Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov

Social Studies Model Lesson Plan

The Boarding School Period – American Indian Perspectives

High School

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals:

Social Studies Standard 4, Benchmark 12.7 Students will analyze and illustrate the major issues concerning history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and current status of the American Indian tribes and bands in Montana and the United States.

Understandings:	Essential Questions:
• Federal policy periods, particularly The Boarding School Period beginning in 1879, have affected Indian people and still shape who they are today. (EU 5)	• To what extent does the boarding school experience directly impact tribes today? • Why is it important to understand the historical background regarding the education of American Indian people?
Students will be able to… • understand and explain the basis for the establishment of Indian boarding schools.	*Students will know…* • the historical context in which decisions were made regarding the education of American Indians and the subsequent negative consequences.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:

1. Research and analyze issues and events associated with the boarding school period.

2. Students will gather evidence and present their findings in the form of a brief essay and oral presentation.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Ask students what it would be like if aliens came to Earth and said they were going to take all of the kids away to another planet for education. You would be forbidden to speak any language from Earth and must learn the language the aliens speak and also study only their history and culture.

Have students brainstorm responses/reactions to this scenario. Discuss.

Mention that American Indians actually had this happen to them through the Indian boarding schools and the methods used to assimilate Indians into Euro-American culture.

Tell students they will be reading an excerpt from the OPI document, *A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy* by Stan Juneau. Have copies available for students to read in-class, excerpt is provided in this lesson.

Have them pay particular attention to the quotes and reflections from American Indians that experienced a boarding school education.

Students will be asked to write up a two-page reaction paper to the reading. Ask them to address the following issues in their essay:

What was life like in the boarding schools?

What reactions did Indians have to this type of education?

What were some of the motives behind the movement to educate Indians in this manner?

How would you feel if you had to attend school under similar conditions?

To what extent does the impact of the boarding school era have on American Indian people today?

Have them turn in their essays at the next class period and tell them to come prepared to discuss what they have learned. Lead a brief class discussion about boarding schools and the impacts this system had on Indian people.

For further research students could read books / watch movies about the boarding school era and prepare a brief presentation to the class about what they learned.

Resources:

These resources provide more background on the boarding school era:

(The following reference books were sent to all Montana school libraries – they provide an excellent starting point for research and general background information.)

Champagne, Duane **(Ojibwe)** (ed)**.** ***Native North American Almanac: A Reference Work of Native North Americans in the United States and Canada.*** Detroit: Gale Publishing, 2001. This huge comprehensive volume provides historical and contemporary information about the Native peoples of North America.
This huge comprehensive volume provides historical and contemporary information about the Native peoples of North America. A broad range of topics including history and historical landmarks, health, law and legislation, activism, environment, urbanization, education, economy, languages, arts, literatures, media and gender relations makes this highly readable book essential for librarians and teachers

Davis, Mary B. (ed). ***Native America in the Twentieth Century, An Encyclopedia.*** 1996. All classroom teachers who are teaching anything about "Native Americans" should have this single-volume encyclopedia available and use it frequently. The emphasis is on Indian peoples today, and the involvement of a great many knowledgeable Indian people, close to much of what they describe, contributes greatly to accuracy and coverage of usually ignored matters.

Fox, Sandra J. Ed.D. ***Connecting Cultures and Classrooms: Indian Education K-12 Curriculum Guide: Language Arts, Science, Social Studies***. Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction and National Indian School Board Association, Polson, MT, Spring 2006.(131-133)
www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/ConnectingCultures.pdf
This document has some excellent time-lines and background information regarding treaties – see the 9-12 Social Studies section.

Juneau, Stan **(Blackfoot).** ***A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy.*** Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2001.
http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/IndianEd/Resources/History_FoundationAmindianEd.pdf

OPI Indian Education Web site – www.opi.mt.gov/programs/Indianed/IEFA.html

Utter, Jack. ***American Indians: Answers to Today's Questions***. Lake Ann, MI: National Woodlands Pub, 1993.

