

19th Annual

# IEFA BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE

*East Helena High School*

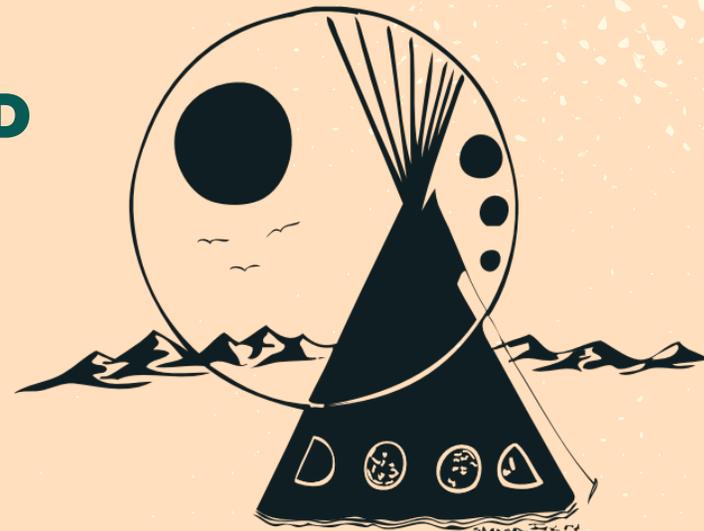
23-24  
March

# PROGRAM

**MITAKUYE OYASIN  
WE ARE ALL RELATED**



**MT OPI IEFA**



**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
GROWING OUR MONTANA STORY**

## Welcome to the 19th Annual IEFA Best Practices Conference

On behalf of the Indian Education for All (IEFA) staff, it is our distinct honor to welcome you to East Helena High School for this year's gathering. This conference remains Montana's premier space for educators, traditional knowledge keepers, and community leaders to come together in the spirit of our 2026 theme: "We Are All Related: Planting the Seeds of Knowledge, Growing our Montana Story."

As we gather, we recognize that Indian Education for All is more than a constitutional mandate—it is a commitment to the truth of our shared history and the vitality of our collective future. Over the next two days, we invite you to engage deeply with our two core pillars:

- **Building Relationships:** Developing genuine, reciprocal partnerships with Montana's Tribal Nations to foster community wellness and student belonging.
- **Cultivating Pedagogy:** Embedding the Seven Essential Understandings into every classroom to ensure all students graduate with a profound respect for the distinct cultural heritage of American Indians.

We are inspired by your dedication to this work. Whether you are here to explore tribal sovereignty, trauma-informed practices, or disciplinary integration in the STEAM fields, your presence here helps "plant the seeds" for a more inclusive and historically accurate Montana.

Thank you for your heart, your curiosity, and your partnership. May this time together strengthen our connections to the land, the ancestors, and one another.

In kinship,

The Indian Education for All Staff Montana Office of Public Instruction





# The 2026 IEFA Best Practices Conference is proud to feature

## "We Are All Related"

(Relationships, Community, and Wellness), a track dedicated to cultivating genuine, reciprocal partnerships between Montana's schools and Tribal Nations. This theme prioritizes Authentic Tribal Consultation by showcasing successful models for sustained collaboration with tribal colleges and education departments, alongside strategies for meaningful Family and Community Engagement that bring elders and knowledge keepers into the heart of the curriculum. Participants will explore the intersection of IEFA and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) through Indigenous relational pedagogies—such as Talking Circles—to foster trauma-informed environments and a true sense of belonging. Furthermore, sessions will address the critical roles of Administrative Leadership and Policy in championing equitable outcomes for American Indian students, while providing sensitive, effective strategies for Unpacking Stereotypes and Bias among staff and students alike.



# **The 2026 IEFA Best Practices Conference is proud to feature**

## **"Planting the Seeds of Knowledge, Growing Our Montana Story"**

(Curriculum & Pedagogy) focuses on deep, culturally sustaining methods for embedding the Essential Understandings across all grade levels and content areas. This track emphasizes Disciplinary Integration, offering practical lesson plans that seamlessly weave IEFA into non-traditional subjects like Math, Science, and Career & Technical Education (CTE). Educators will explore engaging strategies for teaching Tribal Sovereignty, contemporary issues such as language revitalization and MMIP, and the complexities of tribal government. By prioritizing Place-Based Learning and Digital Literacy, these sessions connect local geography and tribal-created media to foster historical accuracy and critical thinking. Finally, participants will examine Culturally Responsive Assessment techniques that move beyond traditional testing to promote deeper reflection and a more authentic understanding of Montana's Indigenous peoples.



**EAST HELENA HIGH SCHOOL**

East Helena High School, 2760 Valley Dr. East Helena ,MT 59635

**2-DAYS OF EVENTS**



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**DAY 1 – MONDAY 3/23**

08:30 AM		Opening Drum and Keynote Dr. Shane Doyle
10:00 AM		Morning Sessions
NOON		Lunch provided
12:40 AM		Afternoon Sessions

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**MONDAY AFTERNOON**

3:00 PM –		The Montana Historical Society will lead teachers through stations and the museum.
5:00 PM		

225 Roberts St, Helena, MT 59620

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**MONDAY EVENING**

7:00 PM		An Evening of Indigenous Musicians and Comedians
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The Myrna Loy 15 N Ewing St, Helena, MT 59601

