

LEARNING FROM LEADERS AND SCHOLARS IN THE REGION

# Foundations of Indigenous Education in the Pacific Northwest

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# About Region 16 Comprehensive Center

Region 16 Comprehensive Center (R16CC), 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. We engage state, regional, Tribal, school, and community partners to provide evidence-based services and supports. R16CC's innovative model creates better networks of services and supports for students, staff, families, and educators.

## Acknowledgments

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# Foundational elements of Indigenous education models



## The educational program centers Indigenous<sup>1</sup> knowledge, culture, and language

- From early learning through higher education, curricula are experiential, place-based, and grounded in relationships with the community and the natural world
- Instructional materials and learning are interdisciplinary, weaving together concepts from science, math, language, history, and art



## The educational program celebrates and incorporates Indigenous resources in the community

- Families, elders, and knowledge keepers contribute to intergenerational sharing of knowledge
- Educators increasingly represent the communities of students and families they serve
- Educators and staff members from outside of the community receive mentorship and coaching in cultural responsiveness, Tribally specific information, and community engagement
- Student voice is central and helps ensure that the educational program addresses the needs and interests of the current generation



## The educational program is part of a broader system that fosters safety and healing in communities

- Schools work in partnership with the community to foster physical, social, and emotional well-being through culturally sustaining practices that promote health, safety, healing, and growth

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, we use the terms American Indian, Native American, Indigenous, and Native interchangeably (see the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian for more information and guidance on terminology <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/faq/did-you-know>).



## **All aspects of the educational program promote Tribal sovereignty and self-determination**

- School leaders adopt and implement Indigenous leadership frameworks to guide the work
- Academic schedules and calendars are aligned with cultural and community events
- Accountability structures and funding requirements allow for variation and differentiation from public school based on a westernized model
- State and local education agencies engage in robust and authentic consultation with Indigenous communities and Tribes



## **The educational program increases the visibility of Indigenous cultures**

- Policies and practices work to actively cultivate, sustain, and make visible the uniqueness of nations, Tribes, and regions
- Systems are established to enable collaboration and knowledge exchange within and between Tribes, regions, and states, including both rural and urban communities of Native people
- The system nurtures Indigenous students and staff members to become leaders who can influence policy and systems-level change

# Introduction

In 2022, the Region 16 Comprehensive Center (R16CC) partnered with Education Northwest to gather information on best practices in Indigenous school improvement. We reviewed literature on exemplary uses of effective schooling practices for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawai'ian students, focusing on evidence generated by and with Indigenous researchers and educators. We also conducted outreach with experts in the field, gaining perspectives on successful, evidence-based approaches to developing schools that holistically support Indigenous students. From this group, we recruited and interviewed 11 individuals across the country who had first-hand knowledge of implementing Indigenous pre-K–12 school improvement models. The report summarizing our research findings was released in September 2022.<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, R16CC and Education Northwest partnered again to extend the previous scope of work and address feedback on the first report from R16CC's WA Tribal Advisory Board. Specifically, we responded to a call for a stronger focus on regional efforts in the Pacific Northwest. This document presents themes that emerged from conversations with key education leaders and scholars, along with examples and resources created and carried out by Indigenous education leaders and scholars in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. See appendix A for a description of the methods we used to gather this information and appendix B for a list of questions used in interviews.

The recommendations and resources in this report are intended to support educators and educational leaders across the region with strategies that could improve educational (and life) experiences for Native and non-Native students alike. This report is not an exhaustive list of all of the foundational elements of Indigenous education in the Pacific Northwest, but instead should be considered a summary of what we have learned from conversations with leaders in the region and a review of their published works.

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<sup>2</sup> Davidson, S., Broaddus, M. S., Velie, Z., & Harry, K., (2022). Indigenous school improvement: Research findings. Region 16 Comprehensive Center.



# The educational program centers Indigenous knowledge, culture, and language

From early learning through higher education, Indigenous education should be grounded in experiential, place-based learning that is developed from the ground up by Native educators (rather than adapted from Western curricula). Relationships with the community are central, and education supports connections with the natural world. Instructional materials and learning are interdisciplinary, weaving together concepts from science, math, language, history, and art.

