

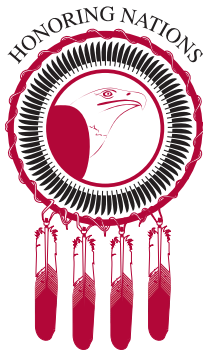
EXCELLENCE IN TRIBAL GOVERNANCE

AN HONORING NATIONS CASE STUDY

The Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program: Building an Educational Bridge to the Future for the Youth of the Hopi Tribe from High School to College and Beyond

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HONORING CONTRIBUTIONS
IN THE
GOVERNANCE OF AMERICAN
INDIAN NATIONS



ABOUT HONORING NATIONS

Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations (Honoring Nations) is a national awards program that identifies, celebrates, and shares outstanding examples of tribal governance. Administered by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the program was launched in 1998 with the support of the Ford Foundation, which sponsors similar governmental best practices programs around the globe. Honoring Nations spotlights and awards tribal government programs and initiatives that are especially effective in addressing critical concerns and challenges facing the more than 560 Indian nations and their citizens. Honorees serve as sources of knowledge and inspiration throughout Indian Country and beyond.

The Hopi Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program was awarded High Honors in Honoring Nations 2000.

ABOUT THE HARVARD PROJECT

Founded in 1987, *The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development* (Harvard Project) is housed within the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Through applied research and service, the Harvard Project aims to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations. The Harvard Project's core activities include research, advisory services, executive education and the administration of a tribal governance awards program. In all of its activities, the Harvard Project collaborates with the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of Arizona.

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THE TWO-PLUS-TWO-PLUS-TWO PROGRAM: Building an Educational Bridge to the Future for the Youth of the Hopi Tribe from High School to College and Beyond

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last 30 years, Native nations across North America have been taking control of their educational systems in the belief that American Indian “self-determination and local control [are] means of cultural preservation and growth.”² Disturbed by the low achievement scores and high dropout rates of American Indian youth in schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and local public educational agencies,³ tribes have been finding ways to create tribally run schools. Recent federal legislation emphasizing a focus on standardization has created an increased incentive for local control over schools and curriculum as a means for developing culturally and community relevant systems while promoting achievement and respect for the traditions and identities of Native populations. For a deeply traditional and conservative society like the Hopi Tribe, autonomy and self-determination in education are the keys to guaranteeing modern success in both traditional and mainstream worlds. How the Hopi Tribe constructed its Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two college transition program as a way of maintaining traditional ways of life, promoting academic excellence, and ensuring the development of qualified Hopi professionals returning to the reservation offers a model of sovereignty in action.⁴

THE HOPI TRIBE

Located in northeastern Arizona and surrounded by the larger Navajo reservation, the Hopi Tribe is a group of 12 villages located among three sacred mesas. The Hopi settled in the region well over 1,000 years ago. In fact, the Hopi village of Oraibi on Third Mesa is considered the oldest continuously inhabited village in the United States.⁵ While geographically isolated from external infrastructure and development in Arizona, sophisticated and highly successful methods of dry farming, sheep herding, weaving, and silver smithing have sustained generations of Hopi.

Although the Hopi Tribe is now governed by a tribal council comprised of a chairman, vice-chairman, and elected council members from four designated reservation districts, self-governance among its villages has been traditionally rooted in a highly organized matriarchal system of family, clan, and village loyalties. Each village is separate and politically autonomous, with its own clans, traditions, and perspectives about the use of the land and the extent of outside influence. Some villages have even elected not to have running water and electricity to keep the influence of western culture to a minimum in this remote region. Choosing their path in the modern world, the Hopi have maintained their traditional ways, especially with regard to the very private and complex religious ceremonies and belief system. Privacy, respect for self-determination, and individual autonomy is highly valued in Hopi culture and no more so than in control over the education and development of Hopi youth.

Historical control over education in the Hopi Tribe has been a continual struggle with a succession of outside invasion—from the Spanish in the mid-16th century to the Anglo government of present day. Educational freedom was restricted first by mission schools and then, after treaties established Hopiland as a recognized reservation, by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). In the 1800s, the BIA began a policy of removing Hopi children and sending them to far flung schools on the premise of edu-

cating them in western traditions, language, and culture. This policy set into motion a pattern in which many Hopi did not return to the original villages or if they did, they found the education they received in BIA-run schools to have little connection to daily life on the reservation. Inadequately equipped and staffed with poorly trained, sometimes abusive teachers, these schools continuously shortchanged Hopi youth on both traditional knowledge and western academic excellence.