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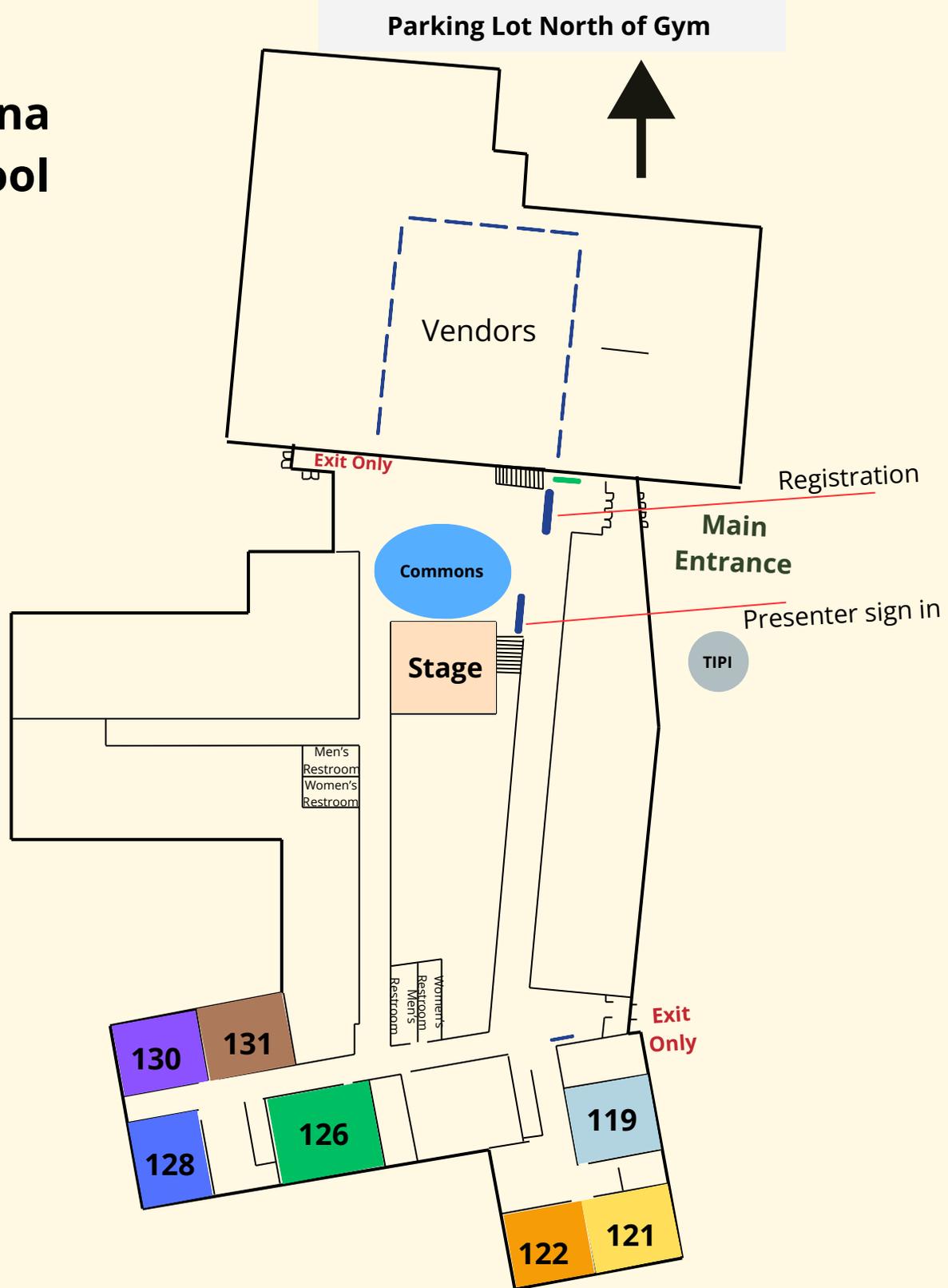
**DAY 2 – TUESDAY 3/24**

08:30 AM		Gardiner FFA presentation, Keynote Watson Whitford, Awards Ceremony
10:00 AM		Morning Sessions
NOON		Lunch provided
12:40 AM		Afternoon Sessions

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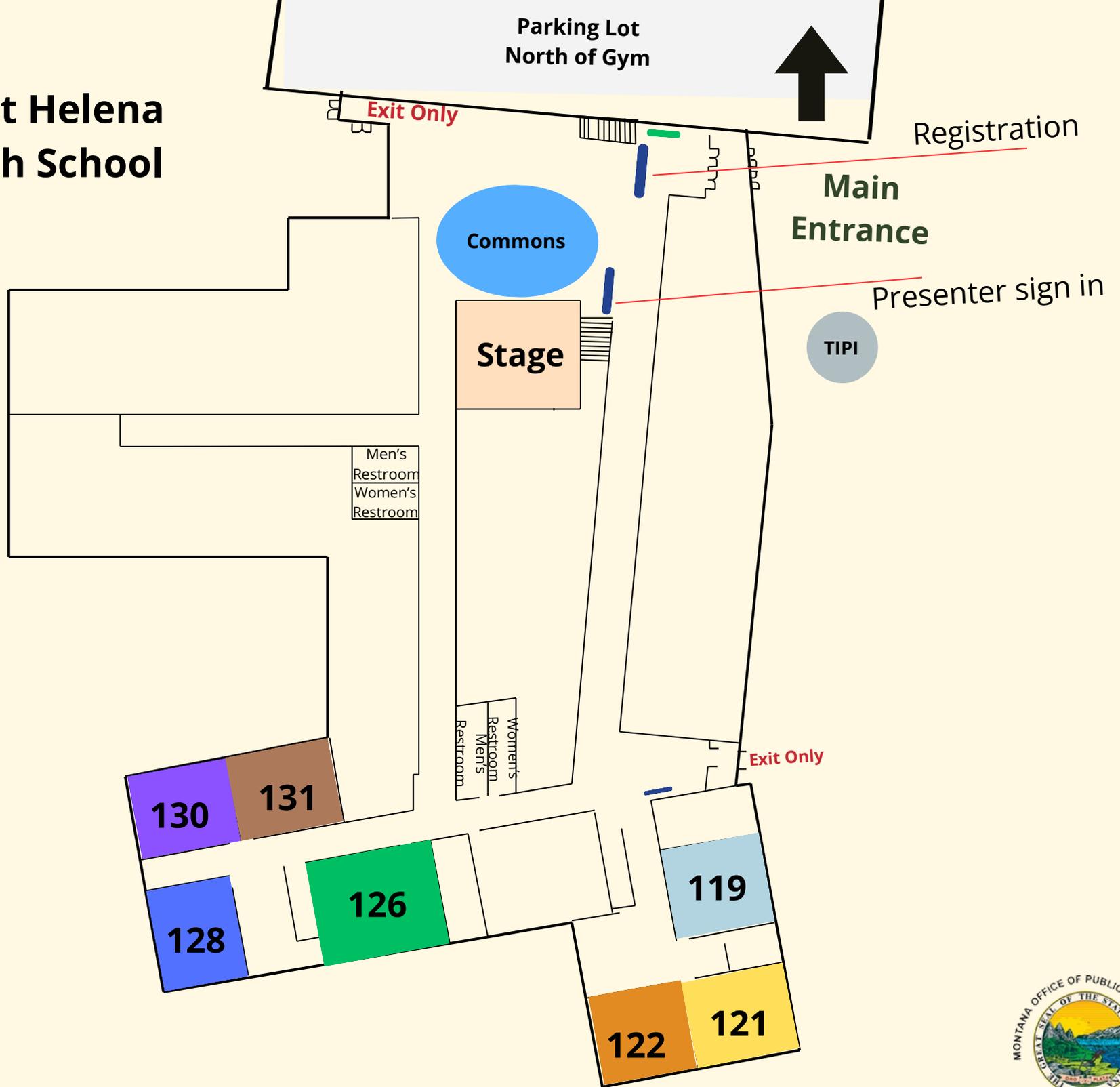
# IEFA BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE

## East Helena High School



# IEFA BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE

## East Helena High School



# IEFA BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE

East Helena High School

Parking Lot North of Gym



Vendors

Exit Only

Registration

Main Entrance

Commons

Presenter sign in

Stage

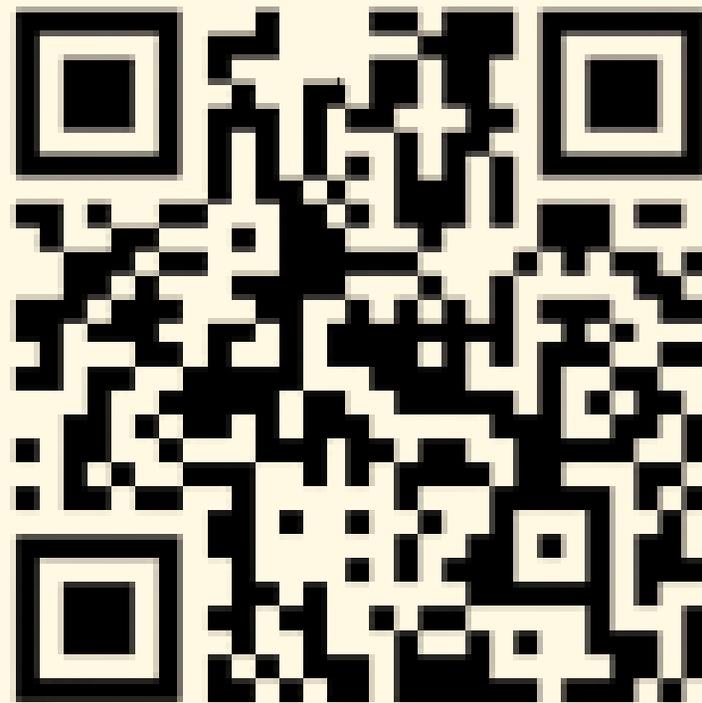
TIPI

Men's Restroom  
Women's Restroom



**East Helena  
High School**

**scan the barcode to  
connect to Wi-Fi**



**Wi-Fi: OPI26**

**Password: OPI26User**



# **IEFA AWARDS**

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## **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

- **Dr. MURTON McCLUSKEY**
- 

## **OPI STAFF CHAMPION AWARD**

- **KATRINA ENGELDRUM**
- 

## **TERESA VELTKAMP AWARD**

- **CHRIS CLAIRMONT**
- **JOSEPHINE CRISLOGO**
- **LAVONNA LITTLE OWL - REAL BIRD**
- **DARLA STONE**
- **CLINT VALANDRA**



# IEFA & MACIE



DOOR PRIZES



Museum Tour



Evening Event



# EXHIBITORS



NATIONAL  
NATIVE  
CHILDREN'S  
TRAUMA  
CENTER



THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



# Special Thanks

to ALL OUR SPONSORS





**IEFA  
BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE**



# Keynote Speaker

## The Nature Conservancy \ Yellowstone Peoples

Dr. Shane Doyle (Apsaalooké) is a community and environmental advocate who hails from Crow Agency, MT. Dr. Doyle currently serves as the North America Indigenous Right Relations Director for The Nature Conservancy, as well as the executive director of Yellowstone Peoples, an Indigenous nonprofit that supports and organizes an annual Intertribal Tipi Village event in Yellowstone Park. In his role for The Nature Conservancy, Shane works across the U.S. and Canada to support Tribal Bison Restoration on Native lands, as well as the revitalization of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Land Back to Native communities. Shane lives in Bozeman with his wife Megkian, and their 5 children; Florence, Ruby, Lilian, Blake and Quannah.



**Dr. SHANE DOYLE**

**Monday  
3/23**



**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
GROWING OUR MONTANA STORY**



**IEFA  
BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE**



# Keynote Speaker

Watson W. Whitford, whose spiritual name is Wapanatak (Morning Star), is an enrolled member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe and a descendant of the Diné Nation. Deeply rooted in the traditions of Rocky Boy, Montana, and Red Mesa, Utah, Watson is a practitioner of his cultural lifeways through song, dance, and language. Currently a third-year Environmental Horticulture student at Montana State University, his work bridges Indigenous knowledge systems with sustainable environmental practices.

A dedicated advocate for Indigenous youth, Watson has served in several high-level leadership capacities, including as an Earth Ambassador and regional representative. He currently serves as a member of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Coalition under the U.S. Department of State and the United Nations Association (UNA-USA), where he represents Indigenous perspectives on a global platform. Watson remains committed to uplifting the next generation by encouraging them to remain grounded in their sovereign identities and ceremonial traditions.



## Watson Whitford

**Tuesday  
3/24**



**KNOWLEDGE,  
PLANTING OUR MONTANA STORY  
GROWING OUR MONTANA STORY**



7:45 AM

Registration Check in  
Check-in and networking.

8:30 AM

Opening Remarks  
Superintendent and MACIE

Drum

Shane Doyle, Mike Jetty

9:00 AM

Keynote Speaker  
Dr. Shane Doyle

	119	121	122	126	128	130	131
10:00 - 10:50	<p><b>Math Standards Guidance Lab: Personalizing IEFA + Standards Integration for Your Grade Level</b></p> <p>Katrina Engeldrum</p>	<p><b>Breaking The Stigma-Using Media Arts to spread positivity</b></p> <p>Joe Hammer</p>	<p><b>Culturally Sustaining Leadership in Practice: Ensuring Every Student Knows Montana's Full Story</b></p> <p>Katie McCrea</p>	<p><b>Planting Seeds of Leadership: The Billings Student Tribal Council Model</b></p> <p>Darla Stone and Billings Public Schools Youth Council</p>	<p><b>Attendance Matters</b></p> <p>Brent Harlen &amp; Tammy Hall</p>	<p><b>Planting Seeds Through Story: Youth Voice and Community Partnership in Action</b></p> <p>Calli Nicholson and Clare Ann Harff</p>	<p><b>Knowledge Keepers Panel</b></p>
11:00 - 11:50	<p><b>Take a trip through your events</b></p> <p>Ron Buck &amp; April Wills</p>	<p><b>Invitation: How to welcome Native speakers into your school</b></p> <p>Chris Latray and Anna East</p>	<p><b>Student Voice and Civic Engagement</b></p> <p>Kristi Calvery</p>				<p>Knowledge Keepers Room Open</p>

11:50 AM

Lunch Time



119	121	122
<p><b>Math Standards Guidance Lab: Personalizing IEFA + Standards Integration for Your Grade Level</b></p>	<p><b>Breaking The Stigma-Using Media Arts to spread positivity</b></p>	<p><b>Culturally Sustaining Leadership in Practice: Ensuring Every Student Knows Montana’s Full Story</b></p>
<p>Katrina Engeldrum</p>	<p>Joe Hammer</p>	<p>Katie McCrea</p>
<p>In this interactive session, educators will explore existing mathematics guidance resources that integrate standards, culturally relevant contexts, and IEFA principles. Participants will learn to navigate these materials, examine components of effective IEFA-integrated lesson design, and collaboratively adapt exemplar tasks for their own grade levels and classroom contexts. Through guided exploration and grade-band discussion, teachers will build confidence in using current and forthcoming K–12 guidance to design meaningful, standards-aligned, and locally relevant mathematics instruction.</p>	<p>Breaking the Stigma, Spreading Positivity Through Media Arts highlights how the Buffalo Unity Project empowers Indigenous youth in Poplar, Montana to challenge negative stereotypes through storytelling and media production. This session explores how media arts can amplify student voice, strengthen cultural identity, and shift community narratives by replacing deficit-based coverage with authentic, student-created stories grounded in pride, resilience, and place.</p>	<p>Grounded in relational leadership and culturally sustaining pedagogy, this session explores how educational leaders and teachers can cultivate authentic relationships and implement culturally sustaining practices that ensure every student understands and contributes to the full history, identity, and contemporary realities of Montana. Framed within Indian Education for All and the Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians, the presentation positions cultural leadership as a systemic responsibility that moves beyond compliance toward transformational educational practice.</p>

**131****Knowledge Keepers Panel**

Article X of the Montana Constitution, the state recognizes the unique cultural heritage of American Indians. The primary objective of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers at the IEFA conference is to provide authentic, lived-experience expertise that ensures Montana's educational standards are grounded in tribal integrity. They aim to bridge the gap between academic theory and the deep, oral traditions of the twelve tribal nations in Montana.