*“When you're walking the land, whether it's creating blankets from animal hides or cradle boards or canoes or cedar bentwood boxes, there's always an understanding that there is math, there is science, there is engineering, there is technology, there is art, there is story, there is history.”*

– Interview with Dawn Hardison-Stevens  
Program Manager, Native Education Certificate Program  
University of Washington

## Examples and Resources From the Pacific Northwest

### Indigenous Knowledges to Transform Public Education

Craig, A. B., & Craig, C. M. (2022). Indigenous knowledges to transform public education. In C. Pewewardy, A. Lees, & R. S. Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn, *Unsettling settler-colonial education: The Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model* (pp. 26–36). Teachers College Press.

#### Authors

Anthony Craig, University of Washington College of Education  
Chelsea M. Craig, Tulalip Public Schools

**Synopsis.** This book presents the Transformational Indigenous Praxis Model (TIPM), an innovative framework for promoting critical consciousness toward decolonization efforts among educators. The TIPM challenges readers to examine how even the most well-intentioned educators are complicit in reproducing ethnic stereotypes, racist actions, deficit-based ideology, and recolonization. Drawing from decades of collaboration with

teachers and school leaders serving Indigenous children and communities, this volume helps educators better support the development of their students' critical thinking skills. Representing a holistic balance, the text is organized in four sections: Birth–Grade 12 and Community Education, Teacher Education, Higher Education, and Educational Leadership. The book centers the needs of teachers, children, families, and communities who are currently engaged in public education and deserve an improved experience, while also informing efforts to create a more positive future.

*“Until all of us—Natives, non-Natives—until we remove the imperial hand controlling what we think, what we feel, what we believe, we will create and recreate the same obstacles ... removing that imperial hand is like rearranging our brain to ask, ‘What's the ancestral hand that should be arranging our brain? What would our ancestors do with this whole generation of five-year-olds?’”*

– Interview with Anthony Craig  
Professor of Practice and Director of Leadership for Learning  
University of Washington College of Education

## Weaving Together Indigenous and Western Knowledge in Science Education: Reflections and Recommendations

Higheagle Strong, Z., Charlo, L. J., Watson, F., Price, P. G., & Christen, K. (2023). Weaving together Indigenous and Western knowledge in science education: Reflections and recommendations. *Journal of Indigenous Research*, 10(2022), Article 10.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/kicjir/vol10/iss2022/10>

### Authors

Zoe Higheagle Strong, Washington State University

Landon James Charlo, Washington State University

Francene Watson, Washington State University

Paula Groves Price, North Carolina A&T State University

Kimberly Christen, Washington State University

**Abstract.** The Culturally Responsive Indigenous Science (CRIS) project was a collaborative effort between three Tribal communities in the Pacific Northwest and faculty members and students from Washington State University, many of whom are Tribal citizens. The project was designed to integrate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) and Western knowledge into science curricula and professional learning opportunities. At the end of the five-year grant project, members of the CRIS team (including Tribal and university partners) gathered to reflect on the work accomplished and the lessons learned

about the process of integrating ITEK within science education. In this conceptual paper, the authors discuss four key takeaways from their reflections: 1) creating relational space for cultural values and practices, 2) Indigenous science education requires many educators with diverse expertise, 3) respecting Tribal and individual autonomy and timelines, and 4) remembering who the work is meant to serve. The authors also provide important recommendations for weaving together ITEK and Western science to better serve and engage Native American youth.

### **The Ichishkiin Language Alliance**

Heritage University Language Center

Director: Gregory Sutterlict, Heritage University

**Excerpt from website.** “The Ichishkiin Language Alliance teaches the Yakama Native tongue to kids in kindergarten through grade 12 and beyond—where the future of the language lies. The Alliance is comprised of educators, elders and leaders from the Yakama Nation, area school districts and the university. In addition to Heritage, it includes representation from the Yakama Tribal School, the Mt. Adams School District, the Zillah School District, the Yakama Nation Sahaptin Language Group, the Wapato School District, Yakama Nation Headstart and many individuals.”

***“Preservation is documenting things. Revitalization is bringing it back to life.  
And promotion is putting it out there into the community.”***

**– Gregory Sutterlict (excerpt from website)**





## The educational program celebrates and incorporates Indigenous resources in the community

Knowledge keepers are not limited to classroom teachers: families, elders, and other community members all contribute to sharing knowledge within and between generations. It is important for students to learn from educators who represent the students and families they serve, and for educators and staff members entering the community from outside to receive mentorship and coaching that will provide them with a background in cultural responsiveness, Tribally specific information, and community engagement. Centering student voice in designing and carrying out learning opportunities helps ensure that the educational program addresses the needs and interests of the current generation of youth.

