

getting it. Since the nation, state legislature, and school boards do not seem to value education, the burden of financial and emotional support is up to the school staff and the community.

HISTORY

Understanding the history of Native Americans helps illuminate my own life as it is representative of my personal experience. "In 1887, the U.S. Congress passed the General Allotment Act (Dawes Act), whose purpose was to abandon a policy of separation and adopt a policy of blending Native Americans into the American mainstream." (Fernandez 1991, 123). Children were taken from their homes and reservations to be educated in schools far from their families. The act broke up reservation lands into 160 acre farms to make Natives self-sufficient. The land eventually fell into white hands. The act failed because Indians have always depended on each other (tribal members) for their needs; they shared the work and the profits. Natives thought of the land as an integral part of their spirituality, not as a thing to possess, exploit or profit from. Taking their children and separating them from the family would cause a breakdown in the society, thus staying on the land (as mandated by white laws), was not important to them. *For myself, material possessions (land, vehicle etc.), are not equal to or more important than my family.*