This project is intended to encourage students to reflect on the multiple facets of an historical event such as the forced acculturation of the Native Americans during the late 19th and into the 20th century. There were many differing points of view on the "Indian problem," and how it could be solved.
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/indianschools/

Bibliography of Indian Boarding Schools: Approximately 1875 TO 1940
http://libguides.asu.edu/search.php?iid=55&c=0&gid=3074&pid=3897&search=boarding%20schools

Excerpt from *A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy*:

Chapter Four - Federal Boarding School Era

Luther Standing Bear, a Carlisle student, remembers:

> **Although we were yet wearing our Indian clothes…one day when we came to school there was a lot of writing on one of the blackboards. We did not know what it meant, but our interpreter came into the room and said .Do you see all these marks on the blackboards? Well, each word is a whiteman's name. They are going to give each one of you one of these names by which you will hereafter be known." None of the names were read or explained to us, so of course we did not know the sound or meaning of any of them. Each child in turn walked to the blackboard with a pointer and selected his future Anglo name. (George Horse Capture, *the Indian Industrial School*, page 22)**

The Beginning of American Education Among Indians

Education opportunity was included in treaties that Indian tribes signed with the United States from the very beginning. Education, however, was usually determined to be that of the American institutions and not a continuation of the education process for community survival that was developed and created by Indians over thousands of years.

American education was offered to Indians as early as 1617 at Moor's Charity School (later Dartmouth College), Hampton Institute and Harvard. In 1723 William and Mary College opened a special house for Indian students. In 1774, two years before there was a United States, William and Mary College invited their Indian neighbors to attend their college. The next day the Indians declined the William and Mary College offer, and stated:

> We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men while with you would be very expensive to you. We are convinced that you mean to do to us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily.
>
> But you who are wise must know that different nations have different conceptions of things, and you will, therefore, not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours.
>
> We have had experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the College of the Northern provinces. They were instructed in all your sciences. But when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the Woods…Neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing. **(Tom Thompson, *the Schooling of Native America*, page 7)**

A New Direction

It was about this time period, in 1874, that General Sheridan submitted to President Grant a plan which he thought would compel the Indians to remain on their reservations. He suggested relentlessly pursuing the worst offenders, then "selecting" the worst of the masses and sending them to some remote eastern military fort until they had learned it was hopeless for them to continue further hostilities. Five years later Carlisle Industrial School was opened in Pennsylvania on an abandoned Army base, and Colonel Pratt was selected as the administrator of the school. Pratt was ordered to begin recruiting among the Sioux of the Dakotas, and then continue recruiting from other Indian tribes.

The Rise of the Federal Indian Board School System

Raymond Cross concludes: The federal Indian boarding school system grew out of the Indian peoples' changed status in the late 19th century. They legally devolved from their historic status as semi-independent sovereigns to a governmental wardship status. As federal wards, Indian children were to be federally educated so as to "give the Indian a white man's chance" in life. Manifest Destiny had doomed the American Indian peoples to extinction, or so thought the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1888. Indian education policy had to reflect the reality of the disappearance of the Indian way of life within 20 years time.

> If anything in the world is certain, it is that the red man's civilization will disappear before the white man's civilization, because of the two, it is inferior. The Indian problem, in its fundamental aspects, is then, must the red man disappear with this civilization? Is it possible that in Christian times the Indians themselves have got to disappear with their inferior civilization? I think we can say certainly that unless we can incorporate the red man into the white man's civilization, he will disappear. Therefore, the one question behind the land question, behind the education question and the law question, is, How can we fit the red man for our civilization? **(Raymond Cross, *UALR, Race and Higher Education*)**

A New Approach. Federal Boarding Schools

American Indians, BIA publication (1984), documents, "... Education of young Indians began to come to the forefront in 1860 with the establishment of the first federal boarding school on the Yakima Reservation in Washington. In 1879, the first off-reservation boarding school for Indians was established at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Chemawa Indian School in Oregon, Haskell Institute in Kansas and Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma were opened within the next five years. In 1883, the position of Superintendent of Federal Indian Schools was established and 10 years later an act of Congress authorized the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to assign the duties of Indian agent to a school superintendent."