*“We need to acknowledge that there is still a predominantly settler system in place for evaluation of teachers as well as principals and administrators ... so how do we change the system so that we can keep and maintain and retain our Native educators because of the impact that that has on Native students? For them to see a Native educator in the classroom is so important.”*

– Interview with Dawn Hardison-Stevens  
Program Manager, Native Education Certificate Program University of  
Washington

### Examples and Resources from the Pacific Northwest

#### Reclaiming Indigenous Kinship Education: Lessons From the Sapsik'walaá Program

Jacob, M. M., & Sabzalian, L. (2022). Reclaiming Indigenous kinship education: Lessons from the Sapsik'walaá program . *NEOS*, 14(2).

#### Authors

Michelle M. Jacob, University of Oregon

Leilani Sabzalian, University of Oregon

**Abstract.** We discuss two key areas we witness and experience in our work leading an Indigenous teacher education program, and we offer them here as a guide for researchers and teachers whose work impacts children and youth. In doing so, we honor the instructions of Tuxámshish (Dr. Virginia Beavert), who advises that the need to reclaim Indigenous kinship structures in education needs to be one of our highest priorities as we seek to build generative futures and opportunities for children and youth. We recruit and train master’s level Indigenous teacher candidates who are dedicated to teaching in Indigenous-serving schools (for a more detailed program description, see <https://sapsikwala.uoregon.edu/>). It is within this context that we affirm the importance of Indigenous kinship in education by 1) modeling an intergenerational approach to education that purposefully centers Elder wisdom, and 2) engaging Indigenous Storywork that more deeply connects students to families and communities.

*“Stories connect us to place and to each other, affirming and strengthening kinship.”*

– From “Reclaiming Indigenous Kinship Education: Lessons from the Sapsik’wataá Program”

## **Indigenous Teacher Education Is Nation Building: Reflections of Capacity Building and Capacity Strengthening in Idaho**

Anthony-Stevens, V., Mahfouz, J., & Bisbee, Y. (2020). Indigenous teacher education is nation building: Reflections of capacity building and capacity strengthening in Idaho. *Journal of School Leadership*, 30(6), 541–564.

### **Authors**

Vanessa Anthony-Stevens, University of Idaho

Julia Mahfouz, University of Idaho

Yolanda Bisbee, University of Idaho

**Abstract.** This article discusses the efforts of the Indigenous Knowledge for Effective Education Program (IKEEP), at the University of Idaho, a predominately white institution (PWI) of higher education, and its struggle to create space in higher education for intentional support of Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty, and Tribal nation building through the preparation of Indigenous teachers. In doing so, we examine the contentious and local work of reimagining education, from the bottom up and top down, to develop leaders to serve the needs of Indigenous youth and communities through the vehicle of mainstream institutions. With data from a multiyear ethnographic documentation, we examine the experiences of IKEEP program administration, teacher

mentors, and students through the conceptual lens of Tribal nation building in higher education. Our findings underscore how teacher education programs at PWIs need to engage in a radical shift toward *seeing* Indigenous teachers as nation builders and to prioritize the infrastructure and programmatic collaboration to support them and their communities as such.

*“In 2007, University of Idaho established an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with 10 Tribes in the region. The biggest thing that came out of the MOU is recognition of sovereignty status of the Tribes and placing the university in a government-to-government relationship with those Tribes. It is one of the biggest high points that places this institution in a position to be able to support what we now call nation-building of those Tribes, to be able to work collaboratively with those Tribes and have ongoing communications and collaborations with them.”*

– Interview with Yolanda Bisbee  
Executive Director of Tribal Relations  
University of Idaho

## **Native Education Certificate Program**

University of Washington

**Program manager:** Dawn Hardison-Stevens, University of Washington College of Education

The University of Washington College of Education and the Professional & Continuing Education program offer the Native Education Certificate Program for educators and professionals working with Native communities and Tribal Nations. The program sessions are designed to cultivate the educator and professional's ability to create and engage in meaningful and effective relationships with Native American students, families, and communities through a community-based perspective. Educators and professionals develop the expertise of engaging Native students, families, and communities in instruction to ensure Native students thrive and succeed, making school and future careers relevant to the pressing needs of Native communities. This innovative cohort model enables peers to collaborate in scholarship and engage knowledge and skills with Native leaders and educators, creating strong alliances within learning communities. Cultural partnerships inspire the community-based educator with relevant tools to share with colleagues, communities, and students.