The negative effects of this inadequate system of education became exacerbated in the 1970s, when large shifts in the economy of the United States threatened the sustainability of farming and herding as a way of life. Wage labor became the dominant means of earning a living and even the isolated and relatively self-sufficient Hopi Tribe felt the impact. Concerned that without the skills necessary to compete in the outside world, new generations of Hopi would be unable to control traditional resources and alternative sources of income, and poverty would soon accomplish what centuries of invasion had not. Increasingly, Hopi citizens confronted the difficult choice of either staying geographically and culturally connected to their traditional way of life or relocating somewhere off-reservation where opportunities for education and employment were more plentiful. With the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975 (Public Law 93-638), the Hopi villages examined ways to take control over their educational systems and to find a way to change the choices.

CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

In 1983 after waiting years for a reservation-based high school to be built, the clans of Polacca identified land in the eastern part of the reservation near Keams Canyon and the Tribe began construction on the new multi-million dollar Hopi Jr./Sr. High School (HJSHS). Long frustrated with the state of BIA-run educational systems, including the endless delays, convoluted politics, and continuing underperformance of schools, Hopi leaders recognized that the new facility would not improve the

performance of the school if it continued to be run in the same way. At the federal level, approximately 80% of the appropriations for educating Indian children were being spent before they ever reached the classrooms of schools like Hopi Jr./Sr. High.⁶ And at the local level, problems such as outdated textbooks and curricula, indifferent instructional practices, lackadaisical discipline, and high teacher and staff turnover plagued the school under BIA management. In 1995, the Tribe took over management, operating Hopi Jr./Sr. High School as an autonomous federal grant school under Public Law 100-297⁷ and beginning a transformation in education for Hopi youth.

Determined not to repeat the mistakes of its predecessors in running the school, tribal citizens and the tribal government worked together in creating a new system of school governance. First assembling a progressive and knowledgeable local school board, the Tribe then hired experienced administrators and a high quality teaching force. The school board worked with the new staff to overhaul curriculum, update library and technology services, create new forms of student progress assessment, and establish consistent disciplinary policies and procedures. Choosing to remove cumbersome BIA-mandated paperwork requirements and inflexible regulations, the school established its own teacher and staff hiring process as well as its own methods of school development. All of these actions paved the way for educational innovation, professional growth, and responsive school governance.

The results were deeply satisfying. HJSHS students began to outperform local and tribal peers, matching and sometimes exceeding non-Indians achievement levels on the Stanford 9 standardized tests administered across Arizona public high schools.⁸ In fact, the School received the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement's Model School Award.⁹ Overall, school-wide enrollment increased as did student attendance. Additionally, the School achieved fi-

financial stability, operating in the black without any significant increases in funding – something never achieved under BIA control. With students achieving like never before and the school being run by competent personnel, the Tribe looked at other concerns.

The Hopi-Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program

Addressing Tribal Concerns

Even with the transformation that accompanied Hopi control over the School, the Tribe remained concerned about the number of students successfully transitioning into and completing post-secondary education. For Hopi students, going to college usually entailed the difficult choice of leaving the reservation, family, and the traditional Hopi way of life. More than just an issue of individual academic achievement, the Tribe saw increased college attendance as a way to address a bigger issue on the reservation – the critical need for a well educated Hopi labor force with the technical expertise to fill high level jobs on the reservation.

For many years the Hopi Tribe was well aware that opportunities for employment were often better off of the reservation, and even when high-level, well-paying jobs were available on the reservation, most were filled by non-Hopi applicants. This point was driven home when the Indian Health Service (IHS) opened the Hopi Health Care Center at First Mesa in 2000. The new facility needed to fill a variety of professional health care positions, including doctors and nurses, but was unable to find enough qualified Hopi applicants. Concerned tribal leaders and school administrators convened a meeting to discuss possible strategies for addressing this issue, agreeing on the importance of expanding opportunities for Hopi students to attend post-secondary schools, while increasing the number of skilled Hopi professionals returning to the reservation.

The challenges to this goal were two-fold. First, many of the students who left the reservation to attend college did not fin-

ish, some not even making it to the second year. Second, those students who left the reservation and succeeded in college very seldom returned to the reservation to live and work. The issue became one of setting in motion a system that would maintain Hopi students' connections to their homes, their traditions, and their cultures while supporting their academic abilities with the type of challenging coursework that would leave them well-prepared to attend college after graduation. This is how the Hopi Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two program was born.

The Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program

Started by HJSHS in 1997, the name of the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program reflected a holistic sequence of options for students progressing through high school and into college. Starting during the last two years of high school, students were able to enroll in college level courses for credit. After high school, students could transition into two years of post-secondary education leading to an Associate degree, with the option to segue into two additional years of college leading to a Bachelor's degree. These options provided Hopi students with a way to pursue an affordable college education and a high level career path while remaining on the reservation. In doing this, the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program fostered a crucial link between home and higher education, creating an opportunity for Hopi youth to return with the skills to fill vital reservation-based jobs and the ability to continue living a traditional Hopi way of life with their families.

From its inception, the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program involved partnerships with local institutions of higher education, specifically Northland Pioneer College (NPC) and Northern Arizona State University (NAU). Looking to tap into available expertise both internally and externally, the partnerships allowed the institutions to combine resources and efforts. Each institution addressed the reservation's need for highly skilled professionals while helping Hopi students to succeed in the transition into college. Initially focused on preparing students for careers

in health care, a major economic and social need on the Hopi reservation, the majority of courses offered in the program have been high level science and math and have depended on an unprecedented level of instructional cooperation among the individual institutions.

College level courses available to HJSHS students were taught cooperatively by NPC, NAU, and the high school faculty via interactive distance learning. HJSHS and its partners invested in the technology to make high quality distance learning possible with the purchase of over 200 computers, access to T-100 internet capability, and the installation of an advanced interactive satellite teleconference system. NPC opened its branch campus near the School for more hands-on capability and NAU built a distance learning center within the School itself. Much more than just pre-taped lectures given by college faculty, the system allowed classes to be conducted on more than one campus in real time. Best of all, students at HJSHS could raise their hands and be called on by off-site professors.

In addition, with assistance from NPC, many HJSHS faculty became certified to teach at the community college level, allowing them to conduct courses in conjunction with NPC and NAU faculty. For example, while students taking NAU's "pre-med" advanced chemistry course participated in class sessions via the interactive television system, HJSHS's chemistry teacher conducted labs and offered tutorials on-site. HJSHS paid the tuition and fees for concurrent courses, allowing all students to access college credit and experience, regardless of personal financial circumstances. The placement of the program in HJSHS, and within the reservation, allowed students to become familiar with the challenges of college coursework in a supportive environment while increasing their skills, confidence, and ability to be successful at a competitive academic level.

The Program Today

Four years into the program's operations, college attendance by Hopi students increased substantially, with over 45% of the

2001 graduating class enrolling in either a two-year or a four-year institution of higher education. Of that 45%, over three-fourths participated and received credit through the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program. Enrollment in science and math courses at HJSHS rose, with students showing an increased interest in academic achievement, including voluntary participation in after-school tutoring. In fact, students in the program have even outperformed college level peers. For example, according to Northern Arizona University, over 50% of the students enrolled in NAU's pre-med chemistry course drop the class. However, in 1999, all eight Hopi high school students enrolled in the pre-med chemistry course passed, with one of them earning the highest grade across the entire university.¹⁰

Almost seven years after its inception, the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program continues to promote the transition of HJSHS students into post-secondary education while working to ensure high academic achievement and increased opportunities for all of its students. With a current enrollment of 763, the School serves more students than either of the local public high schools.¹¹ Even more impressive is the fact that as a charter school, all of the students enrolled in HJSHS are there by choice, regardless of how far they must travel to attend. According to the 2003-2004 Arizona School Report Card on school progress, Stanford 9 test scores increased in every area and the school outperforms other local schools on Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards tests in reading and math.¹² HJSHS's drop-out rate is 2% less than the state average and its graduation rate is 6% higher than comparable schools.¹³

Hopi Jr./Sr. High School has also extended its partnership efforts with other agencies and organizations. Acting in conjunction with other enrichment programs, such as NAU's Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search, the Academic Decathlon, and the University of Arizona's Health Careers Pathway Program, the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program has been able to provide students with a holistic and high quality level of ca-

reer development services and educational guidance. In 2000, HJSHS began participating in the Lowell Observatory's Navajo-Hopi Astronomy Outreach Program to extend classroom learning about the universe and the solar system into the real world application of a working observatory. In 2001, the HJSHS and Harvard University Medical School collaborated in creating the Native American Summer Program at Harvard Medical School. Over three weeks in the summer, Hopi and other Native students, participate in classes, projects, and college life on the Harvard campus. The goal of the program is to demystify the process of attending a top level university for the students, while increasing science and math awareness in medical issues, especially those connected to tribally identified concerns. The program set a new standard for other Native students and every year receives more requests from other tribes and regions to expand the program.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The challenges of maintaining and improving a creative and ambitious program like Hopi Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two are closely linked to the challenges of running an autonomous school system in a remote, rural area.

