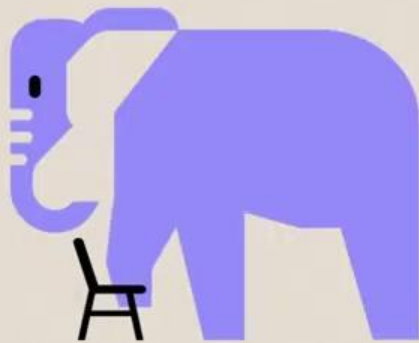




nisn
NACA Inspired
Schools Network

Take Me Outside Outdoor Education Leadership Conference

Committed to uplifting the genius that has always existed in our communities.

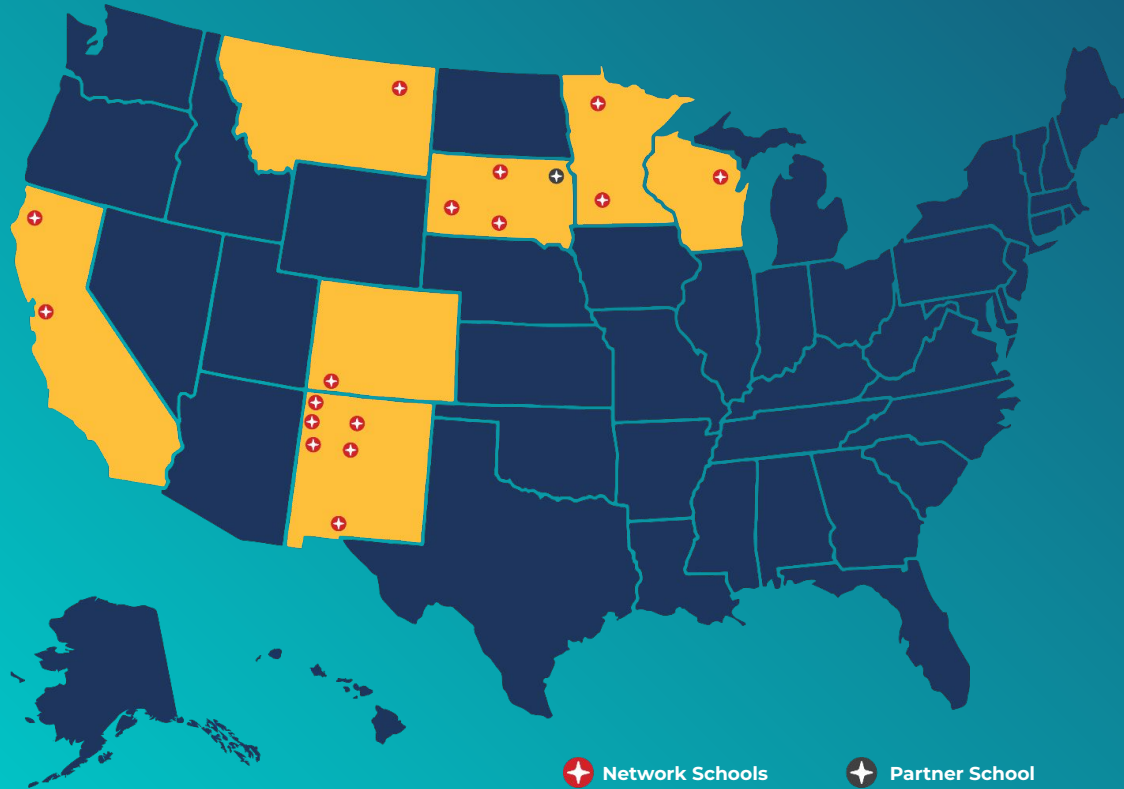




Together with communities,
we are building the future of
Indigenous education.