*“There’s nothing like having Native students see an elder walk across campus and instead of having heads down, chins come up and understanding that when ... their stories are heard, their voices are heard.”*

– Interview with Dawn Hardison-Stevens  
Program Manager, Native Education Certificate Program University  
of Washington



# The educational program is part of a broader system that fosters safety and healing in communities

Schools do not operate in isolation; rather they work in partnership with other community services and resources to foster physical, social, and emotional well-being through culturally sustaining practices that promote health, safety, healing, and growth.

*“There's been a huge impact during the pandemic, not only to our Native education scope of work but also our schools and our families. And so that's still very much at the center of our vision and focus—rebuilding and healing and reconnecting.”*

– Interview with Sara Marie Ortiz  
Program Manager for Native Education  
Highline Public Schools

## Examples and Resources from the Pacific Northwest

### Native Aspirations: Addressing the Contagion of Violence in the Context of Historical Trauma

PrettyPaint, I., & Taylor, C., (2013). Native aspirations: Addressing the contagion of violence in the context of historical trauma. In D. M. Patel, M. A. Simon, & R. M. Taylor (rapporteurs), *Contagion of violence: Forum on Global Violence Prevention: Workshop summary* (pp. 88–93). National Academies Press.

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/13489/contagion-of-violence-workshop-summary>

#### Authors

Iris PrettyPaint, Heritage University

Corinne Taylor, Kauffman and Associates, Inc.

**Abstract.** For the past seven years, an innovative and transformative project called Native Aspirations (NA) has successfully addressed the crisis of youth violence in American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) communities. Sixty-five Native communities across some of the most remote and underserved areas of the United States have benefited from the NA approach. The program started in 2005 with emergency funding from the

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the aim of which was to tackle the violence facing AI/AN youth. The NA approach respects Tribal sovereignty by collaborating with Tribal leaders, community members, and Tribal behavioral health departments. At the heart of the NA approach is the recognition of two salient factors that contribute to both the problem of and the solutions to community-wide violence. The first factor is the role that historical trauma plays in community violence. The second factor consists of honoring the local knowledge and cultural practices that heal communities.

*“Native Aspirations understands the importance of creating and fostering safe environments for young people to process and understand trauma while creating a vision for a better, healthier community.”*

– From “Native Aspirations: Addressing the Contagion of Violence in the Context of Historical Trauma”

## **Organic Intellectuals in the Prison: Reports from the Flying University on Philosophy as Public Practice**

Neely, S. (2022). Organic intellectuals in the prison: Reports from the Flying University on philosophy as public practice. *Precollege Philosophy and Public Practice*, 4, 33–50.

### **Author**

Sol Neely, Heritage University

**Abstract.** The Flying University, a prison education and reentry program that brings university students inside the prison for mutual and collaborative study, convenes with the assumed understanding that incarcerated peoples bear rich critical perspectives on the state of our communities as well as a philosophical potential to muster the resources necessary to heal communities in the wake of historical violence and transgenerational trauma. Rather than bringing incarcerated students into the purview of academic philosophy, the Flying University reverses these roles by recognizing that incarcerated peoples engage in daily philosophical scrutiny about a whole range of topics that traditional academic philosophy too often fails to comprehend with any depth. The Flying University enacts precollege philosophy as public practice by facilitating semester-long seminars that bring professional philosophers and university students into the prison—not so they can teach prisoners but listen to them. The guiding critical assumption of this practice follows Antonio Gramsci’s argument that what distinguishes “philosophers” from their opposite has less to do with intellectual activity and perspective and more to do with social status and credentials. A genuinely restorative philosophical praxis must

solicit, within our community dialogues, the stories and voices of our incarcerated neighbors as “organic intellectuals.”

## Recommendations for Improving Adolescent Addiction Recovery Support in Six Northwest Tribal Communities

Whelshula, M. M., LaPlante, D. A., Nelson, S. E., & Gray, H. M. (2021).

Recommendations for improving adolescent addiction recovery support in six Northwest Tribal communities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49(7), 2922–2937.

