



# INFUSING CURRICULUM INTO CULTURE

**Presented by:**  
Matthew Bell & Morgan Smith;  
*Tribal Student Achievement,  
Relations, & Resiliency Unit*



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

# MEET THE TEAM



Donnie Wetzel

- Director



Alicia Doney

- Tribal Youth Coordinator



Crystal Hickman

- School Mental Health Support Services Coordinator



Matthew Bell

- Culture & Language Specialist



Morgan Smith

- Tribal Student Achievement Specialist



Anna Marsicano

- OPI Tribal Culture & Connection AmeriCorps Planning Grant Coordinator

“ONE OF THE REASONS INDIAN CHILDREN EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY IN SCHOOLS IS THAT EDUCATORS TRADITIONALLY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO INSERT CULTURE INTO EDUCATION INSTEAD OF INSERTING EDUCATION INTO CULTURE.”

**- CORNEL PEWEWARDY**

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF INDIGENOUS NATIONS STUDIES AT PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

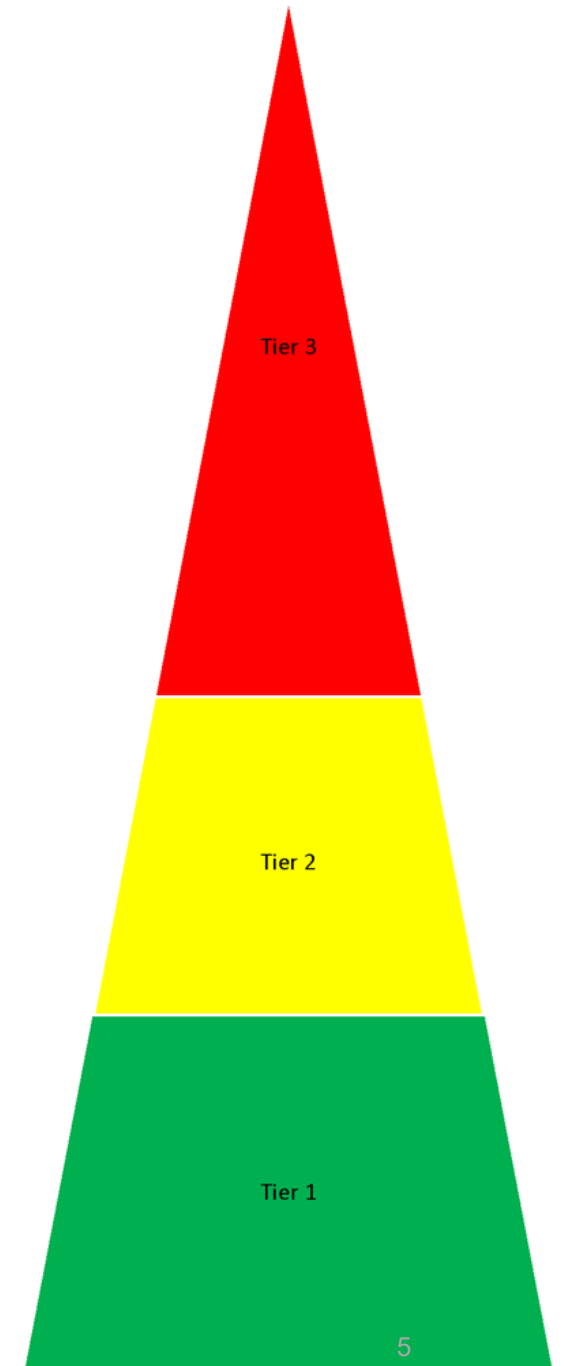


# Western vs. Tribal mindset

- Outside in 
  - Fidelity = paperwork 
  - Temporary relationship 
  - Individual 
  - Verbal Communication 
  - Getting an "A" 
- Inside out
  - Fidelity = relationships
  - Lifelong relationship
  - Community
  - Non-Verbal Communication
  - I am good at something