Carlisle Indian School

In an effort to demonstrate the education provided to Indian people in off-reservation boarding schools operated by the federal government, the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania can be used as an example.

Carlisle is an important beginning point because it opened its doors in 1879 and closed its doors in 1918. Although Carlisle operated as a school for only 38 years, among many Indian people in Montana, people still say with pride, "my
relative attended Carlisle Indian School."

The following excerpts are from George Horse Capture's publication The Indian Industrial School, wherein he writes about the Indian students' experiences at Carlisle Indian School.

The stories of this transitional period involve pain, cruelty, loss, survival and pride. The Carlisle Indian School of Pennsylvania played an important part and fills a unique spectrum in the Indian story. For reasons that history can now view as both good and bad, Colonel Pratt took it upon himself to do what he could foresee as vanquished Indian warriors. His influence over these people tells the story of what might be the first serious attempt to bring "formal" education to them.

R. H. Pratt - Who was he?

After the Civil War, Richard Henry Pratt was sent west to control tribes from blocking the way for white settlement, and to fulfill the government's obligation to protect white settlers while upholding recent treaties with the Indians. Pratt was in charge of the Tenth Regiment Cavalry, or "Buffalo Soldiers" units composed of primarily recently-freed slaves and Indian scouts. It was at this time that Pratt became sympathetic to the injustices being done to both Indians and blacks. Pratt later wrote ..."talking with the Indians, I learned that most had received English education in home schools conducted by their tribal government. Their intelligence, civilization and common sense was a revelation, because I had concluded that as an Army officer I was here to deal with atrocious aborigines."

Student Recruitment

Richard Henry Pratt, 1879, explained the purpose of taking Indians to boarding schools to Spotted Tail of the Sioux Nation:

> There is no more chance for your people to keep themselves away from the whites. You are compelled to meet them. Your children will have to live with them. They will be all about and among you in spite of anything you can do, or that can be done for you by those interested in keeping you apart from our people. Your own welfare while you live and the welfare of your children after you, and all your interests in every way, demand that your children should have the same education that the white man

> has, that they should speak his language and know just how the white man lives, be able to meet him face to face without the help of either an interpreter or an Indian agent. …

Pratt continued:

> I propose not only to take your children to the school at Carlisle, but I shall send them out to work and to live among the white people, and into the white man's home and schools so that as boys and girls they will be coming into the same classes with white boys and girls and will so learn to know each other, and this will take away their prejudice against the whites and take away the prejudice of the whites against your people and it is the only way to remove such prejudice.

After a lengthy discussion with the other leaders, Spotted Tail finally consented to send five sons and the other leaders supported his decision by agreeing to send their children. In spite of the fact that the local missionaries were not in favor of Pratt's plan, he finally persuaded and convinced Red Cloud and others it was in their children and grandchildren's best interest to be educated at Carlisle, the school he opened back east.

Students Trip Back East

Below is a student's perspective of the trip from the Dakota's to back east, as illustrated in the Indian Industrial School, in order to better understand this experience from the Indian viewpoint.