**Purpose and Role**

The participation of Knowledge Keepers serves several critical functions for educators and stakeholders:

- Validation of the "Essential Understandings": They provide the cultural context and specific tribal histories necessary to teach the Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians accurately.
- Cultural Preservation: By sharing oral traditions, languages, and worldviews, they assist schools in fulfilling the state constitutional mandate to preserve the cultural heritage of American Indians.
- Modeling Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Knowledge Keepers demonstrate how to integrate Indigenous "ways of knowing"—such as storytelling, circle practices, and land-based learning—into modern classrooms.

**10:00 - 10:50**



126	128	130
<p><b>Planting Seeds of Leadership: The Billings Student Tribal Council Model</b></p>	<p><b>Attendance Matters</b></p>	<p><b>Planting Seeds Through Story: Youth Voice and Community Partnership in Action</b></p>
<p>Darla Stone and Billings Public Schools Youth Council</p>	<p>Brent Harlen &amp; Tammy hall</p>	<p>Calli Nicholson &amp; Clare Ann Harff</p>
<p>Strong student leadership requires clear structure and authentic purpose. In this training, Darla Stone breaks down the operational "blueprint" of the Billings Student Tribal Council (BSTC). We will explore the lifecycle of a student-led council, from recruitment and the joining process to the specific roles and responsibilities that keep the council running effectively. Attendees will walk away with a clear understanding of BSTC's core activities, such as community volunteering and organizing the BPS Honoring Our Youth Powwow, and practical strategies for cultivating Indigenous student leaders in their own districts.</p>	<p>This session will utilize research- and evidenced-based practices to assist schools across Montana in increasing school attendance to 95% or better in a manner that incorporates student engagement, holistic wellness, cultural practice, and relationship building.</p>	<p>Watch youth-created documentaries about Indigenous identity in urban Montana, including the 2025 National Student Production Award winner, then explore the partnership process behind them. Billings Indigenous Education and MAPS Media Institute will share how student filmmakers collaborated with Knowledge Carriers and cultural leaders, from tipi setup to intimate interviews, to create honest, community-grounded stories. Discover a replicable model for centering youth voice and transforming IEFA from concept to practice.</p>



119	121	122
<b>Take a trip through your events</b>	<b>Invitation: How to welcome Native speakers into your school</b>	<b>Student Voice and Civic Engagement</b>
Ron Buck	Chris LaTray & Anna East	Kristi Calvery
<p>School field trips should have meaning and impact! In this discussion, you will learn how to utilize IEFA funding in a meaningful way. You will learn how to research events, contact speakers, and set up field trips that will encourage students to dive deeper into our Native American history. Place-based learning is some of the most impactful learning a student can attend.</p>	<p>If you've considered inviting Native speakers to your school, but you're not sure how to welcome them respectfully, this session is for you. We will share methods of navigating everything from funding to paperwork to respectful protocols.</p>	<p>This lesson focuses on using excerpts from literary journalism, primary historical sources, and place based learning to help students develop interest, empathy, and inspire civic engagement for contemporary issues such as Missing Indigenous People.</p>



# Lunch



11:50 - 12:40



11:50 AM

Lunch Time

	119	121	122		126	128	130	131
12:40 - 1:30	<p><b>Creating Classroom Spaces to Support Indigenous Learners</b></p> <p>Michelle Henson, Jen Murphy, Crystal Hickman</p>	<p><b>Updating your content with IEFA</b></p> <p>Matt Bell</p>	<p><b>Sovereignty and Stewardship in Montana: Integrating History, Law, and Education — A Northern Cheyenne Case Study.</b></p> <p>John Bennett, Dr. Kari Dahle-Huff, Rosalia Bad Horse</p>		<p><b>Vision for the future: A pathway for strengthening tribal language instruction</b></p> <p>Bianka Rock Above, Lea Whitford, Anna East</p>	<p><b>The Seasonal Round a Curriculum Framework for the Essential Understandings</b></p> <p>Tim Ryan and Mali Matt</p>	<p><b>Building Resilience through Cultural Identity Formation in the Classroom</b></p> <p>Sandra S. Ashley</p>	<p><b>Aligning Education with Indigenous values and pedagogy. Stepping out of the box and into the circle.</b></p> <p>Matthew Johnson</p>
1:40 - 2:30	<p><b>Teaching WITH not ABOUT</b></p> <p>Tristen Belgarde</p>	<p><b>IEFA in action with Title III</b></p> <p>Matt Bell &amp; Zach Hawkins</p>	<p><b>Indigenous Names: Exploring How Names Are Received, Given, and Honored</b></p> <p>Carolyn Rusche</p>	<p><b>MTHS -Linking Indian Education for All and Museums</b></p> <p><b>1:55 - 2:55</b></p> <p><b>Space is limited - Must sign - up ahead of time</b></p> <p>225 Roberts St, Helena, MT 59620</p>				

3:00 PM

Montana Heritage Center  
Tour sponsored by MT Historical Society

7:00 PM

Myrna Loy  
Evening event

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
GROWING OUR MONTANA STORY**



119	121	122
<p><b>Creating Classroom Spaces to Support Indigenous Learners</b></p>	<p><b>Updating your content with IEFA</b></p>	<p><b>Sovereignty and Stewardship in Montana: Integrating History, Law, and Education – A Northern Cheyenne Case Study.</b></p>
<p>Michele Henson, Jen Murphy, Crystal Hickman</p>	<p>Matt Bell</p>	<p>John Bennett, Dr. Kari Dahle-Huff, Rosalia Bad Horse</p>
<p>The emotional status of students greatly influences their ability to learn. When students are experiencing emotional distress their innate stress responses can often impede the learning process by limiting cognitive abilities such as memory and concentration. Fortunately, there are steps every educator can take to create classroom spaces that can help relax students’ “fight or flight” responses and better enable learning to occur. In this presentation we will explore some of the brain science around learning and the ways educators can support Indigenous students, and all students, by creating learning spaces that establish a sense of safety and foster resilience.</p>	<p>This will be a workshop to examine ways to update your curriculum, lessons or everyday practices</p>	<p>Learn how the 1976 Hollowbreast decision affirmed perpetual tribal mineral rights, harmonizing Indigenous wisdom with federal law to protect Mother Earth, sovereignty, and communal thriving. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe—known as Tsetsêhesêstâhase/So’taahe —reveres Montana’s Hoh’oe homelands as sacred gifts from creator Maheo’, weaving culture, language, and the belief that all are related. Sweet Medicine’s ancient teachings inspire stewardship of the interconnection of land, water, and resources.</p>



