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Kwai kwai all,

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The idea of an Vermont based education curriculum is nothing new. The Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs has had this discussion at length. Representative Brian Cina has made great efforts to get Vermont Schools to represent the Indigenous People of this great land.

As the representative of the Missisquoi Abenaki Nation I believe it is my responsibility to relay our hopes for this curriculum.

One such point would be that we were always here, and we are still here. We have survived a great deal by doing what had to be done. The old adage of hiding in plain sight. Sometimes, parents would just lie to their kids about their heritage to protect them. Protect them from the government as well as community members that would persecute them just for being Abenaki. But I digress.

Another point would be that **we didn't immigrate here. We were here.** We had culture, spirituality, identity, language and much more taken from us. Millions of Native Americans were systematically killed by the intentional spread of disease, wars brought here and genocide as recent as the 1940's. We were never given reparations. No month on a calendar for recognition, no college tuition and certainly no reservation that would have assisted in keeping our culture more intact.

But through it all, the Missisquoi Abenaki Nation has persisted. Just now coming back out of the shadows that we have been placed in as well as sought refuge in. It is now our intention to walk about with the pride so long forgotten. In the spirit of community we teach all that will attend, native and non native, the way of the Abenaki people. All of our teachings are open to the general public.

Important to the curriculum, language, water, land, respect for things living (the seven generations as well as the tree brothers) the fact that we have our own spirituality and beliefs. People are going to want to gloss over the inhumane aspects of our history. Like renaming a building. Ten years later nobody remembers that the building was named after the person that developed the eugenics protocol that nearly wiped out a native nation. Or the renaming of sports teams from the "Indians" to something else. In both cases the names should remain the same. The catch is that they would have to be used as a teaching tool to show people why these things can be considered inappropriate or offensive.

I am aware of and have attended numerous presentations conducted by Fred Wiseman,PHD. Has been teaching at a Vermont State College. I assume he had an approved curriculum. Why recreate the wheel. He would be a very valuable resource in this area.

1. Abenaki studies must be a significant portion (50%) of the Native American part of the social studies curriculum. They also need to understand other Indigenous peoples too
2. Must have an Abenaki component in Middle and High School not just 4th grade.
3. Must include the 19th and 20th century Abenakis to dispel the myth that Abenakis went extinct.
4. Include Abenakis in STEM curricula, not just social studies, we have significant elements for "Science, Technology and Society" themes such as

watercraft and architectural engineering, ethnobotany, agronomy,,
astronomy etc.

Wliwni (Thank you) for taking the time and effort to reach out the the
people of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi.

Eugene Rich
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