### Authors

Martina M. Whelshula, Swan Innovations LP

Debi A. LaPlante, Harvard Medical School

Sarah E. Nelson, Harvard Medical School

Heather M. Gray, Harvard Medical School

**Abstract.** American Indian and Alaska Native communities offer tangible and intangible resources, including centuries of indigenous wisdom and resiliency, to support their young people in recovery from substance use disorders. At the same time, Tribal youth returning home from residential or inpatient treatment are vulnerable to relapse, especially if they encounter the same environmental triggers in which their substance misuse developed. This study endeavored to learn about community stakeholder perceptions of existing strengths and needs for supporting recovering adolescents among six Tribal communities of the Inland Northwest. Using a Tribal Participatory Research approach, we conducted group level assessments with key stakeholders representing educators/coaches, medical and behavioral health providers, social service providers, cultural leaders/elders, and legal professionals among each participating Tribe ( $N = 166$ ). We used content analysis to identify emergent themes across participants' recommendations for improving recovery support. The five emergent themes were (1) *communication, collaboration, and accountability among Tribal departments and agencies*; (2) *community-wide education*; (3) *the importance of providing wraparound/supportive services*; (4) *youth-focused education, services, and events*; and (5) *a recovery coaching model*. American Indian and Alaska Native culture was infused into nearly all these recommendations. We also discuss specific ways to implement these recommendations, including the forthcoming development of a culturally grounded community-wide mental health training program developed specifically for, and with, these Tribes.



## All aspects of the educational program promote sovereignty and self-determination

Indigenous educators not only deliver instruction, they also lead the work of schools, adopting and implementing Indigenous leadership frameworks as a guide. In addition to grounding instructional materials and learning in Indigenous knowledge, other aspects of schooling such as the academic schedules and calendars are designed to align with the timing of cultural and community events. Necessary conditions for promoting educational sovereignty include ensuring that state- and district-level accountability structures and funding requirements allow for variation and differentiation from traditional public schools. To achieve this, state and local education agencies must engage in robust, authentic, ongoing consultation with Indigenous communities and Tribes.

*“We need to make sure that we're making space and creating space and sustaining space for our Native people to be able to be the creators of the curriculum, creators of shifting systems and organizations in ways that reflects our values and who we are as Indigenous people ... For too long we've asked for permission to do that, but we're not asking for permission anymore, we're just doing it.”*

– Interview with Robin Starr Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn  
Faculty Director of the Educational Leadership Program  
University of Washington Tacoma

### Examples and Resources from the Pacific Northwest

#### The Gift of Education: How Indigenous Knowledges Can Transform the Future of Public Education

Jacob, M. M., Sabzalian, L., Jansen, J., Tobin, T. J., Vincent, C. G., & LaChance, K. M. (2018). The gift of education: How Indigenous knowledges can transform the future of public education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 20(1), 157–185.



## Authors

Michelle M. Jacob, University of Oregon

Leilani Sabzalian, University of Oregon

Joana Jansen, University of Oregon

Tary J. Tobin, University of Oregon

Claudia G. Vincent, University of Oregon

Kelly M. LaChance, University of Oregon

**Abstract.** This article advocates for the necessity of Indigenous Knowledges in furthering Indigenous self-determination in public schools, as well as furthering the broad aims of public education. Drawing attention to past efforts across the United States to transform the public school curriculum and analyzing data from testimonies given at Oregon State Legislature hearings, we argue that Indigenous Knowledges offer an important resource for educating all students responsibly and improving relationships within and across communities. Framing these ideas as gift-giving logic, we argue that if educators and policymakers are open, they can learn a great deal from Indigenous Knowledges and advocacy efforts.

*“Orienting educational policy and practice toward recognizing Indigenous Knowledges as resources means enacting culturally sustaining/revitalizing curricula and pedagogies that affirm Indigenous Knowledges and that are enacted within a context of relationships with Indigenous families, communities, and nations.”*

— From “The Gift of Education: How Indigenous Knowledges Can Transform the Future of Public Education”

## Indigenous Children’s Survivance in Public Schools

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children’s survivance in public schools*. Routledge.

### Author

Leilani Sabzalian, University of Oregon

**Synopsis.** This book examines the cultural, social, and political terrain of Indigenous education by providing accounts of Indigenous students and educators creatively navigating the colonial dynamics within public schools. Through a series of survivance stories, the book surveys a range of educational issues, including implementation of Native-themed curriculum, teachers’ attempts to support Native students in their

classrooms, and efforts to claim physical and cultural space in a school district, among others. As a collective, these stories highlight the ways that colonization continues to shape Native students' experiences in schools. By documenting the nuanced intelligence, courage, artfulness, and survivance of Native students, families, and educators, the book counters deficit-based ways of portraying Indigenous students. The goal is also to develop educators' anticolonial literacy so that teachers can counter colonialism and better support Indigenous students in public schools.

