



Preliminary Findings
(with Recommendations and Additional Suggestions)
PI 8 Complaint - Mellen School District
May 22, 2023

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Reviewers:

Kris McDaniel, Social Studies consultant

David O'Connor, American Indian Studies consultant

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Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(h)	Preliminary Finding
Adequate instructional materials ...which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.	Mellen is not in compliance with this component of the standard for grades K – 12.
<p>The evidence provided by Mellen included curriculum maps for each elementary grade level, but only with respect to English Language Arts/Literacy/Reading. There was no evidence provided of alignment to any social studies standards for the elementary grades.</p> <p>As noted in preliminary analysis provided to Mellen on January 13, 2023, Mellen's evidence provided examples of how it incorporated world cultures into its curriculum, but there was a lack of evidence on instruction on the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of <u>American society</u>.</p> <p>Some specific examples of the deficiency of the evidence provided include: the sixth and seventh grade social studies curriculums provided focused on world cultures without any evidence of how this instruction related back to cultural diversity and pluralism within the US; and the eighth grade curriculum provided related to American history (the colonization of the United States to the Civil War) and did not relate to the diverse and pluralistic nature of our current society.</p> <p>The tenth grade U.S. history curriculum (that covered the industrial age through the Civil Rights Era and beyond) could potentially be evidence of compliance with this component of the standard, but the curriculum map provided by Mellen was not sufficient evidence. In communications to Mellen throughout this inquiry, DPI identified that actual lesson plans reflecting the content of the units identified in those curriculum maps or resources associated with the instruction were needed to analyze whether Mellen was in compliance. No such evidence was provided.</p>	

Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(h)	Preliminary Finding
Adequate ...texts ...which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.	<p>Mellen is not in compliance with this component of the standard for grades K – 8.</p> <p>Mellen is in compliance with this component of the standard for grades 9 – 12.</p>
<p>With respect to grades K – 8, no evidence was provided regarding texts being used in the classroom. Again, evidence was limited to curriculum maps. Further, as detailed above, the curriculum maps provided did not identify evidence relative to the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of <u>American society</u>.</p> <p>In communications to Mellen throughout this inquiry, DPI identified the definition of “texts” is broad. Specific evidence could include textbook excerpts, photos, maps, journals and other primary sources used in the classroom. No such evidence was provided with respect to grades K – 8. Copies of table of contents of texts with no evidence of the actual content is not sufficient.</p> <p>With respect to grades 9 – 12, following the second virtual meeting between Mellen and DPI to discuss the standards and potential evidence, Mellen provided <u>excerpts</u> from a Sociology text that sufficiently reflects the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society. Mellen staff identified during the meeting that this is a required course for all high school students. This is sufficient evidence to show that Mellen is in compliance with this component of the standard for grades 9 – 12.</p>	

Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(h)	Preliminary Finding
Adequate... library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.	Mellen is not in compliance with this component of the standard for grades K – 12.
<p>The evidence provided by Mellen included a library plan, a library collection analysis and title lists of library books related to certain ethnic or cultural groups. The evidence provided by Mellen included a statement from its contracted Library Media Specialist that “Mellen’s collection is lacking in many cultural areas except Native American and African American”.</p> <p>Library “services” has a much broader meaning than just curating a collection available for use by pupils. Wis. Admin. Code § PI 8.01(2)(h)1.-4. identifies that compliance with this standard requires a: library plan; library media person; library facilities and a current, balance collected of books; as well as the provision of library media services to all students performed under the direction of licensed library and audiovisual personnel.</p> <p>In communications to Mellen throughout this inquiry, DPI provided a robust list of example “services” for which it was seeking evidence, including the provision of inclusive learning opportunities in the library and modeling and teaching the research process to pupils. No evidence of this broad range of services was provided.</p> <p>With respect to the evidence presented, the collection analysis indicates an aged (as opposed to current) collection. With 55% of the collection analyzed as aged, 9% having a 2017 or newer copyright, and an average age of all diverse materials being 2004, relevance and accuracy of available items is questionable. Also, the lists of book titles do not align with the report. For example, there are 190 items indicated in the analysis, and there are 62 in the list provided. In order for collection analysis data to be an effective part of library services, there must be multiple reports provided over a time period to demonstrate growth, efforts to align the collection to student and curriculum needs, and management of resources.</p> <p>It is understood through the library plan and information provided at the second virtual meeting with Mellen that a library media specialist is contracted through CESA 12 for sixteen days annually. This limits the opportunity to provide library services to students and staff. No evidence has been provided to illustrate how the collection of materials is utilized by students and staff or of any additional services being provided to meet this component of the standard and, specifically, the requirement of Wis. Admin. Code § PI 8.01(2)(h)4 on provision of library media services by licensed library and audiovisual personnel.</p>	

General Notes Regarding Instruction on American Indian Tribes

It should be noted up front that some evidence provided by Mellen on American Indian instruction related to English Language Arts/Literacy/Reading lessons. The statutory standard requires that this instruction take place “as a part of the social studies curriculum”. Any instruction that is occurring outside of the social studies curriculum is not in compliance with any component of this standard for that reason.

Further, even if many of the lessons offered for review were provided within the social studies curriculum, they were still not sufficient to meet this standard because they did not include instruction on the “federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state.” One specific example of the deficiency of the evidence provided related to “history” in the elementary grades was a second-grade lesson asking pupils to read a paragraph and look at a photograph and then answer questions about a famous Native individual. None of the individuals included in this lesson were members of Wisconsin tribes and bands. Additionally, lessons on the Great Basin Indians, Subartic peoples and James Town are not related to Wisconsin tribes. Although it is appropriate to teach on the diversity of Indigenous nations and communities across the United States in addition to instruction on Wisconsin tribes and bands, on their own these instructional units are not sufficient to show compliance with this component of this standard.

Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(L)4.	Preliminary Finding
As a part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction of the history... of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state at least twice in the elementary grades.	Mellen is not in compliance with this component of the standard.
<p>DPI was able to identify <u>one</u> instance where instruction on instruction on the history of Wisconsin tribes and bands was occurring in the elementary grades: a fourth-grade social studies project which required students to learn about the histories and cultures of one of five Wisconsin tribes and present their findings to the class at large.</p> <p>DPI was also able to identify an eighth-grade social studies research project that provided a number of “major American Indian tribes” from which students chose a tribe to research. Topics included in the research were sufficient to satisfy the history and culture component. However, not all of the tribes included in the choices were Wisconsin tribes and bands. There was no indication that those students that did research Wisconsin tribes and bands shared their findings with the class at large. As a result, all eighth-grade students did not receive instruction in Wisconsin tribes and bands and this was not a sufficient instance of instruction. This project could easily be converted into a sufficient instance of instruction through either: requiring all students to research one of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands <u>located in this state</u>; or by requiring all students to present their findings to the class so that all students receive instruction on at least some Wisconsin tribes and bands.</p>	

Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(L)4.	Preliminary Finding
<p>As a part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the ...culture ...of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state at least twice in the elementary grades.</p>	<p>Mellen is not in compliance with this component of the standard.</p>
<p>DPI was able to identify <u>one</u> instance where instruction on the history of Wisconsin tribes and bands was occurring in the elementary grades: a fourth-grade social studies project which required students to learn about the histories and cultures of one of five Wisconsin tribes and present their findings to the class at large.</p> <p>DPI was also able to identify an eighth-grade social studies research project that provided a number of “major American Indian tribes” from which students chose a tribe to research. Topics included in the research were sufficient to satisfy the history and culture component. However, not all of the tribes included in the choices were Wisconsin tribes and bands. There was no indication that those students that did research Wisconsin tribes and bands shared their findings with the class at large. As a result, all eighth-grade students did not receive instruction in Wisconsin tribes and bands and this was not a sufficient instance of instruction. This project could easily be converted into a sufficient instance of instruction through either: requiring all students to research one of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands <u>located in this state</u>; or by requiring all students to present their findings to the class so that all students receive instruction on at least some Wisconsin tribes and bands.</p>	

Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(L)4.	Preliminary Finding
As a part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the ...tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state at least twice in the elementary grades.	Mellen is not in compliance with this component of the standard.
DPI was unable to identify sufficient instruction on tribal sovereignty in the elementary grades. The fourth-grade lesson referenced above contains a reference to student learning on the tribes' "type of leadership today" and also optional research on "information on Treaty Rights". DPI requested further information about what these phrases meant and what, specifically, students learned about tribal sovereignty. The provided response - "Students reported that the type of leadership today was typically a counsel or group of elders/leaders that governed tribal affairs" - is not an accurate illustration of the concept of tribal sovereignty, which specifically relates to each tribe's status as a distinct government unto themselves with the same powers as the federal government.	
Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(L)4.	Preliminary Finding
As a part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the history... of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state... at least once in the high school grades.	Mellen is in compliance with this component of the standard.
A ninth-grade civics course outline was provided which confirms instruction on the history of Wisconsin tribes and bands is occurring in that course, which is required for all ninth-grade students and is part of the social studies curriculum.	
Component of Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(L)4.	Preliminary Finding
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As a part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the ...tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state... at least once in the high school grades.	Mellen is in compliance with this component of the standard.
A ninth-grade civics course outline was provided which confirms instruction on the tribal sovereignty of Wisconsin tribes and bands is occurring in that course, which is required for all ninth-grade students and is part of the social studies curriculum. Detailed instruction on tribes' treaty rights and tribal governments is sufficient evidence of instruction on this concept, which as noted above, is focused on the tribe's status as a distinct government unto themselves with the same powers as the federal government.	