18 SCHOOLS

7 STATES



 Network Schools

 Partner School

CALIFORNIA

- Hoopa Valley Tribe (*In Planning*)
- The Freedom School (9-12)

COLORADO

- Kwiyyagat Community Academy (K-5)

MINNESOTA

- Cansayapi (*In Planning*)
- Endazhi-Nitaawiging Charter School (K-8)

MONTANA

- Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes (*In Planning*)

NEW MEXICO

- Dream Diné Charter School (K-5)
- Dził Dit'ooí School of Empowerment, Action & Perseverance (6-12)
- Kha'p'o Community School (K-6)
- Native American Community Academy (K-12)
- Raíces del Saber Xinachtli Community School (K-5)
- Saad K'idilyé Diné Language Nest (0-3)
- Six Directions Indigenous School (6-12)

SOUTH DAKOTA

- Enemy Swim Day School (*Partner School*)
- Mní Wíchóni Nakíčiziŋ Wóuŋspe
- Oceti Sakowin Community Academy (K-2)
- Wakanyeja Tokeyachi Wounspe Tipi (K-2)

WISCONSIN

- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (*In Planning*)

Our work is rooted in Four Big Ideas.



HOLISTIC
WELLNESS

ACADEMIC
RELEVANCE

IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY-LED



School Missions



NACA

To engage students, educators, families, and community in creating a school that will prepare our students to grow from early childhood to adulthood and begin **strengthening communities** by developing strong leaders who are **academically prepared, secure in their identity and healthy.**

DDCS

Dream Diné Charter School is a **place-based** elementary school where the **Diné philosophy, wisdom, history and teachings** are the foundation of a **dual-language, experiential curriculum**. Through our **dual-language, experiential learning program**, we will nurture strong, compassionate, bilingual young people who are committed to their **personal, and community health, wellness, relationships and progress.**

KCA

Kwiyagat Community Academy will ensure an educational program where the **Nuchiu culture and language** guides the educational experience and is characterized by **small class sizes with an interdisciplinary, indigenous, and project-based approach** that results in **high academic expectations and desired character skills, personal wellness, and community involvement.**