### **Washington State–Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs)**

*Excerpt from the Washington Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) Office of Native Education (ONE) website:*<sup>3</sup> In 2013 the Legislature passed [House Bill 1154](#), authorizing state–Tribal education compact schools ([RCW.28A.715](#)). The bill authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction to enter into state–Tribal education compacts. The legislation exempts schools that are the subjects of state–Tribal education compacts from all existing state statutes and rules regarding school districts and district boards of directors; establishes standards for teachers, staff, and curriculum; outlines admissions policies and school funding; and establishes reporting requirements on student enrollment. Compact schools are encouraged to implement early learning pilot programs. The Department of Early Learning is directed to form a working group to develop early learning pilot programs. The Office of Native Education provides consultation to eligible federally recognized Tribes and BIE schools located in Washington state who are interested in starting a state–Tribal education compact.

*“Federal rules [came to exist] because we were perceived to be incompetent [and] were never allowed to help make the rules with regard to the laws that directly affect our kids. So, a number of things have to happen. One is that we need to reexamine these laws and change them to reflect the ability of the Tribes to make up their own laws regarding their inherent right to educate their own children ... a true government–to–government relationship needs to be in effect that respects the ability on the part of the Tribe with proper support and funding to be able to adopt those language and other educational programs.”*

**– Interview with Bernard Thomas  
Lummi Nation Schools, Director of Education**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/native-education>



## The educational program increases the visibility of Native cultures

Policies and practices must work to actively cultivate, sustain, and make visible the uniqueness of nations, Tribes, and regions. Systems are established to enable collaboration and knowledge exchange within and between Tribes, regions, and states, including both rural and urban communities of Native people. The system nurtures Indigenous students and staff members to become leaders who can influence policy and systems-level change.

*“Washington is an incredible place to lead Native education work. It’s just so rich, and there are so many resources in our people. But also, there’s been a huge push over time in this region to make sure that the historical narrative is remembered and that it’s centered in many different spaces. It isn’t always. I still say that there is this invisibilizing that’s going on of our historic shared histories and also of our people ... it’s a superpower to have that history in hand and accessible and to always be reminded of it visually and through the Tribal languages that are still spoken by respecting those Elders who physically carry that history in their bodies.”*

– Interview with Sara Marie Ortiz  
Program Manager for Native Education  
Highline Public Schools

### Examples and Resources from the Pacific Northwest

#### “A Future Denied” for Indigenous Youth: From Social Disruption to Possible Futures

Elliott-Groves, E., & Fryberg, S. A. (2018). “A future denied” for young Indigenous people: From social disruption to possible futures. In E. A. McKinley & L. Tuhiwai Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of Indigenous education* (pp. 1–19). Springer.

#### Authors

Emma Elliott-Groves, University of Washington College of Education  
Stephanie A. Fryberg, University of Michigan

**Abstract.** Representations of contemporary Indigenous people in the United States and Canada are poorly reflected in public institutions. Portrayals are rare and generally inaccurate, highlighting the erasure of Indigenous people from current discourse. Such erasure is an inevitable result of settler colonialism, a process that aims to replace the Indigenous inhabitants of a given region with settlers. Settler colonialism is predicated on the notion that land can be owned as private property and that Indigenous people have no special claim to their traditional territories. The U.S. government and its legal system have supported its ends, which have disrupted the web of relationships necessary for Indigenous identity development. These relationships include prescriptions for what it means to be an Indigenous person and how to conduct one’s life in a good way. In conjunction with representational erasure, their disruption prevents young Indigenous people from developing positive concepts of self. In the face of cultural invisibility and widespread negative stereotypes, the attempts of young people to build healthy identities for themselves can be compromised or completely thwarted. They cannot find ways to connect the narrative thread of their past and present with their possible futures, which are effectively foreclosed. Thus, representational erasure places young Indigenous people at great psychological risk, culminating far too often in suicide. To mitigate these effects, we recommend raising social awareness of settler colonialism and reimagining public education in ways that will affirm rather than deny Indigenous values.

### **On Indian Ground: A Return to Indigenous Knowledge**

Jacob, M. M., & RunningHawk Johnson, S. (Eds.). (2020). *On Indian ground: A return to Indigenous knowledge: Generating hope, leadership, and sovereignty through education: The Northwest*. Information Age Publishing.

#### **Authors**

Michelle M. Jacob, University of Oregon  
Stephany RunningHawk Johnson, Washington State University

**Synopsis.** This is the second of 10 regionally focused texts that explore American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawai’ian education in depth. The text is designed to be used by educators of Native youth and emphasizes best practices found throughout the region. Previous texts on American Indian education make wide-ranging general assumptions that all American Indians are alike. This series promotes specific interventions and relies on Native ways of knowing to highlight place-based educational practices. *On Indian Ground: Northwest* looks at the history of Indian education across the Pacific Northwest region. The authors also analyze education policy and Tribal education departments to highlight early childhood education, gifted and talented educational practice, parental involvement, language revitalization, counseling, and research. These chapters expose

cross-cutting themes of sustainability, historical bias, economic development, health and wellness, and cultural competence.

