Wind River Tribal Education for All

To increase cross-cultural understanding in Wyoming and support the aims of Wyoming’s new Indian Education for All legislation, a cadre of native and non-native educators in Wyoming has begun collaborating with the Wyoming State Historical Society to produce standards-based classroom materials on the history and culture of the Eastern Shoshone, Northern Arapaho and other tribes of the region.

In November and January 2017-2018 a committee appointed and led by the Wyoming Department of Education drafted revisions to the state’s social studies, English/Language Arts and other standards to better reflect the history and culture of indigenous tribes of the region. Those revisions were reviewed by the public, the state Board of Education and the governor, and the new standards are in effect as of summer 2018. Many of the revisions are substantial. School districts have three years to comply.

The new classroom materials will dovetail with the standards-based materials produced by Wyoming PBS for its online Wind River Education Project, <http://windriveredu.org/>, developed in 2016. The PBS site offers short videos on tribal history, culture and government, with Native American teacher-developed lesson plans aligned to state and national standards. Some of the same educators who wrote these lesson plans will write the plans for the Historical Society project as well.

The Wyoming State Historical Society is a 64-year-old nonprofit membership organization with chapters in nearly every county. Its state-history website, WyoHistory.org, offers hundreds of articles, maps, historical photos, field-trip suggestions and educational toolkits for classroom use. WyoHistory.org, in collaboration with scholars and elders and support from Wyoming Humanities, developed substantial content in 2017-2018 on the history and culture of the tribes on the Wind River reservation. WyoHistory.org will continue to develop more articles on those and related topics in the coming years. Those articles, in turn, will provide background and resources for the lesson plans developed by the native educators.

The new classroom material will be available to the Wyoming State Department of Education for use on its official website, should it find the material of sufficient quality. Historical and educational material will also be posted and housed on WyoHistory.org. Some materials will be ready by fall 2018. More materials will be coming online each month during the 2018-2019 school year. All materials will be available for free for use in Wyoming schools.

To participate in the project, for more information or to offer suggestions contact Tom Rea, editor, WyoHistory.org, Casper, WY, editor@wyohistory.org, 307-277-3275.