 Holistic Wellness

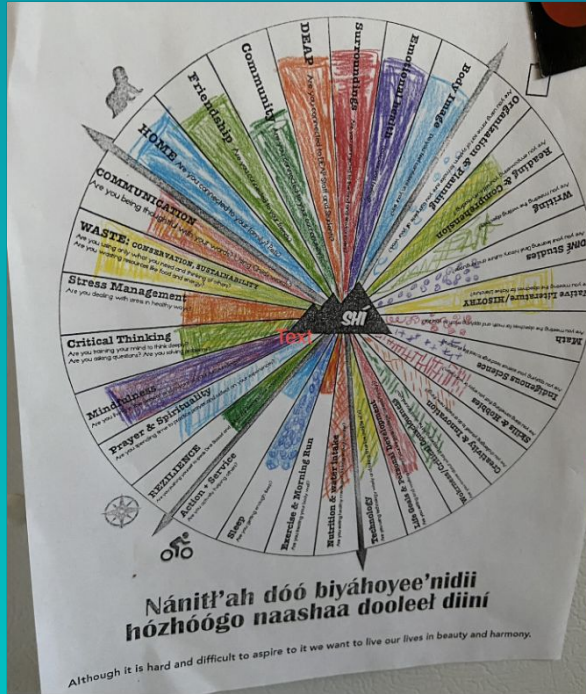
 Identity

 Academic Relevance

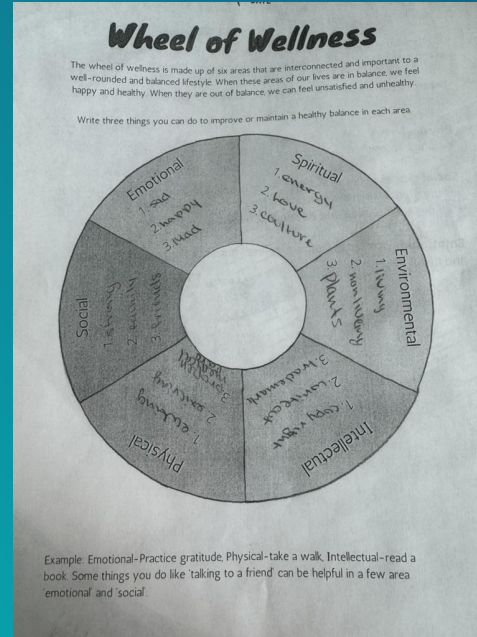
 Community



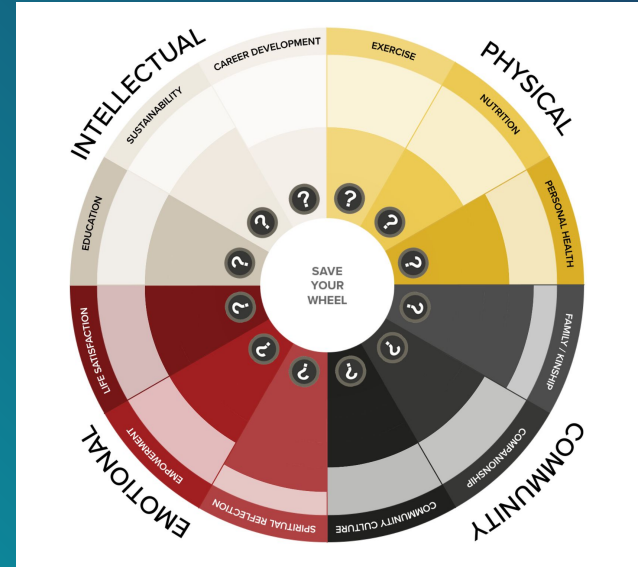
Tools for your Toolbelt: Wellness Wheels in Action



Student Hózhó Wheel
from DEAP School



Middle School
Student



NISN Staff Wellness Wheel

Tools for your Toolbelt: Identity Development



**Where do you get
your medicine?**
(WDYGYM)

Used by both staff
and students to
reflect, build
authentic
connections with
each other and get
beyond the
superficial

WDYGYM Protocol



Setting the tone (10m): Facilitator shares his/her personal story first

Optional: Individual reflection/journaling (10m): The group has time to individually reflect on the prompt.

Sharing stories (time varies): The facilitator will start by sharing his/her story, followed by everyone else (5-7 minutes each)

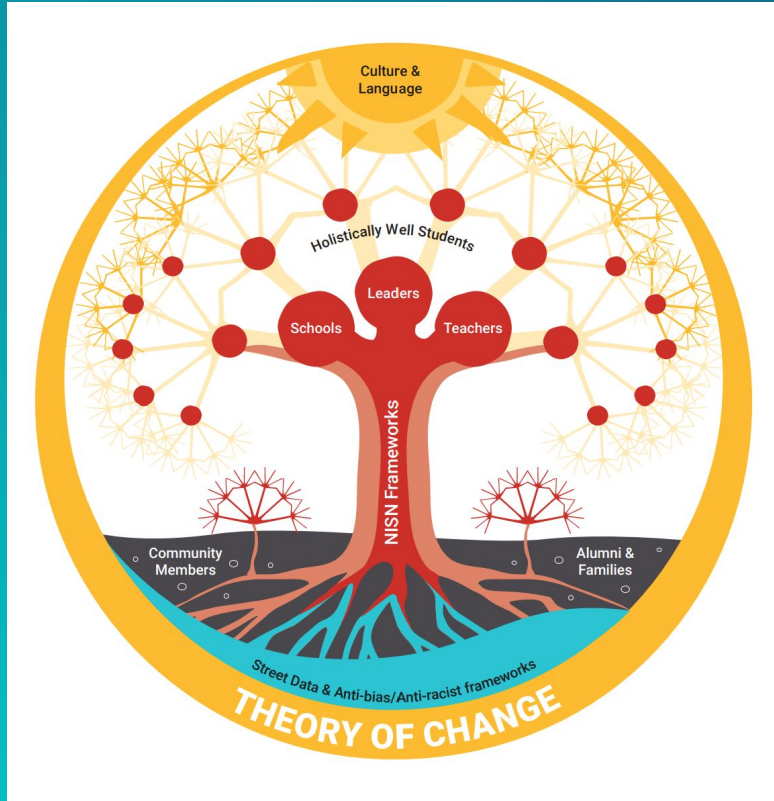
Closing reflection (15m): After all have shared, the group will individually reflect on the experience:

