

September Resource Toolkit

Continuous Improvement Principles and Framework

The Continuous Improvement Framework

Continuous Improvement Framework

- Elevation of anti-racist and anti-bias practices.
- Identification, provision, and growth of equitable supports within learning communities.
- Development of strong leadership at all levels.
- Use of data inquiry/school improvement principles and processes.
- Focus on improving core instructional practices.
- Implementation within a multi-tiered system of supports.



Focus: ONE – Native Literacy



The September Resource Toolkit focuses with the Office of Native Education (ONE) on Native Literacy. Native Americans have navigated a complex landscape of colonization and assimilation, acquiring literacy through various means to resist and adapt. Far from being passive recipients of imposed education, Native Americans used the written word to challenge authority. Their innovative use of literacy—rooted in a rich tradition of communication—became a form of anticolonial resistance, as they harnessed it to protect their communities, critique unjust policies, and maintain a sense of autonomy amid relentless efforts to erase their cultural identities; this is a strength that our students and communities bring to our classroom. When approaching Native Literacy, we need to unlearn our preconceived notions of contemporary literacy techniques.

Where are you, altitude wise?

10,000 Feet

Before addressing the academic needs of Native children, it is essential to focus on healing from the trauma inflicted by forced schooling, as identity and representation are crucial for Native children, families, and communities. Research supports that these elements form a critical foundation for all children, and for Native students, focusing on the culture of students, parents, elders, and tribal leaders is particularly important.



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- Schools should begin by accurately identifying their Native student population, as current Federal measures may underestimate the presence of Native (AI/AN) students; using MaxID techniques can provide a clearer picture.
- Schools must develop plans through ongoing tribal consultation, as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and honor existing Memorandums of Agreement and Understanding with tribes, strengthening and expanding and revising these agreements as needed. It's important to involve parent committees in meaningful collaboration and seek advisement from native education leaders. Schools should also engage tribal community members who are trusted by students, families, and communities in ongoing collaboration.
- *The well-being of students should be a priority, ensuring that school counselors address the relational, social, cultural and emotional needs of students in addition to their academic concerns.*
- Integrating Native-centered Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches across all content areas and grade levels is key, as is prioritizing the hiring of Native educators, counselors, and mental health providers and even volunteers.

Recognizing that practices designed to serve Native learners often meet the needs of all students is crucial. As reported recently to Director Strom, a then sophomore Native female shared her lived experience that, "in this school – we love each other. We really care about each other." But further related that, "we live in trauma, every morning I wake up, I live in trauma." Please consider this when working with our native communities.

1,000 Feet

To effectively support Native students, schools must embrace the interconnectedness of all living things, a principle central to traditional knowledge that emphasizes understanding one's role within the natural order and the oral transmission of stories to preserve culture and identity. Storytelling, a vital component of literacy development for Native students, bridges traditional oral knowledge with written forms, linking community experiences with classroom learning. Think of the benefits of reflecting indigenous historical literacy approaches to Schools and communities should collaborate to incorporate multifaceted approaches to literacy, recognizing that a single method is insufficient.

- This collaboration should include the full implementation, in partnership with nearby tribes, of the John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial and tribally-developed curriculum with integrity and fidelity, ensuring that professional learning opportunities and supplemental classroom resources are provided.
- School improvement goals must expand coordination across district programs supporting these students, such as Title III English Language Learning, Migrant Education, Career and Technical Education, and Special Education. Moreover, it is essential to expand anti-racist, culturally based learning opportunities that center on tribal curricula and instructional resources, including pathways like Mastery-Based

Learning for graduation purposes. Schools should also increase opportunities for Native learners to engage in tribal language learning and growth.

- Finally, identifying and reflecting on “Lessons Learned” from the Academic and Well-Being Recovery Plan will be crucial for ongoing planning and evaluation, ensuring that the educational experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native learners are continuously improved.

100 Feet

When identified, a school community can take meaningful actions to support Native children, youth, and families. This includes engaging in diagnostic assessments that focus on identifying the strengths and assets of Native students, using a collectivist approach.

- It’s crucial for the community to recognize and address both intentional and unintentional biases, as well as deficit narratives that may be present in these assessments.
- Engaging with the community is also vital—tribal consultation is necessary to understand and address community needs effectively. Consider the power of engaging with parents and community... in community. Step out of the comfort you all experience in schools and engage on mutual ground. Community centers, longhouses, etc.
- Schools should ensure that system-wide indicators, such as policies, funding, and the experience of paraeducators, teachers, and administrators, are connected to student performance.
- District and school improvement plans align with and respond to the findings of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, ensuring that the educational environment is inclusive, supportive, and community driven. *Colonization is an active process; tribal community input can help identify and disrupt the process.*

Furthermore, if you have been identified through WSIF for school improvement and would like to join ONE’s state literacy work group contact [Executive Director Henry Strom](#).

Native Literacy Support

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Conclusion

As we consider the importance of [Native literacy](#), the September Resource Toolkit for ONE, we must recognize that academic achievement may only occur if the school system is about healing, empowerment, and cultural preservation. Native Americans have historically used

literacy as a tool of resistance, transforming it into a means of protecting their identities and autonomy. Today, our schools must honor this legacy and engage culturally responsive education that centers Native voices, languages, and traditions. This requires acknowledging past wrongs, accurate identification of Native students, meaningful collaboration with tribes, and the full implementation of culturally based curricula like Since Time Immemorial. By doing so, we not only fulfill our educational responsibilities but also contribute to the broader movement of healing and justice for Native communities.