Like most rural schools in the region, finding and retaining high quality teachers and other educational staff is a constant struggle for HJSHS. Because of the supportive work environment encouraging creativity and teacher satisfaction created by the innovative and autonomous vision of HJSHS, the School has had more success than many of its regional peers in maintaining excellent staffing. However, the geographic remoteness, lack of a local teacher pool, and other related factors still take their toll on HJSHS's staff retention efforts. For example, in 2002, the School had to replace 24 of its 85 staff members. In meeting this challenge, the School continues its commitment to innovation and recently initiated an education/teacher career branch to the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program as a way to provide its own pool of qualified educators.

Another common challenge is the struggle to raise passing rates on state and national standardized assessments. Although HJSHS compares more than favorably to statewide averages, with 10th grade math and reading scores on Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Tests exceeding regional average passing rates by 3% or higher, it still struggles to maintain an overall 50% passing rate.¹⁴ However, the School is making amazing strides when the progress of students from one year to the next is compared. The 2003 Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), an indicator of how well the reading and math skills of students are improving each school year by comparing individual students' Stanford 9 scores from one school year to the next, indicated that from 2002 to 2003, more than 86% of 8th grade students were making expected progress – 10% higher than the state average.¹⁵

Comparable to the experience of many rural school districts, the Tribe and HJSHS are also concerned about the skill level of incoming students. In 2003, members of the Tribal Council, parents, and administrators discussed how hard it is for “students to perform well on standardized tests when students enter the school several years behind in reading, writing and math scores”.¹⁶ This leaves students unable to take advantage of enrichment programs such as the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Programs and leaves school staff frustrated that students who may benefit from this program are unable to access it. One suggestion to address this issue is to have all the elementary schools serving the Hopi reservation align themselves to Arizona State standards. Currently every school is autonomous in how to address these standards, sometimes resulting in disjointed programming across schools. While some students entering HJSHS may have had several levels of math, other students may not have received instruction in the same set of math skills. The Hopi Tribe is working on options for alleviating skill differences, including consideration of unifying the curriculum across all schools serving the Hopi Tribe, and focusing on supplemental measures such as increased afterschool tutor-

ing and extra assistance for students who come in with low skills.

Also, HJSHS faces a challenge familiar to all schools in negotiating ongoing relationships with parents and families. Research indicates that parental involvement is key to successful student transition into college.¹⁷ For many Hopi families, college is an unknown quantity that appears at times to conflict with familial and cultural obligations. Western education sometimes clashes deeply with traditional educational practices, forcing students into choosing between family and being Hopi or going to college and becoming successful in the outside world. Although parents and grandparents may be extremely proud of their children's achievements, they may not be aware of the demands and the responsibilities inherent in seeking a college degree. Additionally, families often struggle with the financial constraints of sending a child to college. Although the tribe has an ongoing scholarship program, families may not be aware of how to access these funds. In order to increase awareness of both the benefits and the challenges of higher education, the School is working on ways to reach out to parents and involve them more deeply in the college courses, college planning, including financial aid and general information about college life.

A final challenge for HJSHS is the ongoing need for flexibility in addressing the changing needs of the Tribe. While developing qualified health care professionals remains a current priority, changing economic trends and tribal needs may require a focus on different professional pathways. Strategic planning in conjunction with the Tribal Council based on economic and labor projections may enable the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program to adjust the program as new trends in labor and service needs appear.

CONCLUSION

The Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program is remarkable for its ambitious and creative approach in addressing the educational

challenges experienced by the Hopi Tribe. When faced with a real educational, demographic, and economic crisis, tribal leaders refused to give in to the forces that made it difficult for young tribal citizens to seek higher education. Instead, Hopi's leaders created a program that enriched, strengthened, and encouraged Hopi youth to fulfill their educational aspirations. In preparing greater numbers of Hopi high school students for college, while also making it possible for those students to spend less time away from home, the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program has been a major force behind the positive change in academic achievement among Hopi youth. More than just a college transition program, the program has also been a meaningful investment in community integrity and the future of the Hopi Tribe, enhancing the Nation's economy, social development, and ability to self-govern.