- o What did I learn?
- o Where did I see aspects of myself/my story in others?
- o What am I taking away from this experience?
- o Where am I curious and what is one thing I am going to follow up/learn more about from another person tomorrow?
- o How do I see my identity, power, privilege, and access in my story or related to others'?

Closing connections and thanks (10m): The group will close by giving thanks, and acknowledging the stories and the people who shared them.



Tools for your Toolbelt: Community-Led



Indigenous communities determine and articulate their vision and mission of education relevant to their community needs.

Community-led Design & Role of Story Cycles



End of Year



Thinking
+
Community

Mission-Driven
Story Cycle



Planning
+
Grounding



Beginning
of Year

Reflection
+
Grounding



Doing
+
Transforming

WINTER

FALL

SPRING

SUMMER



End of School Year

Students present, street data gathered.

Conceptualizing the Caracol



SPRING



Annual Street Data Reflection & Planning

SUMMER

Change in school leadership and make up of MDLT.

Dr. Giron & Moctezuma

Year

CUAUHTLI



HUITZILTZIN

Mission-Driven Story Cycle

Community-led MDL Survey

Partnership with Cruces Creatives. Students prepare & Practice

Inquiry Question: " How do we re-conceptualize /re-design the graduate profile? How does this change how we approach capstone 2.0?"



Survey & Talking Circle

Community-led MDL Survey & Talking Circle

Aligning Rubric and Profile

Tlamatiyolotl
Tlazohtla
Chikawalitzli

PAPALOTL




Attempt at initiating School Data book study

Expand the MDLT, Community talking circle, weaving ACE initiatives

Community-led Talking Circle

Tools for your Toolbelt: Academic Relevance (Graduate Profiles)






KWIYAGAT

COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Graduate Profile of a Good Relative



Community

Students are able to connect and apply the values and skills they have learned so they can contribute in cultural settings and protocols.

Land-Based

Students demonstrate gratitude and reciprocity in honoring the Ute relationship with the land and the Circle of Life.

Wellness

Students know how to balance their aspects of wellness to demonstrate positive self identity, spirituality and physicality.

Academics

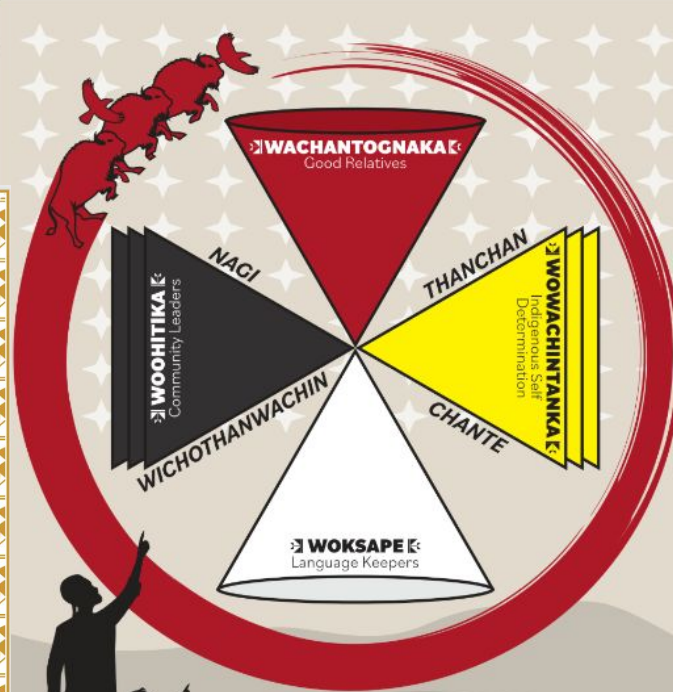
Students demonstrate the qualities of a Native Scholar through their language, culture and core content classes.

