



## **OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE**

### **THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

602 SW 35th Street • Oklahoma City, OK 73109

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Assistant to the Bishop: Rev. Dr. David M. Wilson

April 5, 2021

Dear State Department of Education,

I am Rev. Dr. David Wilson, the assistant to the Bishop for the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church. We are an organization that consists of 81 Indian Methodist churches in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas. We are an organization that is over 180 years old, and was created when our ancestors were removed from our homelands in the Southeast.

Although we are centered on our churches, we have long been supporters of education for your people, and especially including the cultural aspects of the 45 plus tribes that are a part of our conference.

Our offices are in Oklahoma City and we became connected with Sovereign through teachers and students at the school as we were introduced to the great work they are doing there. We are also a bus stop for students when students were meeting in person. We have supported the school through contributions to help students with covid-19 needs. We were able to provide gift cards for students as they started back virtual this spring. We have provided other PPE for the students throughout the year. We are also partnering with them to pay for tutors to help students with virtual work.

We have also worked to connect Sovereign with many Native American persons and organizations in the area so they could find a way to support and partner with Sovereign. We have also been able to forward grant opportunities with leaders and connections with various Oklahoma tribes.

I am writing this letter to show support for Sovereign Community Schools. I have known a few of the teachers at Sovereign for several years and it has been a joy to hear their passion for their work and service for students at Sovereign. We have heard and seen of their talent, their progress in learning at Sovereign, which is backed up by the great testing scores. Many students have thrived at Sovereign due to its emphasis on Indigenous learning and to be able to be with students who share much in common.

Urban Native students have a challenging time being the minority in a public school system. Indigenous culture is not always valued and emphasized in many facets. This hinders their learning and success. Sovereign has been able to focus so much on teaching from an Indigenous perspective and can be creative and inclusive regarding Indigenous culture and learning. I have heard from students who talk about the excitement of being valued and accepted as an Indigenous person by all at Sovereign.

It has also been affirming to meet with parents who volunteer and do what they can to help their children at the school. They love the school much as well and work hard. We look forward to our continued partnership with Sovereign and their success and will help them in the future.

In conclusion I fully support the mission and efforts that SCS has continued to put forward. They are working hard to ensure the future of Indigenous students in Oklahoma, and it would be a loss not to allow SCS the opportunity to continue to move forward.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rev. Dr. David Wilson".

Rev. Dr. David Wilson  
Asst to the Bishop  
(Choctaw)  
Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference  
United Methodist Church