The challenges faced by the Hopi Tribe in founding and maintaining the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program offer valuable lessons in self-determination in education. The Tribe's experiences highlight a rich model of community commitment, ever-evolving innovation, dynamic partnerships, and a long term vision for the education of their youth, including:

- Asserting control over their educational systems gives tribes the ability to ensure new generations of well-educated, well-trained tribal citizens who can address tribal needs in the present and far into the future.
- Building stable and capable educational institutions in tribal nations ensures the independence and flexibility to create innovative programs that are appropriate in meeting the communities' cultural and economic needs.
- Creating access to academically challenging coursework leading to college credit and transition allows tribes to address low student achievement and high post-secondary dropout rates through a high level pathway to success.

- Developing and maintaining dynamic partnerships with local institutions of higher education provides an excellent pool of extended resources and combined efforts in supporting and preparing Native high school students to be successful in post-secondary education.
- Using new technology to address tribal interests in education, including interactive distance learning, increases students' access to technically advanced subjects and even allows them to remain on the reservation while obtaining extended knowledge and experience.

As the Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program, and the Hopi Jr./Sr. High School, move forward in expanding their resources, creating new avenues for college credit, and developing deeper connections to families, the program seems increasingly able to accomplish its most important goal: paving the way for students to remain active participants and keepers of their culture while achieving educational excellence and a future of professional opportunities.

Notes

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² Synder-Joy, Zoann K. (1994). Self-determination in American Indian education: Educators perspectives on grant, contract and BIA administered schools. *Journal of American Indian Education* 34, 20-34.

³ From *Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action*, the final Report of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, U.S. Department of Education, October 1991. Summary of findings available at http://www.kued.org/productions/2worlds/at_risk/#tradition. Full report available at <http://www.tedna.org/pubs/nationsatrisk.pdf>.

⁴ The Hopi Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two Program was a High Honors recipient in 2000 from the Honoring Nations national awards program, identifying it as an outstanding example of tribal governance in addressing critical concerns and challenges facing Indian nations and their citizens.

⁵ See the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office Home Page – Visitor information: Three Mesas section. Available at http://www.nau.edu/~hcpo-p/visit/mesa_1.htm.

⁶ According to the *Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations* Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two site visit report, September 28, 2000, p.2.

⁷ Public Law 100-297 is Title V of the Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 which allow tribal schools to become grant schools and receive federal funding directly to the governing body of the school. The school itself is an autonomous unit responsible for all decision at the school-site level and often may be chartered under the tribe or the state's authority. Hopi Jr./Sr. High School is chartered under the state.

⁸ See Arizona Department of Education Research and Evaluation Section-Accountability Reports. Available at <http://www.ade.state.az.us/azlearns/>.

⁹ See the Hopi Jr./Sr. High School 2003-2004 Arizona School Report Card 2003-2004. Available at <http://www.ade.state.az.us/srcs/ReportCards/56492004.pdf>.

¹⁰ According to the *Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations* Two-Plus-Two-Plus-Two site visit report, September 28, 2000.

¹¹ See Hopi Jr./Sr. High School profile at GreatSchools.Net. Available at http://www.greatschools.net/modperl/browse_school/az/1455/.

¹² See the Hopi Jr./Sr. High School 2003-2004 Arizona School Report Card 2003-2004. Available at <http://www.ade.state.az.us/srcs/ReportCards/56492004.pdf>.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ See Hopi Jr./Sr. High School profile at GreatSchools.Net. Available at http://www.greatschools.net/modperl/browse_school/az/1455/. Data from the Arizona Department of Education for the Spring 2003 AIMS 10th grade testing in math and science:

School Name	Distance	AIMS	AIMS	SAT9	SAT9
		Reading	Math	Reading	Math
		Grad 10	Grade 10	Grade 9	Grade 9
Hopi Jr/Sr High School	0	36%	12%	26	44
Ganado High School	39.2	27%	9%	15	30
Pinon High School	27.2	19%	7%	13	29

¹⁵ See Hopi Jr./Sr. High School profile at GreatSchools.Net. Available at http://www.greatschools.net/modperl/browse_school/az/1455/. Data from the Arizona Department of Education for MAP in math and reading comparing 2002 Stanford 9 testing results with 2003 Stanford 9 testing results for HJSHS.

¹⁶ See “Hopi Rep Calls for Unified Curriculum; Test Scores Reported” in the Gallup Independent, February 27, 2002.

¹⁷ Many resources exist indicating the importance of parental involvement in transitioning and succeeding in post-secondary education, in fact, the U.S. Department of Education has more than 30 years worth of research indicating that a direct correlation exists between parental involvement and increased student achievement. One source of interest is the 1999 Minnesota High School Follow-Up Survey, p. 33-34 discussing the impact of parental involvement in the decision students make to attend college. Available at <http://www.mheso.state.mn.us/pdf/1999MNHCSurvey.pdf>.