Ute Language

Students demonstrate knowledge of their tribal traditions, languages, stories, and practices and are able to make progress towards language acquisition.

Nuchiu Culture

Students recognize the importance of elders and traditional knowledge keepers and value cultural traditions, practices, and stories.



WACHANTOGNAKA
Good Relatives

WOWACHINTANKA
Indigenous Self Determination

WOKSAPE
Language Keepers

WOOHITIKA
Community Leaders

NAGI

THANCHAN

WICHOTHANWACHIN

CHANTE

OCETI SAKOWIN
COMMUNITY ACADEMY

**UNAPOLOGETICALLY
INDIGENOUS.**

IGbD Theory of Change



- A) There is **inherent genius (protocols, knowledge, skills) in Native communities** that should drive original curriculum design.
- B) **Community-led design** ensures alignment to community desired results.
- C) There are **existing, research-proven practices in designing original curriculum** that many of our network teachers and instructional leaders have mastered.
- D) A, B, and C combined make for **community-led, Indigenized learning for students and comprehensive, cohesive, backward-designed curriculum.**
- E) Centering the **expertise and autonomy of expert, teacher-designers** increases buy-in AND **high quality, immersive professional learning of a master curriculum** by a non-teacher-designer increases the likelihood that the curriculum is used and used well.

Indigenous Genius by Design (IGbD) Lens for Capstones

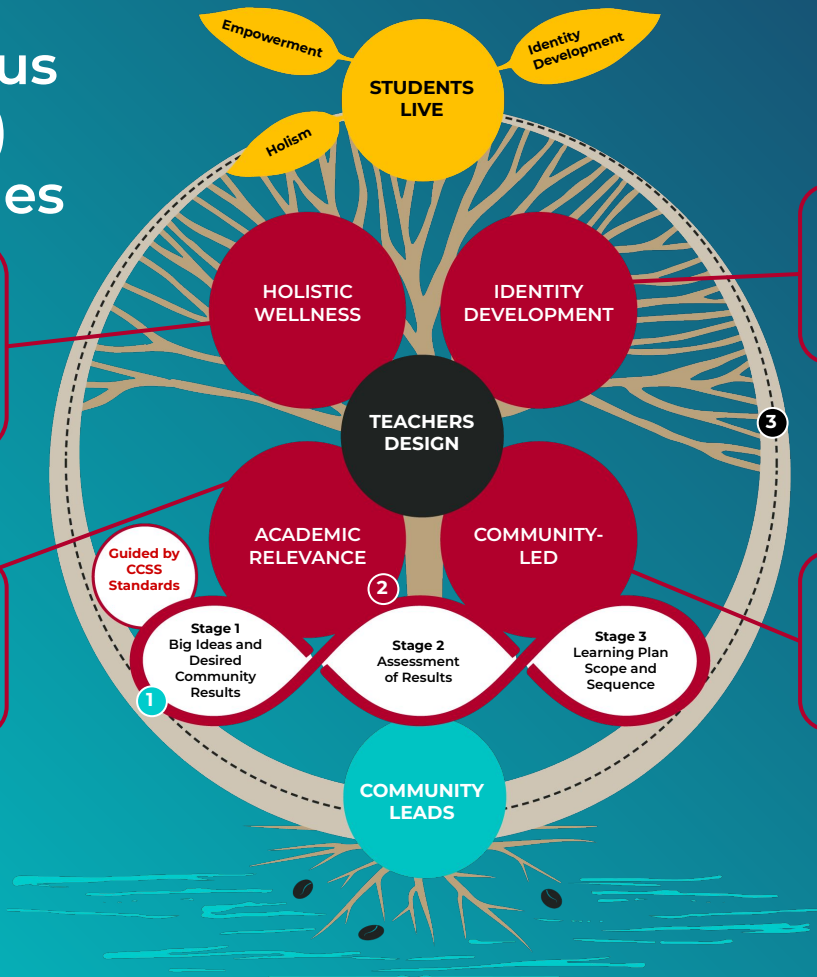


Does your capstone encourage students to think about the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social implications of the lesson?