126	128	130	131
<p><b>Vision for the future: A pathway for strengthening tribal language instruction</b></p>	<p><b>The Seasonal Round a Curriculum Framework for the Essential Understandings</b></p>	<p><b>Building Resilience through Cultural Identity Formation in the Classroom</b></p>	<p><b>Aligning Education with Indigenous values and pedagogy. Stepping out of the box and into the circle.</b></p>
<p>Bianka Rock Above, Lea Whitford, Anna East</p>	<p>Tim Ryan &amp; Mali Matt</p>	<p>Sandra S. Ashley</p>	<p>Matthew Johnson</p>
<p>This presentation will describe the creation of a rich collaboration across cultures and entities to promote Indigenous language revitalization through curriculum design and assessment.</p>	<p>The Salish Kootenai College (SKC) strives for the student to be the most effective teacher in their profession. The integration of OPI-IEFA's Essential Understandings is part of that professional development. SKC Native American Studies faculty members Tim Ryan and Mali Matt will take you on a learning journey through the Seasonal Round and how they apply the Essential Understandings to their course work, followed up with a workshop on the Seasonal Round.</p>	<p>What is resilience? How has it helped Native peoples adapt to changing times? In this presentation, we view resilience through an indigenous lens where various perspectives join together in the holistic worldview. Serving as a silent partner, a wise elder, and a guiding companion all in one, resilience holds a unique status among Native peoples. It has provided us strength to be who we were meant to be, and must be promoted in today's classrooms.</p>	<p>This workshop will discuss and offer some strategies for integrating elements of Trauma Informed care, Restorative Practices and Cultural resiliency factors to create a safe and productive learning environment.</p>

**12:40 - 2:30 2 PD Units**



119	121	122
<b>Teaching WITH not ABOUT</b>	<b>IEFA in Action with Title III</b>	<b>Indigenous Names: Exploring How Names Are Received, Given, and Honored</b>
Tristen Belgarde	Matt Bell	Carolyn Rusche
<p>Indian Education for All (IEFA) was never meant to live only in lectures, worksheets, or tests. Facilitated by Tristen Belgarde, Youth Director at Western Native Voice, this dynamic session invites participants to experience IEFA through interactive dialogue, lived stories, and community-centered learning. Attendees will explore meaningful, real-world approaches that move beyond traditional instructional models and inspire authentic understanding and engagement.</p>	<p>We will explore the ins-and-outs of Title III identification and services for All students</p>	<p>This lesson will explore the cultural significance of Indigenous names to help students and teachers understand the cultural relevance of names from the Indigenous perspectives.</p>



## Montana Heritage Center Curation Tour 1 hour PD

### MTHS Workshop: Linking Indian Education for All and Museums

Nina Sanders

**Are you researching indigenous histories? Are you an art educator? Are you an academic researcher, or do you emphasize indigenous identity in your curriculum? This sixty-minute workshop in the Montana Historical Society Archives will introduce participants to the protocols and opportunities in this area of the Montana Heritage Center. Hosting by MTHS Indigenous Curators, Nina Sanders and Kendra Newhall, Head of Collections, this workshop is limited to 15 people.**

**Meet in the Central Commons of the Montana Heritage Center.**

**Following the conclusion of the first afternoon session, participants will need to travel to the Montana Historical Society (MTHS). Participants in this workshop will conclude their session in time for the 3:00 PM tour.**

**[Sign-up Here](#)**

225 Roberts St,  
Helena, MT 59620

**1:55 - 2:55**

# STEP INTO HISTORY



## HOMELAND GALLERY

Join us at the Montana Heritage Center for an immersive exploration of our shared roots. We will break into intimate groups of eight for a deep dive into the Homeland Gallery—a journey through the stories that shaped Montana.

- Credit: 2 Hours of Professional Development Units available for participants.

### MONTANA HERITAGE CENTER

**03/23/2026**

3 PM - 5PM

225 Roberts St,  
Helena, MT 59620



# MONTANA HERITAGE CENTER

## **Parking:**

While you may park anywhere on the Capitol Campus, the best parking is in the lot north of the Montana Heritage Center (off Roberts Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue).

There are designated handicap spots at the north entrance.

On the east entrance off Sanders Street, there is a roundabout which is perfect for drop-offs (see map).

For questions about parking or logistics, contact Darby Bramble 406-444-2412.

**03/23/2026**

3 PM - 5PM

225 Roberts St,  
Helena, MT 59620



# HEARTBEAT AND HUMOR



**MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup> 7PM**

**THE MYRNA LOY  
15 N EWING ST,  
HELENA, MT 59601**



**RACHEL  
TWOTEETH-PICHARDO**

Native American Flute  
Little Shell Chippewa



**JAMIE FOX**  
Métis Fiddle Traditions  
Gros Ventre & Métis



**SAPPHIRE  
FERGUSON-JETTY**  
Métis Fiddle  
Spirit Lake Dakota & Turtle  
Mountain Chippewa



**SCOTTY LEACH**  
Pianist and Fiddler



**THOMAS MCCLURE**  
Comedian  
Séliš (Bitterroot Salish)

**Join us for a night filled with music and laughter**





7:45 AM

Registration Check in  
Check-in and networking.

8:30 AM

Presentation  
Gardner FFA

8:50 AM

Keynote  
Watson Whitford

9:30 AM

Awards Ceremony

	119	121	122	Commons	126	128	130	131
10:00 - 10:50	<b>Becoming Storytellers: Indigenous Games and the Art of Listening</b>  Joe Pichardo & Rachael Pichardo	<b>CSKT Bison Range, the Restoration of culture, language</b>  Stephanie Gillin	<b>We are Family, We are Hardin</b>  Tara Bird & Mary Leda Good Luck	<b>Tipi Toolkit</b>  Blgs Public Schools Indigenous Education Team	<b>The Indigenous Whole Learner Relational Framework</b>  Crystal Hickman	<b>Assessing Understanding , Not Just Information: Culturally Responsive Assessment &amp; Feedback</b>  for Indian Education for All  Dr. Rebecca Turk	<b>Native Storytelling/Puppetry: "Chipmunk &amp; Chickadees": A Crow/ Apsáalooke Story</b>  Maria B. Gallegos	<b>Knowledge Keepers Panel</b>  Knowledge Keepers Room Open
11:00 - 11:50	<b>Supporting Positive Indigenous Identity: Student Perspectives and Recommendations</b>  Michele Henson	<b>Media Mavericks: The Power of Youth Storytelling</b>  Ann Bernard	<b>Teaching Identity</b>  Jacob 'Buck' Turcotte					