> After a tearful departure the children experienced their first trip on a steamboat. The noise of the huge paddle wheel kept the children awake as they huddled together in a large room under the deck. Some of the older boys talked about jumping overboard while others sang brave Indian songs. Before the children had time to overcome their fears, they arrived at their first destination where Pratt had secured two railroad cars to take them to Chicago. This part of the trip was even more frightful. One of the children later wrote: "we expected every minute that the house would tip over, we held our blankets between our teeth, because our hands were both busy holding to the seats."
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> At a station in Sioux City, white onlookers crowded the platforms yelling war whoops and throwing money at the Indian children. Confused by these tactics, the children threw the money back. Later, crowds of laughing spectators interrupted the children's meal until the young Indians finally hid their food in their blankets so they could eat it later. Exhausted and often hungry, the children endured frightening experiences throughout the long trip. At midnight, on October 6, 1879, eighty-two boys and girls in native dress, tired and excited, arrived on the eastern edge of Carlisle.

Before leaving for Dakota Territory to recruit students, Colonel Pratt had requisitioned the Indian Bureau to have food, clothing and other supplies sent to Carlisle Indian School of Pennsylvania for the arrival of children. When he arrived, he discovered nothing had been sent. Ota Kte, or Plenty Kill, a Sioux Indian, described his disappointment:

> The first room we entered was empty. A cast-iron stove stood in the middle of the room, on which was placed a coal-oil lamp. There was no fire in the stove. We ran through all the rooms, but they were the same - no fire, no beds. All the covering we had was the blanket which each had brought. We went to sleep on the hard floor, and it was so cold!

Pratt, with the assistance of others in the community, eventually received rations and equipment to maintain the school.

Curriculum and Extra-curricular Activities

The curriculum at Carlisle Indian School of Pennsylvania was flexible, training each student according to his or her own ability. The training was vocational and academic, and eventually carried students through the 10th-grade level that included instruction in English, chemistry, physics, government, geography, history, advanced mathematics and biology. The Indians were expected to participate in various extracurricular activities at the school. In addition to the Y.M.C.A. and King Daughter's Circle, the girls could choose between the Mercer
Literary Society and the Susan Langtreth Literary Society. The boys had a choice of the Standard Literary Society or the Invincible Debating Society. It would be 10 years before students graduated with a 10th grade education, but because of the death of the students and many returning home, none of the first students were among the graduates.

Carlisle later became famous for its student marching bands, artists and athletic successes against the best colleges in the East, in the Olympics, and other students became professional athletes.

Summarization

George Horse Capture, White Clay People of the Gros Ventre Tribe, states:

> My Indian friends always say that they are proud that their relatives went to Carlisle. In a sense it is something like Yale, or Princeton, or Cambridge, almost mythical, far away from the isolated reservations. They were the chosen. We all realize that most of the myth of Carlisle was generated not by Pratt but by the people there, the Indian people. Foremost among the heroes was Jim Thorpe. When you hear his name one immediately thinks of Carlisle; they are intimately bound together and because Jim Thorpe is our hero, the school that he attended must also be good. And our association with the man and his school honors us. So it can be truthfully said that the memories among reservation people of Carlisle students are good ones. They are proud of their ancestors who went to this far away place and did well.

Horse Capture concludes:

> The quest for a military style strict discipline undoubtedly had a destructive, traumatic effect on all of the children and must have caused tears of shame and anguish. Boarding school memories agree that the Indian students were forbidden to speak their native language, lest they be severely punished. Such unnecessary punishments were instrumental in killing much of our culture.
>
> From a warrior/hunter tradition they were expected to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week, doing laundry, milking cows, plowing the garden and all of these other embarrassing tasks. Now many years later only the pleasure and honor remain, the scars all but forgotten.

The Closing

> Pressure from the Indian Bureau and further reduction of enrollment due to World War I forced the inevitable. In the end, it was not the Indian Bureau but the War Department which finally closed the doors. The patriotic necessity of caring for wounded World War I American soldiers had taken precedence over the school's failing programs.
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> The War Department, which controlled the grounds originally, exercised a right, written into the transfer of the property to the Department of Interior, to revoke the transfer. The original part of the "Old Barracks" once more came under military control.
>
> All was chaos during the summer of 1918. The remaining Indian students were sent home or to other non-reservation schools throughout the United States. On the morning of September 1, 1918 the transfer ceremony took place.[17]

Boarding Schools and Montana

Many members of Montana's Indian tribes were "rounded up" and sent to boarding schools to receive their formal education. Colonel Pratt arrived in Montana in 1890 to "collect" the young people slated to attend this school. The push was to augment the enrollment at Carlisle Indian School of Pennsylvania, and he wanted to increase the participants from each of Montana's reservations from 40 students to about 175 from each agency.