# INDIGENOUS SCHOOL CLIMATE POTENTIAL

- ❖ Tier 3: Intensive holistic support paths prepared with place-based connections identified. Elder & local supports (e.g., smudge & sweats are available, wrap around services, equine therapy, medicine wheel model).
- ❖ Tier 2: 1:1 mentorship with restorative practices & talking circles in place. Relationship development between all. Healing room with smudge & talking circles available. Holistic Elder mentorship.
- ❖ Tier 1: Tribal identity & language reflected in & out of school using a strength-based approach. Tribally specific strategies woven into curriculum/lessons, tribal values/virtues taught, teachings of tribal family structure, clan systems, “becoming of age”, youth/elder mentorship, resiliency work.



# Culturally Holistic School Framework

## 2023 Resources



# TRIBAL YOUTH WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS



# KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS OF INDIGENOUS NATIONS (KKIN)

**Established**  
**October 2021**

KKIN, representing cultural elders and knowledge keepers from every tribal nation in Montana, will help us build sustainable sources of indigenous knowledge that inform our public education system to re-root and revitalize our tribal youth in positive self-identity. This is also good for all Montanans as KKIN will provide quality, culturally appropriate knowledge and resources from the Tribes of Montana to enhance educational systems with robust knowledge that exists within the original inhabitants of indigenous communities that populate our Great State.





# RESILIENCE IN SOMETHING ELSE (RISE)

**RISE** is a group created from the COVID-19 pandemic due to students' need for support and connection in our socially distanced time. This group has fostered relationships across the state of Montana and continues to thrive due to the invaluable opportunities for leadership development and relationship building.

One of the main focuses of **RISE** is connection with personal culture as well as heritage. The students uphold these values each meeting.

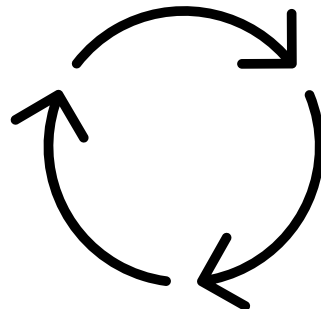
Meetings are held every other week with schools across the state and they are Youth Designed and Youth Led!



# SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

## Current Work:

Providing supports to schools, districts, and educators around restorative practices, talking circles, resiliency, educational wraparound processes, and strength-based approaches. Other work includes supporting CSCT by coordinating with the Children's Mental Health Bureau, participating in the CSCT coalition, supporting schools with questions about the IGT process, and conducted informal data collections regarding the efficacy of the CSCT services.



# Six Components of Resiliency

Get  
connected.

Make every  
day  
meaningful.

Learn from  
experience.

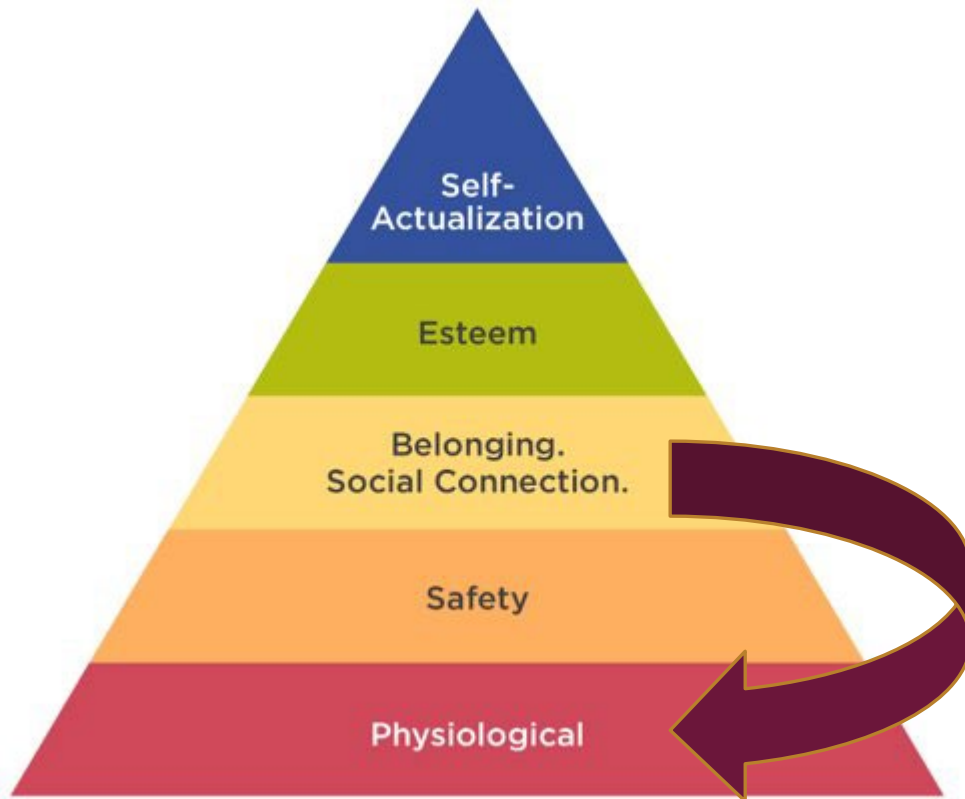
Remain  
hopeful.