11:50 AM

Lunch Time



119	121	122	Commons & Outside
<p><b>Becoming Storytellers: Indigenous Games and the Art of Listening</b></p>	<p><b>CSKT Bison Range, the Restoration of culture, language &amp; history</b></p>	<p><b>We are Family, We are Hardin</b></p>	<p><b>Tipi Toolkit</b></p>
<p>Joe Pichardo, Rachel Pichardo</p>	<p>Stephanie Gillin</p>	<p>Tara Bird &amp; Mary Leda Good Luck</p>	<p>Billings Public Schools Indigenous Education Team</p>
<p>Experience Indigenous pedagogy in action through Stone People's Lodge, a traditional Blackfeet storytelling game. This interactive workshop demonstrates how relational teaching practices build social-emotional skills, community wellness, and cultural understanding. Educators will play the game, learn facilitation strategies including cultural gathering practices through reciprocity, and receive ready-to-use materials. Indigenous traditional games like Stone People's Lodge create authentic pathways for integrating IEFA principles while developing students' listening, empathy, storytelling, and respectful feedback skills across all content areas.</p>	<p>Discuss the history of Bison/Buffalo on the Flathead Indian Reservation prior to the National Bison Range being established. Discuss the restoration of the Bison Range back to the Confederated Salish &amp; Kootenai Tribes.</p>	<p>This session explores how the Hardin School District 17H &amp; 1 Family Engagement Center cultivates "genuine, reciprocal relationships" with Apsáalooke (Crow) and Northern Cheyenne families. We share innovative strategies for increasing participation through culturally sustaining practices, including the integration of Crow language and holistic support for parents and guardians. Participants will gain practical tools for fostering a true sense of cultural belonging that empowers both students and their families.</p>	<p>Learn how BPS Indigenous Education teams has been integrating tipi demonstrations across the district.</p>

**10:00 - 10:50**



131

## Knowledge Keepers Panel

Article X of the Montana Constitution, the state recognizes the unique cultural heritage of American Indians. The primary objective of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers at the IEFA conference is to provide authentic, lived-experience expertise that ensures Montana's educational standards are grounded in tribal integrity. They aim to bridge the gap between academic theory and the deep, oral traditions of the twelve tribal nations in Montana.

### **Purpose and Role**

The participation of Knowledge Keepers serves several critical functions for educators and stakeholders:

- **Validation of the "Essential Understandings":** They provide the cultural context and specific tribal histories necessary to teach the Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians accurately.
- **Cultural Preservation:** By sharing oral traditions, languages, and worldviews, they assist schools in fulfilling the state constitutional mandate to preserve the cultural heritage of American Indians.
- **Modeling Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:** Knowledge Keepers demonstrate how to integrate Indigenous "ways of knowing"—such as storytelling, circle practices, and land-based learning—into modern classrooms.

**10:00 - 10:50**



126	128	130
<p><b>Supporting Positive Indigenous Identity: Student Perspectives and Recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Assessing Understanding, Not Just Information: Culturally Responsive Assessment &amp; Feedback</b></p>	<p><b>Native Storytelling/Puppetry: "Chipmunk &amp; Chickadees": A Crow/ Apsáalooke Story</b></p>
<p>Crystal Hickman</p>	<p>Dr. Rebecca Turk</p>	<p>Maria B. Gallegos</p>
<p>The Indigenous Whole Learner Relational Framework offers a holistic, relational approach to teaching and learning grounded in Indigenous worldviews. Rather than privileging cognition alone, the framework attends to the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of learners and emphasizes knowledge as relational, place-based, and lived. This session introduces participants to the core principles of the framework and explores how relationality—with self, community, land, and knowledge—can transform pedagogical practice. Drawing on Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, the presentation invites educators to reflect on their roles, responsibilities, and relationships within learning environments. Participants will engage with practical examples and reflective prompts to support meaningful, ethical, and context-responsive learning across diverse educational settings.</p>	<p>Assessing Understanding, Not Just Information: Culturally Responsive Assessment &amp; Feedback for Indian Education for All</p>	<p>The oral tradition of Native storytelling is an important tool for preserving history, sharing cultural beliefs and customs, and imparting knowledge and wisdom. Many Native stories are also used to explain how or why something has happened. In this Crow story, listeners are introduced to Chipmunk and Chickadee. Basic, essential animal (and thus, human) survival is a prominent feature in this story, as are the consequences of failing to act in a responsible manner. The audience learns valuable lessons from the mistakes made by these animals.</p>

