



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 1: The original land base and natural resources of the Oceti Sakowin were under communal stewardship prior to immigrant settlement. The Oceti Sakowin tribes have a distinct and unique interrelationship with the environment that contributes to South Dakota.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 2: There is variety and resiliency among individual Tribal people as identity is developed, defined and redefined by entities, organization and people. A continuum of tribal identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional lifestyle. There is no “generic American Indian”.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 3: The origin, thought and philosophy of the Oceti Sakowin continues in the contemporary lifestyles of Tribal members. Tribal cultures, traditions and languages are incorporated and are observed by many Tribal members both on and off the reservations.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 4: The Oceti Sakowin kinship systems provide a framework for both individual and group behavior. Its unwritten rules promote harmony, compromise, a sense of order, and group cohesion.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 5: History told from the Oceti Sakowin perspective, through oral tradition and written accounts, frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell and becomes subjective information. Currently historical perspective is being revisited to be more inclusive.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 6: Federal policies and treaties put into place throughout American history have affected Oceti Sakowin people adversely. Tribes as sovereign nations have the authority to enter into government to government relationships. Currently, the relationships with the States are not the same for each tribe.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 7: The essential philosophy of the Oceti Sakowin wicoun (way of life) is based on the values of the Oceti Sakowin which has created resiliency of the Oyate. Tribal communities have put considerable efforts into economic development ventures, Tribal universities, alternative education, wellness centers, cultural, traditions and language revitalization.