

# PARITY: Promoting Academic Retention for Indian Tribal Youth

## Description

(Information from: *An Eagle's View: Sharing Successful American Indian/Alaska Native Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs* by B. Hayne. September 1993. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, Volume 1, pages 6-7. You can view the document at <http://www.nwrac.org/pub/library/e/index.html>.)

PARITY seeks to reduce dropout rates and bolster resiliency in students. The focus group is Native American and non-Native American students, grades six through twelve, of the Klamath Trinity Joint Unified School District of Northern California. The program serves a population separated by mountainous terrain spread over 1,100 square miles.

The PARITY steering committee restructured the math, science, language arts and social science curriculum to make it more relevant to students. The curriculum has been enriched with Native American social, cultural, and historical contributions to the various disciplines. Faculty members from participating universities meet regularly to discuss instructional methods and content with the following four principles in mind:

- 1) learn about and respect the student population;
- 2) incorporate its values and interests;
- 3) combine resources to enhance learning, and
- 4) maintain high expectations.

This approach leads to a greater understanding of the students' surroundings and their relationship to a larger, exciting world of learning. Often this becomes a school without walls as students study outdoors at various locations and with a variety of teachers since cross-institutional exchanges occur regularly. The program collaborates with several community partners.

The importance of institutional support for those staff members involved is reflected in release-time, cross-institutional collaboration, orientation and retreat meetings, professional development activities, and a sharing of both human and physical resources among all partner sites.

The PARITY steering committee meets regularly throughout the year to plan major events including fall orientation, fall retreat, Summer Bridge Enrichment, funding issues, public relations with the communities involved, and monitoring the project's overall structure.

The program cites four key components to success:

- 1) cross institutional and community support promoting the common good of assisting students;
- 2) dedication of staff and personnel;
- 3) respect for the students and community; and
- 4) involvement of all partner participants as equals.

## Characteristics:

<b>Risk Factors:</b>	* Lack of Commitment to School * Transition & Mobility
<b>Protective Factors:</b>	* Bonding * Opportunities * Skills
<b>CSAP Strategies:</b>	* Environmental
<b>IOM Type:</b>	* Universal

## Populations Found To Be Appropriate For This Practice:

<b>Specific Ethnic Groups:</b>	* Native American
<b>Specific Age Levels:</b>	* High School * Middle School / Junior High
<b>Other Specified Characteristics:</b>	* Rural Rural, Native, non-Native

## Evaluating This Practice:

The following are suggestions of areas you may want to assess if you implement this promising practice. For assistance on creating an evaluation plan, refer to [Step 7: Evaluation](#).

Assess the change in attendance and absentee rates of the participants.

Assess the change in the grades of the participants.

## Research Conclusions:

(Information from: *An Eagle's View: Sharing Successful American Indian/Alaska Native Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs* by B. Hayne. September 1993. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, Volume 1, pages 6-7. This publication is no longer available.)

Monitoring and evaluating the progress of PARITY included data collection from participating schools and organizations. Attendance and absentee rates, grades and academic performance indicators, and CTBS scores were compiled during fall and spring semesters by an internal evaluator. The internal evaluator assessed retention, grades, absences, and CTBS scores, finding compelling evidence of the program's success in the form of CTBS scores.

The enriched curriculum and a Summer Bridge program have been assessed as the source for improvement of CTBS scores across all areas of testing, especially in science, mathematics, English and reading. These results have led to the curriculum changes being institutionalized.

**Cost:** Please inquire of the contact below

**Special Considerations:** Please inquire of the contact below

## Contact Information:

For training, technical assistance, materials or for more information:

Dr. Sheila Anne Webb, Dean  
College of Education and Professional Studies  
Jacksonville State University  
Jacksonville, AL 36265

E-mail: [sawebb@jsucc.jsu.edu](mailto:sawebb@jsucc.jsu.edu) Phone: (256) 782-8213