## Centering Indigenous College Student Voices and Perspectives Through Photovoice and Photo-Elicitation

Minthorn, R. S., & Marsh, T. E. (2016). Centering Indigenous college student voices and perspectives through photovoice and photo-elicitation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 47*, 4–10.

### Authors

Robin S. Minthorn, University of Washington Tacoma

Tyson E. Marsh, University of Washington Bothell

**Abstract.** Using arts-based inquiry and drawing on photovoice, photo-elicitation, and visual [narrative](#), in this study we explore how Native American college students experience space and place at the University of New Mexico, a large, research-extensive university in the Southwestern United States. The objective of this study is to understand how Native American students view their educational environment. Student perspectives are framed through an artistic inquiry coming directly from the students and their interpretations of space, place, and community. This study was designed to ultimately inform the institution, local Tribal communities, and the existing body of research on how participants viewed their college-going experience in relation to space and place, and how we might more adequately serve Native American college students. Findings indicate the critical importance of cultural centers, houses, and designated cultural spaces for Native American students, as indicated in the literature. Although Native students may experience struggles and successes similar to other student groups within the context of higher education, it is critical that student affairs professionals, administrators, faculty members, and other educational leaders acknowledge how discourses of colonialism and genocide inform higher educational spaces, as well as the experience of Native American college students.

*“How do we highlight the work that's being done ... in school systems, school districts, Tribal communities, and higher ed educator prep programs ... and making sure, there are those connections? To me, inner connections are where you see the strongest foundation.”*

— Interview with Robin Starr Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn  
Faculty Director of the Educational Leadership Program  
University of Washington Tacoma

## Native Education Program

Highline Public Schools

**Program manager:** Sara Marie Ortiz

*Excerpt from program website:* The Native Education Program is committed to working with, and on behalf of, Native students and families:

- To provide authentic, culturally relevant, responsive, and competent academic support to Native students.
- To actively support the academic success of our Native students in high school and prepare them for college, successful careers, and meaningful citizenship.
- To highlight programs, services, and resources in Highline Public Schools, currently available to all students, and support Native students and families in accessing these resources to maximize Native student success.
- To empower students and their families to be positive change-makers in their communities by providing quality academic advancement, community service opportunities, mentorship opportunities, and leadership development opportunities.

## “Darles el Lugar”: A Place for Nondominant Family Knowing in Educational Equity

Barajas-López, F., & Ishimaru, A. M. (2020). “Darles el lugar”: A place for nondominant family knowing in educational equity. *Urban Education*, 55(1), 38–65.

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**Abstract.** Educational researchers, leadership, and policymakers have had the privileged voices and place from which to theorize and address educational inequities. But for some exceptions, nondominant families have been relegated to participation in school-centric “parent involvement” activities. Drawing from a participatory design-based research study using standpoint and critical race theory, our findings suggest key convergences between the lived experiences and insights of nondominant parents and recent educational equity scholarship, while revealing untapped expertise, knowledge, and capacity for addressing inequity. We argue that holding a “place” for the complex understandings of nondominant families can open expansive possibilities for transforming educational systems toward racial equity.

## Statewide K–12 Curriculum in Washington and Oregon

*Excerpt from Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website:*<sup>4</sup> In 2015, the Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5433 modifying the original 2005 legislation, now requiring the *Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State* or other Tribally developed curriculum be taught in all schools. The use of the *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum has been endorsed by all 29 federally recognized Tribes.

*Excerpt from the Oregon Department of Education website:*<sup>5</sup> In 2017, the Oregon State Legislature enacted Senate Bill 13, now known as Tribal History/Shared History. This law directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to create K–12 Native American curriculum for inclusion in Oregon public schools and provide professional development to educators. The law also directs the ODE to provide funds to each of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon to create individual place-based curriculum.

