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## Official Statement

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 14, 2024**

### Nez Perce Tribe Official Statement

The Nez Perce Tribe was disappointed with the recent decision of the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) to provide authorization for supplemental curriculum from outside sources to be eligible for adoption and use by school districts. The excerpts of this curriculum reviewed by the Nez Perce Tribe Education Department reveal a questionable portrayal and analysis of relationships, actions, and motivations between the United States and the indigenous peoples already on the continent thousands of years before European settlers arrived.

Currently, tribal studies in Idaho primarily occur during one semester of fourth grade social studies classes. However, the state's social studies content standards have grown over time to be more informative and accurate in the learning goals in elementary and high school related to tribal way of life, treaties, sovereignty, contributions, characteristics, and federal policy eras. The Tribe believes these supplemental materials announced by the SDE for availability in public classrooms are a step backward from the progress that has been made in developing a fuller and more complete curriculum in Idaho related to tribes. The Nez Perce Tribe prefers to continue to refine and expand on these advancements by diving deeper into these issues, but such efforts are in danger of being undercut with the use of these materials and calls upon the Idaho SDE to reconsider the authorization of these materials.

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*Nez Perce*

**TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

P.O. BOX 305 • LAPWAI, IDAHO 83540 • (208) 843-2253

November 13, 2024

Ms. Debbie Critchfield  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Idaho Department of Education  
650 West State Street  
Boise, ID 83702

**Re: *PragerU Kids Curriculum***

Dear Superintendent Critchfield:

The Nez Perce Tribe ("Tribe") is opposed to the Idaho Department of Education's recent decision to provide supplemental educational materials from PragerU Kids to districts for use in classrooms. Although our education department has not thoroughly reviewed the entire curriculum, the portions that have been reviewed and the portions that were highlighted in the media clearly demonstrate the curriculum is heavily biased and its analysis of historical events seems to have the sole purpose of justifying actions and decisions that profoundly impacted minority groups and Indigenous peoples. Although we understand that each school district will decide whether to use the curriculum, the decision to endorse the curriculum and make PragerU Kids lesson plans available at all should be re-evaluated and a final decision should not be made until there has been a more thorough input by all stakeholders.

These concerns regarding consultation and input are not new. For example, in 2023, the Idaho Department of Education announced that "The Story of America" curriculum was vetted and tested for use in Idaho public schools, with support from the Idaho Governor's office. The Office of the Governor's June 15, 2023, press release says the curriculum was created by "leading experts in the field of American history," so we are interested in knowing what experts on tribal peoples were included to inform the content because the history of America does not start in 1492 or in Idaho in 1890.

These insincere attempts at crafting curriculum to provide a "true" history or analysis do not benefit anyone. Instead, attempts to rewrite the history of this country and wash away the parts some people do not like to acknowledge are misguided and harmful. Indoctrinating students with

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a watered-down curriculum will only foster the growth of racism and resentment in Idaho. True growth can only occur if we are having honest historical discussions in all the school districts in Idaho.

The Tribe appreciates the working relationship with your office, but we are disappointed with the lack of communication on this issue. We believe the use of PragerU Kids resources in Idaho classrooms would have been a good issue to consult on during your recent visit to Lapwai. We request the opportunity to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this matter and find paths forward together.

Sincerely,

*Ryan Catman*  
Shannon. F. Wheeler  
Chairman

For

cc: Idaho Council on Indian Affairs  
Idaho Indian Education Committee  
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho  
Coeur d'Alene Tribe  
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes  
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes