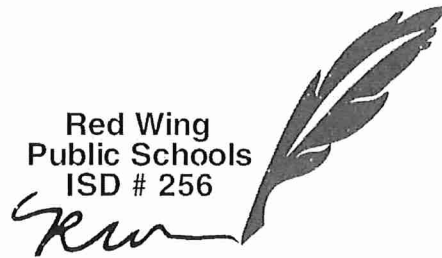


Red Wing Public Schools
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March 9, 2022

Representative Heather Keeler
431 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155
(rep.Heather.Keeler@house.mn)

Robin Schmidt, Committee Legislative Assistant
539A State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155
(Robin.Schmidt@house.mn)

Representative Keeler and Robin Schmidt:

On behalf of Red Wing Public Schools, I am writing this letter to express strong support for HF 2856, which features changes to M.S. 120A.42: Conduct of School on Certain Holidays.

During my school-age years, I learned that Christopher Columbus “discovered” America even though Indigenous People lived here first. General George Custer and Columbus were glorified through monuments, books, and movies even though they massacred and committed other atrocities against Indigenous People. Boarding schools attempted to assimilate Indigenous People and destroy their languages and cultures.

It is time to change. Recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day is a strong step toward honoring Indigenous People. Further, learning about the culture and history of Indigenous People benefits everyone because it provides historical context and better understanding of current issues and people.

Through pow-wows on school grounds, teacher visits to Buffalo pastures, learning experiences in teepees, and recent approval of Dakota Language and Culture classes, Red Wing students are beginning to learn more. It is making a difference. Even though experiences in other districts may look different, learning about the subjects outlined in the proposed changes is critically important for all Minnesota students.

To learn more about the impact of these learning experiences, please contact the Prairie Island Tribal Council, Prairie Island Education Department, Tribal Preservation Office, and/or Red Wing’s School-Home Liaison for Native Programming. We are partners serving Indigenous students, and I am thankful for our relationships.

Once again, please support HF 2856. Learning about the history and culture of Indigenous People is bipartisan and important for all Minnesota students.

Sincerely,

Karsten Anderson
Superintendent