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State of Minnesota  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-SIXTH  
SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. **1240**

March 2, 2009

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on K-12 Education Policy and Oversight

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to education; establishing a volunteer working group on Native language  
1.3 revitalization and preservation; providing for appointments; requiring a report;  
1.4 appropriating money.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. **VOLUNTEER WORKING GROUP ON DAKOTA AND OJIBWE**  
1.7 **LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION AND PRESERVATION.**

1.8 Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** A volunteer working group is established to develop  
1.9 a unified strategy to revitalize and preserve indigenous languages of the 11 federally  
1.10 recognized American Indian tribes in Minnesota. As the federal government recognized  
1.11 through passage of the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act  
1.12 of 2006, the revitalization and preservation of American Indian languages is of vital  
1.13 importance to preserving the American Indian culture. There have been recent efforts in  
1.14 Minnesota to develop programs to teach the Dakota and Ojibwe languages to students  
1.15 and to create fluent speakers at both the kindergarten through grade 12 level and at the  
1.16 postsecondary level. The volunteer working group shall, among other duties, inventory  
1.17 these efforts and make recommendations regarding how to further revitalize and preserve  
1.18 Dakota and Ojibwe languages.

1.19 Subd. 2. **Membership.** The executive director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs  
1.20 Council shall invite each of the 11 federally recognized tribes under Minnesota Statutes,  
1.21 section 3.922, subdivision 1, clause (1), to participate by appointing one member of each  
1.22 tribe to the working group. Three additional members shall be appointed by the Indian  
1.23 Affairs Council. Two of these members must represent the American Indian population  
1.24 in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and one member must represent the American Indian

2.1 population in Duluth. Other working group members may include, at their discretion, the  
2.2 commissioner of education or the commissioner's appointee, the director of the Office of  
2.3 Higher Education or the director's appointee, one member of the Board of Teaching, one  
2.4 member of the senate appointed by its Subcommittee on Committees, and one member  
2.5 of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house. The working  
2.6 group may add other members as deemed appropriate by a majority vote of the existing  
2.7 members. The executive director of the Indian Affairs Council must convene the first  
2.8 meeting no later than September 1, 2009. At the first meeting, the members shall elect  
2.9 from amongst themselves a chair and vice chair of the working group.

2.10 Subd. 3. **Duties.** The working group must develop strategies for the 11 federally  
2.11 recognized American Indian tribes and the state to work together to revitalize and preserve  
2.12 the Dakota and Ojibwe languages in Minnesota. The duties of the working group include,  
2.13 but are not limited to:

2.14 (1) creating an inventory of existing programs designed to preserve Dakota and  
2.15 Ojibwe languages in the state, including postsecondary programs, programs in tribal  
2.16 schools, and other schools throughout the state;

2.17 (2) creating an inventory of available resources for Dakota and Ojibwe language  
2.18 revitalization and immersion programs, including curriculum, educational materials,  
2.19 and trained teachers;

2.20 (3) identifying curriculum needs to train teachers to teach the Dakota and Ojibwe  
2.21 languages in immersion programs and barriers to training teachers to teach the Dakota and  
2.22 Ojibwe language;

2.23 (4) identifying classroom curriculum needs for teaching students in Dakota and  
2.24 Ojibwe languages;

2.25 (5) determining how the identified curriculum needs should be met;

2.26 (6) determining if there is a need for a central repository of resources, and if there  
2.27 is a need, where the repository should be located, how it should be structured, and who  
2.28 should have responsibility for maintaining the repository;

2.29 (7) determining what technical assistance the state could offer to further Dakota  
2.30 and Ojibwe language immersion programs;

2.31 (8) identifying both existing state and national financial resources available to further  
2.32 Dakota and Ojibwe language revitalization and preservation efforts;

2.33 (9) identifying current state and federal law, rules, regulations, and policy that  
2.34 should be repealed, modified, or waived, in order to further Dakota and Ojibwe language  
2.35 immersion programs; and

3.1 (10) assessing the level of interest in the community for Dakota and Ojibwe  
3.2 language immersion programs.

3.3 Subd. 4. **Report.** The working group must report its findings and recommendations  
3.4 to the Indian Affairs Council and the committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over  
3.5 early childhood through grade 12 education and higher education by February 15, 2011.  
3.6 The committee expires on February 16, 2011.

3.7 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

3.8 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

3.9 \$150,000 is appropriated in fiscal year 2010 from the arts and cultural heritage  
3.10 fund to the commissioner of education for the working group on Dakota and Ojibwe  
3.11 Language Revitalization and Preservation. Any balance in fiscal year 2010 is available  
3.12 in fiscal year 2011.