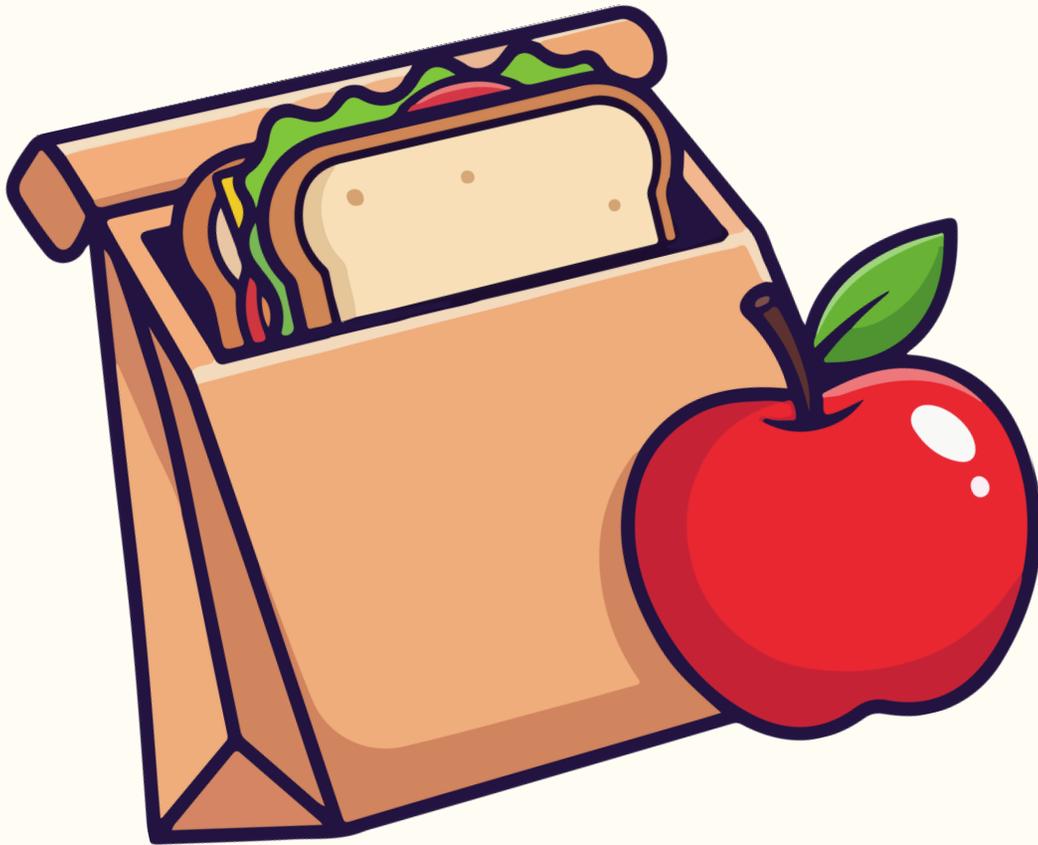
**10:00 - 11:50 2 PD units**



119	121	122
<p><b>Supporting Positive Indigenous Identity: Student Perspectives and Recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Media Mavericks: The Power of Youth Storytelling</b></p>	<p><b>Teaching Identity</b></p>
<p>Michele Henson and High School Student panel</p>	<p>Ann Bernard</p>	<p>Jacob Turcotte</p>
<p>In this session, Native student attending high school in Montana will share their experiences and ideas for building positive Indigenous-identity in school settings. Participants will then have the opportunity to incorporate the recommendations of students by developing activities and lessons that reflect the advice and lived experiences of the student panel. Each participant will leave the session with a student-driven strategy for creating school spaces that support positive Indigenous-identity and build student self-esteem</p>	<p>Media Mavericks is a new program by Montana PBS that invites middle and high school students to explore how they see themselves, their world, and their future. We bring standards-aligned media-making projects to classrooms, help students create original audio-, video-, and image-based content, and publish their work for showcase on the web. It's a great way to teach students useful professional skills and to provide educators with new educational activities that will excite and engage students in ANY TOPIC.</p>	<p>The Buffalo Unity Project at Poplar Middle School uses Assiniboine and Sioux culture to help students understand their identity through creative writing and media arts. Writing workshops focus on emotions and lived experiences, allowing students to process difficult circumstances in healthy ways. By centering storytelling, culture, and student voice, the project promotes healing, pride, and positive representation while fulfilling the goals of Indian Education for All.</p>



# Lunch



11:50 - 12:40



11:50 AM

Lunch Time

	119	121	122	126	128	130	131
12:40 - 1:30	<p><b>Growing Invasive Species Education and IEFA</b></p> <p>Megan Hoyer</p>	<p><b>Pattern, Play, and Purpose: Beadwork as a Gateway to Mathematical Thinking</b></p> <p>Katrina Engeldrum</p>	<p><b>Forming Allies: Facilitating Indian Education for Nonnatives</b></p> <p>Corrine Day</p>	<p><b>Integrating Cultural Relevancy using IEFA Implementation within Multi-Tribal Urban Districts</b></p> <p>Tawny Cale</p>	<p><b>Native Soundtrack for Native Stories</b></p> <p>Scott Prinzing</p>	<p><b>Plains Indian Parfleche: Native American mobile storage container</b></p> <p>Maria B. Gallegos</p>	<p><b>Growing Healthy Communities: Embedding IEFA, Indigenous Knowledge, &amp; Pharmacy Pathways Across K-12 Science and Health</b></p> <p>Brittney Hunter</p>
1:40 - 2:30	<p><b>Using IEFA Materials to Support High Quality Instruction with SPED Students.</b></p> <p>Jillian Bellah</p>	<p><b>The Montana Model: Utilizing IEFA to Support Tribal Education Sovereignty</b></p> <p>Johanna Jones &amp; Emily Agopian</p>	<p><b>Plains Tribes: The Tallest People on Earth?</b></p> <p>Corrine Day</p>				



119	121	122
<p><b>Growing Invasive Species Education and IEFA</b></p>	<p><b>Pattern, Play, and Purpose: Beadwork as a Gateway to Mathematical Thinking (All Grades)</b></p>	<p><b>Forming Allies: Facilitating Indian Education for Nonnatives</b></p>
<p>Megan Hoyer</p>	<p>Katrina Engeldrum</p>	<p>Corinne Day</p>
<p>Explore classroom-ready lessons that connect invasive plant management with Montana’s science standards and Indian Education for All. Learn how to engage students in understanding local ecosystems, biodiversity, and stewardship through both scientific and Indigenous lenses. Participants will leave with hands-on activities that promote critical thinking, cultural relevance, and environmental responsibility.</p>	<p>In this hands-on session, educators will explore a simple beadwork tool using pony beads and wooden dowels to investigate patterns, counting, and mathematical structure through culturally grounded design. Participants will experience the activity as learners, reflect on connections to student choice and social-emotional learning, and consider ways to adapt the tool to grade-level standards and classroom contexts. This session models how tactile, culturally meaningful materials can humanize mathematics and deepen student engagement across grade bands.</p>	<p>This session will share successful strategies for educating nonnative persons on contemporary and historical issues that impact the lives of Montana’s Indigenous populations, including the boarding school era and its legacy. Readings and assignments that have worked well to raise awareness and build compassion among nonnative pre-service and in-service teachers will be shared and discussed with participants.</p>

**12:40 - 1:30**



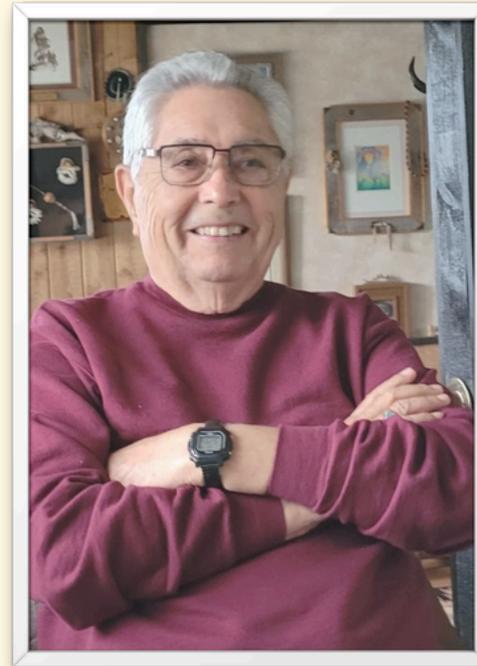
126	128	130	131
<p><b>Integrating Cultural Relevancy using IEFA Implementation within Multi-Tribal Urban Districts</b></p>	<p><b>Native Soundtrack for Native Stories</b></p>	<p><b>Plains Indian Parfleche: Native American mobile storage container</b></p>	<p><b>Growing Healthy Communities: Embedding IEFA, Indigenous Knowledge, and Pharmacy Pathways Across K-12 Science and Health</b></p>
<p>Tawny Cale</p>	<p>Scott Prinzing</p>	<p>Maria B. Gallegos</p>	<p>Brittney Hunter</p>
<p>This engaging, hands-on workshop will showcase the unique structure of Great Falls Public Schools’ Indigenous Education Department, the department’s method to creating lessons that are both culturally responsive as well as culturally relevant, and how these lessons can be used for both IEFA integration or Title VI programs.</p>	<p>Over the past several years there has been an explosion of Native-themed and especially Native-produced media in the United States and Canada. Popular streaming series such as Dark Winds, Reservation Dogs and Rutherford Falls have draw on several decades of Native popular music to underscore the stories and imagery in these shows. Who are these often overlooked musical artists and what can we learn from them and their songs?</p>	<p>The Indigenous peoples of the American West were mobile and migratory, often relocating by traveling great distances, based on food, hunting, resource opportunities, seasonal weather, and cultural traditions. The Native Parfleche played a key role in tool, supply, food storage, and transportation, similar to the modern-day wallet, purse, or suitcase. Geometric patterns, colors, and the use of symmetry are featured, through examples of parfleches of several MT tribes.</p>	<p>Explore a ready to use k-12 lesson integrating IEFA, Indigenous plant knowledge, Tribal sovereignty, science, health, and pharmacy career awareness. Participants engage with hands on activities, digital Indigenous narratives, and Pharmacy4Me resources to support culturally sustaining, place based learning. Leave with adaptable lessons, media literacy tools, and culturally responsive assessment to strengthen student connection to Montana's Tribal Nations.</p>



