BACKGROUND

The State-Tribal Relations Committee (STRC) expressed interest in exploring proactive education strategies related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP). Montana currently has several efforts addressing MMIP, including legislation related to missing persons reporting and the work of the state advisory council. However, education-focused efforts are limited.

Montana’s constitutional structure gives primary authority over curriculum standards to the Board of Public Education and local school districts. As a result, legislation typically focuses on developing educational resources rather than mandating specific classroom instruction.

POLICY OPTIONS MATRIX

Option	Description	Advantages	Challenges
Develop MMIP Curriculum Resources	Direct OPI to develop lesson plans and educational materials related to MMIP that schools may voluntarily use	Builds on existing curriculum development processes; avoids constitutional concerns; relatively low cost.	Schools would not be required to use the materials; impact depends on teacher awareness and adoption.
Professional Training Programs	Provide MMIP training for law enforcement officers, investigators, victim advocates, and service providers.	Improves response to cases; avoids curriculum governance issues; training can be standardized statewide.	Does not directly address youth education or public awareness.
Tribal-Led Education and Awareness Programs	Provide grants or funding for tribal governments or community organizations to develop awareness programs.	Supports tribal leadership and culturally appropriate education.	Programs may vary between communities; requires ongoing funding.
Public Awareness Initiatives	Support statewide awareness campaigns, informational materials, and community outreach.	Raises public awareness; flexible implementation.	Impact may be difficult to measure; requires coordination across agencies.

Expand Indian Education for All Resources	Incorporate MMIP topics into existing Indian Education for All curriculum resources and teacher training.	Aligns with existing state law and funding; integrates issue within broader tribal history education.	IEFA statutes do not require the use of specific curriculum; implementation could vary across districts; requires collaboration with tribes and educators.
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KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STRC

- What role should the state play compared to tribal governments and local communities?
- Should education efforts focus primarily on students, professionals, or the general public?
- How can education initiatives complement existing efforts related to investigations and data collection?
- What level of funding and administrative support would be required to implement each option?