

## KEY FINDINGS

# Recruiting & Retaining Indigenous Educators



This document synthesizes key findings from Chapter 2 of the *Systems and Supports to Develop Indigenous Educators Landscape Analysis Report*. It is designed to help inform leaders of teacher education programs (TEPs) and state and regional education agencies about promising practices and innovative solutions for recruiting and retaining Indigenous educator candidates in TEPs.

Explore the full report at [r16cc.org/resources](https://r16cc.org/resources) for detailed recommendations for Tribes, TEPs, and regional and state agencies.

## RECOMMENDATION 1: BUILD TWO-WAY RELATIONSHIPS

“ [We approach] promoting our programs in a culturally respectful way that would build bridges between our organization and the communities ... What can we do to serve you? What can we do to help you accomplish your goals?

**Lakehead University Indigenous TEP Faculty Member**  
*Systems and Supports to Develop Indigenous Educators*

### HOW CAN MY TEP IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION?

Building two-way relationships with Tribes, Indigenous communities, and Indigenous organizations can support recruitment and retention of Indigenous educator candidates. Your TEP can:

- » Sustain authentic two-way relationships to support the development of strategies to recruit and retain Indigenous educator candidates.
- » Support candidates in maintaining frequent and sustained connections to their home communities, such as providing online learning options and developing the academic calendar around community events.
- » Build “an Indigenous-centered learning community [that] places the needs of Indigenous teacher candidates at its core, fostering a sense of community and belonging among students,” such as a cohort model.

## RECOMMENDATION 2: SUPPORT EDUCATORS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER TEPs

“ [Our students] want to go into teaching so that they can undo what they perceived to be some of the injustices of the past ... They want to do this really good work to help save lives in their community and help people to thrive and not to struggle, so these programs are great because [with] service payback, they can end up having all of that financial help with zero debt.

**Interview Participant**  
*Systems and Supports to Develop Indigenous Educators*

### HOW CAN MY TEP IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION?

Providing continuous supports from the time they apply to a program through the start of their career can bolster recruitment and retention of Indigenous educator candidates. Your TEP can:

- » Offer a streamlined and flexible TEP application process, and create customized program plans for candidates.
- » Offer robust financial support for Indigenous candidates, such as waiving application fees, providing living stipends, covering tuition, and providing access to academic, emotional, and basic needs supports.



- » Ensure candidates are highly supported throughout their student teaching experience by the program faculty, a mentor teacher, the school principal, and others to support their success in the program and after graduation.
- » Develop culturally responsive approaches to determining readiness for certification and prepare candidates to navigate certificate requirements, job applications, and the selection process.
- » Provide candidates with effective mentoring in their early career by helping them stay connected to their preparation program, a mentor teacher, or a learning community that recognizes the value of Indigenous “racial, cultural, and social identities.”

## RECOMMENDATION 3: DESIGN CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PROGRAMS

“ Indigenous teacher candidates are more likely to apply to and remain in programs that are culturally, politically, and epistemically relevant.

**Laura Landertinger, Danielle Tessaro, and Jean-Paul Restoule**  
*“We Have to Get More Teachers to Help Our Kids”: Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Teacher Education Programs to Increase the Number of Indigenous Teachers in Canada and Abroad*

## HOW CAN MY DISTRICT IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION?

Designing culturally sustaining programs that support Indigenous educator candidates, staff, and faculty can transform recruitment and retention. Your TEP can:

- » Engage Indigenous faculty and staff in program planning, including curriculum design and recruitment, and compensate them for their time spent on this work.
- » Design culturally affirming curriculum and supports that reflect Indigenous candidates’ cultural values, histories, and ways of knowing.
- » Provide professional development for faculty and staff around culturally responsive teaching and Indigenous culture, and allow time and space for them to collaborate to review and change the curriculum to effectively support Indigenous candidates.
- » Monitor candidate progress regularly to identify those who need additional support and prevent situations that may otherwise lead a candidate to drop out.



## SO IS IT JUST AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3?

*Not quite.* Centuries of violence against and vilification of Indigenous peoples, cultures and languages can’t be undone in a day. These recommendations should be part of ongoing work to better support current and future generations of Native students, educators, and families. This is just the beginning.



### ABOUT REGION 16 COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

Region 16 Comprehensive Center, a network of 29 educational service agencies in Alaska, Oregon, and Washington, is a responsive and innovative partner guided by the needs of educators and communities to improve the quality and equity of education for each student.

Region 16’s innovative model creates stronger networks of services and supports for students, staff, families, and educators. Relationships with our communities and equitable access to opportunities for our students are at the center of our mission, vision, and values.

### CONNECT WITH OUR TEAM

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