Recommendations:

- All reviewers are ready to meet with Mellen educators to engage in a conversation about: these Recommendations; the incorporation of content into the K-12 district curriculum; and the resources detailed below.
- **Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(h)**
 - Re: Instructional materials which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.
 - Note that suggested resources are only suggestions. Resources to help meet this statutory requirement focus on cultural diversity and pluralism in the United States. In a study of world cultures, there could be ways to bring the cultures that you are studying back to local areas. Consider resources from trusted partners listed below.
 - The Madison area [African-American Jewish Friendship Committee has curated resources into WiseLearn](#) that reflect African American history in the United States.
 - The national [Sikh Coalition has curated resources into WiseLearn](#) that reflect Sikh heritage and culture in the United States.
 - The Library of Congress (note, [the LOC has a lot of tools to help students analyze primary sources](#)):
 - Primary source sets focused on the pluralistic nature of American society, such as [Children's Lives at the Turn of the Twentieth Century](#), [Civil War Images: Depictions of African-Americans in the War Effort](#), [Dust Bowl Migration](#), [Immigration Challenges for New Americans](#), [Japanese Internment](#), [Jim Crow and Segregation](#), [LGBTQ+ Activism and Contributions](#), [Mexican American Migrations and Communities](#), [The NAACP: A Century in the Fight for Freedom](#), [Native American Boarding Schools](#).
 - Lesson plans focused on the pluralistic nature of American society, such as [African American Identity in the Gilded Age: Two Unreconciled Strivings](#), [The American Dream](#), [Reservation Controversies](#), [Immigration History Firsthand](#).
 - The National Archives. [Assimilation and the Native People of Metlakatla, Alaska](#), [Exploring America's Diversity](#) (set), [Comparing Urban and Rural Life in the Early 1900s](#), [Marian Anderson Concert at the Lincoln Memorial](#), [Women of Color and the Fight for Women's Suffrage](#).

- Re: Texts which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.
 - As noted above, "text" is a broad term, and could include screenshots/photocopies of textbooks, primary sources used in the classroom, photographs, maps, music, etc. These should identify specific content that is being taught at the K-8 level that address the pluralistic nature of American society (NOT just world cultures).
- Re: Library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.
 - Refer to previously-provided document on library services for examples of suggested services to be developed in the district.
 - Average age and quality of diverse materials should be increased through effective collection development.
 - Regular collection analysis records should be kept with improvements and significant changes highlighted. This promotes transparent use of Common School Funds and can be used to demonstrate growth and improvement.
 - DPI's School Library Education Consultant can be contacted by the library media specialist for additional guidance.
- **Wis. Stat. § 121.02(1)(L)4**
 - See suggestions above regarding easy conversion of the eighth-grade lesson into a sufficient instance of instruction.
 - Incorporate any relevant instruction being provided in English Language Arts/Literacy/Reading into social studies curriculum.
 - Review the [DPI American Indian Studies Program resource page](#) and the [Wisconsin First Nations page](#) for potential resources to support quality teaching and learning of Wisconsin American Indian tribes and bands.
 - [Lesson planning resources](#) from the DPI AISP webpage.
 - [Teaching and learning resources](#) from the DPI AISP webpage.
 - [Maps](#) from the DPI AISP webpage.
 - The Wisconsin First Nations website has an [overview of teacher exemplars](#) who integrate American Indian Studies into their classrooms that may provide some examples and ideas.
 - Incorporate lessons on tribal sovereignty at the K-8 level. There are many resources on tribal sovereignty for elementary grades. A few examples of resources that educators can use to support discussion about treaties and tribal sovereignty are:
 - Wisconsin Biographies videos and lessons on [Walter Bresette](#) (Treaty Rights and Sovereignty) and [Chief Oshkosh](#) (Leader in Troubled Times).
 - [Native Peoples of Wisconsin](#) by Patty Loew (with [lesson plans](#)).

Additional Suggestions from DPI:

DPI advises that the district consider the following:

- Attending trainings or professional learning opportunities offered by DPI American Indian Studies consultant David O'Connor or similar programming, which can be found at [DPI American Indian Studies Program Calendar of Events](#); and
- Attending professional learning opportunities on the topic of equity and diversity.