Take care  
of yourself.

Be  
proactive.

# CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

## INDIGENOUS MINDFULNESS



- Indigenous ways of life are always about being mindful.
- If we are out of balance, so are our youth.
  - Who helps the helper(s)?
  - How can we help, empower, heal, protect, and care for ourselves?
- Reconnect to the body in the present moment- it connects us to the earth.
- Be more intentional with our thoughts, words, and acts.
- Experiential exercises to bring into communities to build capacity.

# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ARE CONNECTED

## Aligned with Tribal Approach to Education

- Aligning Tribal Language Proficiency Standards
- Aligning Tribal Land Based Learning Opportunities
- Listening to Youth Advocates and Connecting Them With Resources (Ex. KKin)

## Identity & Culture as Protective Factors for At-risk Students

- Expanding the Understanding and Relevance of Tribal Family Support
- Providing Youth with Relevant and Engaging Work

## Identity & Culture as Behavioral Interventions

- Cultural Practices such as Smudging or Sweating Are Proven Positive Interventions
- Cultural Teaching Center on Responsibility to Self and Community

## Stakeholder Integration Tribal Model of Engagement

- Supporting Class 7 Development and Placement
- Organizing Indigenous Cultural Events for All
- Continued Consultation Meetings With Tribes/Education Departments
- Consultation with Larger/Urban Districts

# CULTURE & LANGUAGE

- ❖ Tribal Consultation
- ❖ Montana Indian Language Program (MILP)
- ❖ Indian Language Immersion Program (ILIP)
- ❖ Class 7 Teaching Licenses
- ❖ Technical Assistance/Interfacing between Tribes/Education Committees and State agencies

The [Shared Strategies to Support American Indian Students](#) document is a direct result of Tribal Consultation and community participation. Through a series of conversations with OPI staff, Tribal Leaders and their departments, community members, language instructors, school staff and youth, we collaborated to identify effective strategies schools may consider implementing to support youth, and strengthen school and community supports for years to come.

# INDIAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM (ILIP) GRANT RECIPIENTS

## 2021

- ❖ Browning
- ❖ Hardin

## 2022

- ❖ Browning
- ❖ Hardin
- ❖ Hays-Lodgepole
- ❖ Box Elder

We hope to continue growing this list as the years progress.

# PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING FOR EDUCATORS

<https://youtu.be/BjJQz21mkVk>





# UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ Tribal Youth Summit: April 4-6
- ❖ Tribal Leaders Summit: April 4-6
- ❖ Indian Education for All Best Practices Conference: March 17-18
- ❖ SKC Montana Early Childhood Native Language Summit 2023: June 13-15
- ❖ We are continually planning professional development opportunities for educators.