Do the capstone resources and knowledge keepers connect to your students' background?

Does your capstone require students to connect their own identities to the lesson?

Is your capstone anchored in the voice and history of the community you serve?



- 1 Community Input
- 2 Curriculum Design
- 3 Feedback Loops

Tools for your Toolbelt: Culturally Relevant Curriculum: Native Lit & Indigenous Science

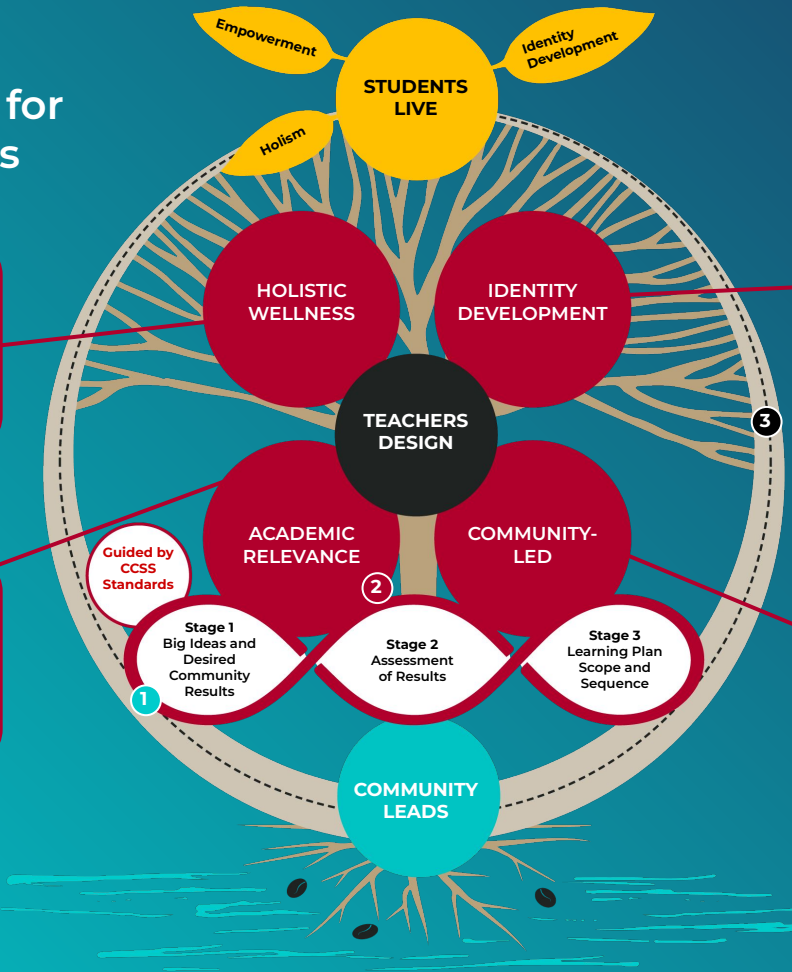


Indigenous Genius by Design (IGbD) Lens for Community Gatherings



When planning for a gathering, is your team thinking about how to foster the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social wellness of participants?

When planning for a gathering, how are you and your team setting intention for making the work relevant and accessible for all participants?



How will your gathering honor and recognize the identities of those present? How can your team show reciprocity with place when gathering?

When planning, what are the protocols and methods for honoring, elevating, and deeply listening to community? How will community be collaborators in what is created?