119	121	122
<p><b>Using IEFA Materials to Support High Quality Instruction with SPED Students</b></p>	<p><b>The Montana Model: Utilizing IEFA to Support Tribal Education Sovereignty</b></p>	<p><b>Plains Tribes: The Tallest People on Earth?</b></p>
<p>Jillian Bellah</p>	<p>Johanna Jones &amp; Emily Agopian</p>	<p>Corinne Day</p>
<p>This presentation provides a comprehensive guide to integrating Montana's Indian Education for All Essential Understandings into Special Education (SPED) and English Language Learner (ELL) frameworks. It emphasizes the legal and ethical necessity of proper identification to ensure equity, prevent the mislabeling of Native students, and uphold the sovereign rights of tribal nations. Attendees will explore practical strategies for creating culturally responsive IEP goals and implementing Indigenous pedagogies—such as oral storytelling and the Medicine Wheel—across academic and social-emotional domains. By aligning federal IDEA requirements with Montana's unique constitutional mandate, this session equips educators to support the "Whole Child" within their specific tribal and cultural contexts.</p>	<p>The Montana Model showcases how integrating Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) principles transforms curriculum by centering tribal perspectives and sovereignty. Through clear partnerships between educators and Indigenous communities, this approach develops authentic content, encourages professional growth, and aligns with educational standards. The session highlights practical strategies for inclusive learning and demonstrates how honoring Indigenous knowledge supports educational equity and long-term curriculum change for all students.</p>	<p>This session will share a statistics project adaptable to a variety of grade levels from middle school to high school. The project is based on an anthropology study that found Plains Tribes to be the tallest, healthiest people in the world before the reservation era. Students utilize the Census at School platform to gather and analyze data as they explore the hypothesis that Plains tribes are still among the tallest people in the world.</p>



**IEFA  
BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE**  
**IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN  
EDUCATION IN MONTANA**



**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL  
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
**Dr. MURTON McCLUSKEY**

**With profound respect, we honor your lifetime of advocacy. Your unwavering dedication has been the heartbeat of Montana's commitment to Indian Education for All. We thank you for your years of leadership and for paving the way for generations of learners to come**

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
GROWING OUR MONTANA STORY**



**IEFA**  
**BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE**  
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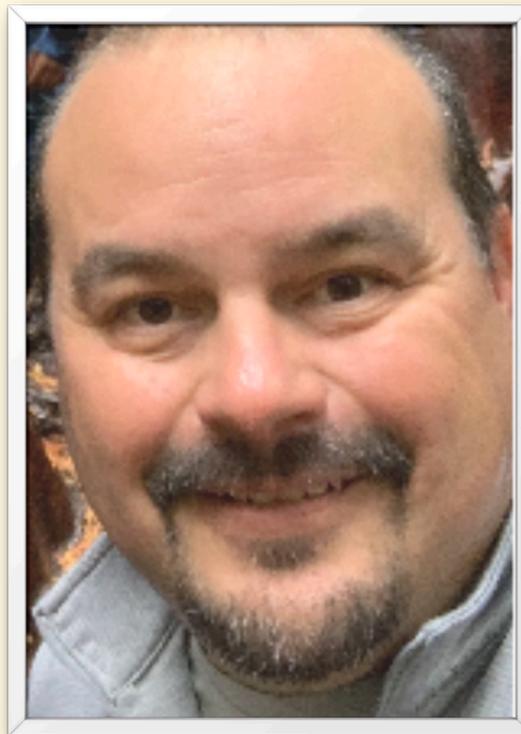
**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL**  
**OPI STAFF CHAMPION AWARD**  
**KATRINA ENGELDRUM**

**The Indian Education for All Unit is proud to present the OPI Staff IEFA Champion Award. This honor recognizes your exceptional leadership and the passion you bring to Montana's constitutional mission. Thank you for being a tireless advocate and for setting the standard for excellence in Indian Education for All.**

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
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**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL**  
**2026 Teresa Veltkamp Award**  
**CHRIS CLAIRMONT**

**As an educator and coach, Chris demonstrates the power of IEFA integration both in the classroom and on the field, fostering an environment of respect, resilience, and historical accuracy.**

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
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**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL**  
**2026 Teresa Veltkamp Award**  
**JOSEPHINE CRISOLOGO**

**A true multidisciplinary leader, Josephine integrates IEFA across ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies, proving that Indian Education for All is a foundational element of every academic discipline.**

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
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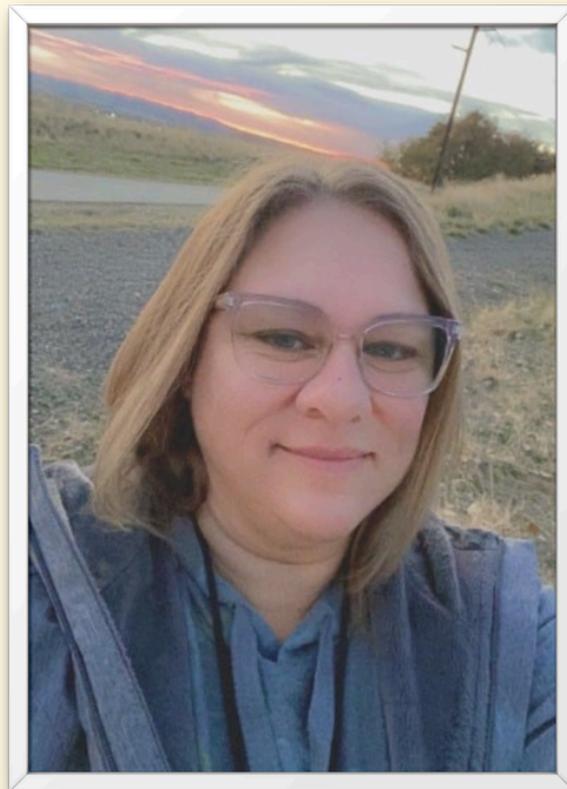
**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL**  
**2026 Teresa Veltkamp Award**  
**LAVONNA LITTLE OWL - REAL BIRD**

**Working in a Dual-Immersion Preschool classroom, Lavonna is at the forefront of language revitalization and early childhood cultural excellence, ensuring Montana's youngest learners begin their journey rooted in identity.**

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**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL**  
**2026 Teresa Veltkamp Award**  
**DARLA STONE**

**A dedicated 4th-grade teacher and Advisor for the Billings Student Tribal Council. Darla is recognized for her leadership in elevating student voices and creating pathways for urban Indian youth to lead within their school community.**

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**INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL**  
**2026 Teresa Veltkamp Award**  
**CLINT VALANDRA**

**Serving as an Indigenous Education Mentor and Cultural Specialist, Clint provides vital cultural context and mentorship, bridging the gap between traditional knowledge and modern secondary education.**

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE,  
GROWING OUR MONTANA STORY**

# IEFA BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE

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