*“We're doing some internal work right now with data justice ... this project is really important because resources typically follow numbers. And we know our numbers are not accurate, and we know our students aren't able to see themselves when they check a box during registration ... we are communicating [the state plan] out to our districts and our communities about the importance and bringing awareness and having our students become more visible.”*

– Interview with April Campbell  
Director for Office of Indian Education  
Oregon Department of Education

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/time-immemorial-tribal-sovereignty-washington-state>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/nativeamericaneducation/pages/senate-bill-13-tribal-historyshared-history.aspx>

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# Appendix A

## Methodology

To launch this project, we held a meeting with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center (R16CC) team to develop and refine our approach. The R16CC team shared a list of educators, education leaders, and academic scholars from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The list of contacts was generated by the R16CC WA Tribal Advisory Board.

### Phase 1. Literature review

To identify recent publications from the group of leaders invited to participate in interviews, we used internet search engines and educational journal databases. We reviewed articles, documents, websites, and other artifacts related to the work of the individuals in the interview sample. The purpose of the literature review was to develop interview protocols grounded in a deeper understanding of how their work demonstrates exemplary schooling practices for supporting Native students and to identify examples and resources to highlight in the report.

### Phase 2. Interviews

After reviewing the literature, Education Northwest worked with R16CC to develop an interview protocol. We reached out to a list of 18 potential interview participants and were able to schedule interviews with seven contributors (table A1) to gain perspectives on successful, evidence-based approaches to developing schools that holistically support Native students in the Pacific Northwest. The interview protocol is attached as appendix B.

*Table A1. Contributors who participated in interviews*

<b>Name of interview participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Yolanda Bisbee	University of Idaho
April Campbell	Oregon Department of Education
Anthony Craig	University of Washington College of Education
Dawn Hardison-Stevens	University of Washington College of Education
Robin Starr Zape-tah-hol-ah Minthorn	University of Washington Tacoma
Sara Marie Ortiz	Highline Public schools
Bernie (Pahalucktun) Thomas	Lummi Nation

### **Phase 3. Sharing and making meaning**

To ensure we were sharing accurate and meaningful information about what we learned, we invited all the individuals with whom we had conducted any outreach to discuss the preliminary findings in a virtual meaning making session. Collectively, we then identified the foundational elements, examples, and resources that would be most useful for those interested in developing, supporting, sustaining, or engaging in inquiry about Indigenous education in the Pacific Northwest. All participants were also invited to review an early draft of this report and provide feedback.

# Appendix B

## Interview questions

### Interview Questions

1. Please tell us about yourself, your current role, and your community. (For example, organization, position, length of time in current position, and how your work connects to the place where you live or your community.)
  - a. For practitioners: Can you tell us a little about your work at XXX? What do you like the public to understand the most about your organization or school?
  - b. For academics/researchers: Can you tell us a little about the research you have done at/with [program/organization]? What are some of the ways that you typically share your findings?
2. [If not covered in #1] How does your work connect to efforts to support Indigenous K-12 education, including school improvement, student well-being, community/Tribal connections, Native language development, etc. in our region?
3. What are some examples of successful innovations or efforts to develop Indigenous centered school models or programs that you know about in our region?
  - a. How were these innovations or efforts devised and developed?
  - b. Who helped in this work?
  - c. What contextual conditions or structures have helped this work in our region?
  - d. What is the role of funding that enabled their initiative?
  - e. What is the role of policy and advocacy?
  - f. How were community, family members, Tribal councils engaged in the work?
  - g. Probe for strategies related to relationship with the environment and implementing place-based learning – how are educators supported in this?
4. In your view, why is it important for our region to support innovative education models and programs that are culturally sustaining and rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and learning?
5. What do you see as the foundational elements or top priorities in the design and implementation of a new model that serves AIAN students? Can you share any examples of how these elements have been implemented in our region? [For teacher prep program leaders, which of these program components should be prioritized in teacher preparation, training, education, PD, mentoring, etc?]

Probe for:

- a. Policy and advocacy (in schools, districts, states)
  - b. Language programming/preservation
  - c. Flexible school day/schedule/calendar
  - d. Culturally responsive/Tribally specific curriculum use
  - e. Parent/family/Tribal engagement
  - f. Community engagement
  - g. Student engagement/empowerment, SEL
  - h. Trauma-informed practices
6. What challenges have existed or do you perceive in developing these new school models or programs?
    - a. What, if any, contextual conditions or structures have hindered this work in our region (e.g. systemic structures of education – assessments, accountability)
  7. What recommendations do you have for any entity [district? Tribal government?] in our region, or Washington State in particular, that would like to start developing an Indigenous model?
  8. What resources or supports are needed to further develop, scale, or sustain Indigenous education models in our region or Washington state in particular?
  9. Is there a person or organization you think we should talk to developing Indigenous school models or programs in our region?
  10. Is there anything else you would like to share?