- 1 Community Input
- 2 Curriculum Design
- 3 Feedback Loops

Role of Meaning Making Cycles in Land Based Healing and Learning and Community Engagement



Opening and Closing Circles:

- Emotional and inquiry check in's
- Focused observation and reflection
- Room for student stories/ imagination
- Outdoor behavior "management"

Community educators

- Plant and animal relatives / lands and waters are our teachers
- Alumni internships and apprentices to educators
-

Grounding Sites:

- Phenology - multiple visits over time allow students to see change over time
- Stories - learning the stories of a place allows students to imagine a time before them as well as a time after
-

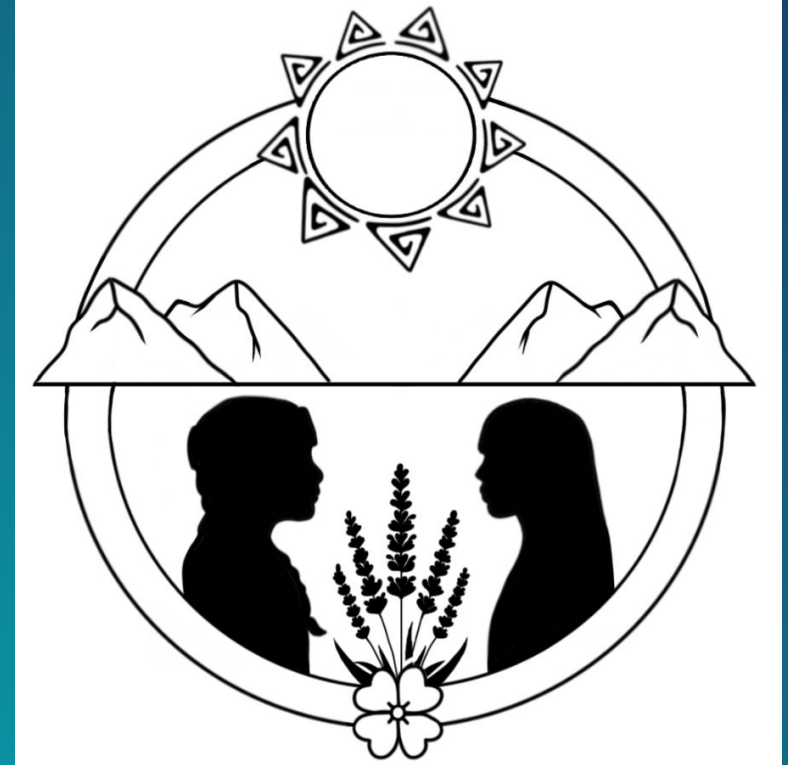


Image Credit: NACA Alum Orenda Martine

Behind the Scenes



WHERE

Land-based Education,
Place, Local Food



WHO

Community,
Team, Advisory



WHY

Big Ideas, Identity,
Collaboration



WHEN

Continuous in
Various Spaces



WHAT

Student Stories,
Cultural Responsibility



Behind the Scenes: Agenda Alignment



Monday, Jun 9, 2025 @ Akwesasne Freedom School

Alignment	Session	Facilitator
	7:30 am Breakfast	
Identity, Holistic Wellness, Academic Relevance, Community-led	8 am-12 pm Site visit to Akwesasne Freedom School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening & Morning Walk with AFS Students and Staff Classroom Visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>K-8 immersion</i>: Small groups to visit and rotate through 5 classrooms <i>Language nest</i>: Sa'ad Kidilye Fellows will spend morning in the nest Story of AFS by Waylon 	Friends of Akwesasne Freedom School
— Lunch/Wellness Break 12:00-1:00 PM— Lunch at the Cannery		
Community-led	1:00 - 2:00 pm Tour of new AFS school site	Waylon
	2:00 pm Travel to Adam's Marina, Boat to Thompson Island Cultural Camp	NISN Staff
LBHL & Holistic Wellness	3:00 pm Land Based Healing and Learning at Thompson Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3:00 - 3:30 PM: Opening (TICC Staff) and Wellness Reflection (MBE) 3:30 - 6:00 PM: Land Based Healing and Learning Spaces <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Kayaking/Canoeing, Horseshoes, Volleyball, Lacrosse, Fishing & Fish Demonstration, Trail Walk, History w/ Staff Archeologist, Campfire Skill Building</i></p> 6:00 - 6:30 PM: Equity Discussion w/ MBE 	TICC Staff
Community-led	6:30 - 8:30 pm Dinner at Thompson Island Cultural Camp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story of Thompson Island with Norman Peters 	KC & Ky