Federal boarding schools continued to be created in other states into the 1900s, and Indian students from Montana continued to attend schools located in Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, California, Oregon, South Dakota and other states. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began to create schools in Montana after 1900 to allow Indian students to attend an education institution closer to their family. These schools were of two types - one was a complete boarding dormitory with education facilities, and the other was a day school where students attended but lived at home.

Lone Wolf, Blackfoot, explains his experience attending school:

> School wasn't for me when I was a kid. I tried three of them and they were all bad. The first time was when I was about 8 years old. The soldiers came and rounded up as many of the Blackfeet children as they could. The government had decided we were to get White Man's education by force.
>
> It was very cold that day when we were loaded into the wagons. None of us wanted to go and our parents didn't want to let us go. Oh, we cried for this was the first time we were to be separated from our parents. I remember looking back at Na-tah-ki and she was crying too. Nobody waved as the wagons, escorted by the soldiers, took us toward the school at Fort Shaw. Once there our belongings were taken from us, even the little medicine bags our mothers had given us to protect us from harm. Everything was placed in a heap and set afire.
>
> Next was the long hair, the pride of all the Indians. The boys, one by one, would break down and cry when they saw their braids thrown on the floor. All of the buckskin clothes had to go and we had to put on the clothes of the White Man.
>
> If we thought that the days were bad, the nights were much worse. This was the time when real loneliness set in, for it was then that we were all alone. Many boys ran away from the school because the treatment was so bad but most of them were caught and brought back by the police. We were told never to talk Indian and if we were caught, we got a strapping with a leather belt.
>
> I remember one evening when we were all lined up in a room and one of the boys said something in Indian to another boy. The man in charge of us pounced on the boy, caught him by the shirt, and threw him across the room. Later we found out that his collar-bone was broken. The boy's father, an old warrior, came to the school. He told the instructor that among his people, children were never punished by striking them. That was no way to teach children; kind words and good examples were much better. Then he added, "Had I been there when that fellow hit my son, I would have killed him." Before the instructor could stop the old warrior he took his boy and left. The family then beat it to Canada and never came back.

Today, some Montana Indian students still attend federal boarding schools primarily in South Dakota, Kansas and Oregon, but most attend public education systems in their home communities. The BIA continues to operate live-in boarding dormitories in Montana, but students attend local public schools. Tribes now operate other former boarding schools under contract agreements with the BIA.

George Horse Capture shares this story and recent experience:

> One 4th of July, while visiting at Lame Deer, Montana, on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, I enjoyed the pow wow. It was a hot Saturday afternoon and the families sponsored a series of specials, one called a "giveaway." A giveaway identifies an activity when a family gets together and saves

money and materials all year and gives them away in honor of some member of their family. They give these materials as a point of pride and so people will always remember this important event.

The thing that I'll always remember at this give away is after many speeches one family member said that they wanted to have this giveaway in honor of their young daughter, who just accomplished a wonderful goal; she had just earned her Master's degree! Culminating the event was the honor dance with this bright young woman wearing a colorful shawl, leading her family and friends in an ancient tribal ceremony. It was a wonderful time for me, because I knew right then that we would survive.

We had made the transition, from the old to the new. Because education is so instrumental to our survival we had just made it a traditional honor to be educated. That was quite a day.

So we continue with our education, and no one knows where the future will take us, but it is a part of our tradition now and we need it for survival. We must remember these old Buffalo Indians who went to Carlisle, for they are our ancestors. We will continue the job they began as our history continues.