Alignment	Session
	7:30 am Breakfast & Walk to IPCC
	8:00 am Opening & Welcome to Interim GTF
Leadership Development	8:45 - 10:15 am (re)Visiting the Leadership Stance Session Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Stance Presentation Journaling Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Values Emotional Vocabulary Wheel Leadership Adjectives Leadership Stance Canva
School Sustainability	10:30 am - 12:00 pm Leadership Stance: Aligning your Leadership Stance with Praxis
— Lunch/Wellness Break 12:00-1:00 PM—	
Mission Driven Story Cycle	1:00 pm Enemy Swim Day School: Unpacking our Mission

Reading/Pre-work:

- Braiding Sweetgrass - Maple Nation: A Citizenship Guide - Kimmerer, R. W. (P. 167)
- For Indigenous Minds Only - Initiating the Process of Youth Decolonization - Wickham, M.
- Indigenizing Education - [Transformative Praxis](#) - Flying Earth, A.D.E. (P. 99)

Big Ideas:

- Operating Effectiveness and Efficiency
- Community Transformation
- Leadership in Indigenous Education

Toolbox:

- School Design Plan - Section 1 (Overview and First 4 pages)
- [Critique Protocol](#) - Please remember to be ready to facilitate for your colleague
- [Wellness_Vision_Template](#)
- [Online Wellness Wheel](#)
- [Wellness Prompts.pdf](#)
- [Wellness Goals.pdf](#)
- [Wellness Simple.pdf](#)
- [Wellness Templates](#)



NISN Programs: School Design Fellowship

The NISN School Design Fellowship (SDF) seeks to co-develop pre-K-12 Indigenous community schools over the course of a three year paid fellowship program. The schools are developed with Independent and Charter School frameworks in mind.

SDF fellows will receive guidance, best practices, and mentorship from NISN staff to:

- Develop community schools anchored in the four big ideas (Community-led, Academic Relevance, Holistic Wellness, Identity Development);
- Receive successful authorization;
- Are ready to operationalize their community-led mission and vision and;
- Prepared to implement their own Mission Driven Story Cycle;
- Salary and benefits paid for by the NACA Inspired Schools Network for the length of participation in the three year fellowship program

Who is eligible?

Indigenous communities within the U.S. who are ready to establish community-led, public charter or Independent schools or convert their existing school from a BIE School to a tribally controlled school.

NISN will bring on new fellows in 2027. If you would like more information please contact the NISN School Design Fellowship Director, Derrick White (derrick@nacainspiredschoolsnetwork.org)

NISN Programs: Growing Together Fellowship



The Growing Together Fellowship (GTF) is a two year fellowship for Indigenous community schools focused on aligning leadership and instruction with the school's mission statement, using best practices to uplift Indigenous students and their communities through NISN's Four Big Ideas (Identity Development, Holistic Wellness, Academic Relevance, and Community-Led).

The fellowship includes:

Leadership Development

for Heads of School and
Teacher Leaders

Equity & Wellness

sessions and trainings for
participating fellows

Mission Drive Learning Teams

facilitated by NISN, focused on
creating mission-aligned
graduate profiles and
capstones

In-Person Convenings and Site Visits

intended to build community among
fellows, demonstrate best-practices, and
allow for creative, communal problem
solving

Who is eligible?

Indigenous community schools within the U.S. who looking to align their leadership and instruction with their Indigenous education mission statement.

NISN will bring on new fellows in 2026. If you would like more information please contact the NISN Growing Together Fellowship Director, Ky George (ky@nacainspireschoolsnetwork.org)



Stay in touch.

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