Indigenous Updates- February

APS-Indian Education Department would like to share with you our monthly messaging flier in building connections and relationships with our Native American students, families, and communities. Taking this time to celebrate and empower your Indigenous students will create harmonious and supportive schools.

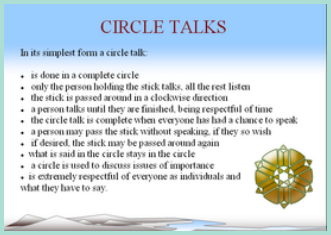
Did you know Restorative Justice started with Indigenous Talking Circles?

"The Circle process that many non-Native people are using today is rooted in the tradition of talking Circles that Indigenous Peoples in North America use and have used for millennia. Different Native Peoples practice different forms of the Circle process. The form of Circles described in Living Justice Press books most closely reflects the talking Circle process practiced by the Plains Peoples of North America. In these traditions, Circles are far more than a technique; they are a way of life. Circles embody a philosophy, principles, and values that apply whether people are sitting in Circle or not."

Healing Circles for Youth Empowerment

Talking Circles

Example of a Talking Stick



Seals & Stoles

Support Our Native scholars earn their Seals and Stoles with support in essay writing, volunteering opportunities and cultural enrichment.

- **Distinguished Learning Seal Essay, Google slide presentation, and letter of recommendation due: February 20, 2026. Upload all documents into Google Classroom and hit the submit button.**

Our Native American Values: Mastery

In the Spirit of Mastery

"Father gave me my first pony and also my first lesson in riding. The pony was a very gentle one and I was so small that he tied me in place on the pony's back. In time I sat on my horse by myself and then I rode by father's side. That was real achievement, for I was very small indeed."
-Standing Bear

- A goal of Native education is to develop cognitive physical, social, and spiritual competence.
- One of the first lessons a child learns is self-control and self-restraint in the presence of parents and other adults.
- Children are taught that wisdom comes from listening to and observing elders.
- Ceremonies and oral legends transmitted ideals to the younger generation. Stories were not only used to entertain, but to teach theories of behavior and ways of perceiving the world.
- Lessons become more meaningful with repetition; the more one listened, the more was revealed.
- Stories facilitate storing and remembering information and function as a higher-order mental process that orders our human existence.

Guide for Action

Standing Bear: Ponca chief who advocated for the rights of Native Americans in the United States and successfully argued in court that Native people are "persons" under the U.S. Constitution.

- **Create holistic learning opportunities; hands-on activities; storytelling; room for humor; creative opportunities; educate and incorporate the historical importance of running and the love of sports like basketball into lessons.**

Intergenerational learning should be respected. Learning is community based. We are all part of that community. As an adult help create opportunities of self-importance and pride within our students.

Tribal obligations and ceremonies that sometimes require absences need to be acknowledged respectively. Winter Stories, String games and Coyote Stories are only taught during the winter months.

Routines are integral in any classroom; look past just the essential question and daily agenda: a personalized greeting; an emotional check-in; weekly 'house-keeping' will go a long way in creating a supportive classroom environment.

Consider supplementing lessons with culturally relevant Indigenous stories; Native role models; and encourage students to be proud of their own stories.

Learn with us:

- **NIEA Grades Pk-2 Lessons**
- **NIEA Grades 3 - 5 Student-Centered Learning**
- **NIEA Grades 6 - 12 Lessons**
- **Native Ways of Knowledge Books**
- **Tips for Teachers: Developing Instructional Materials about American Indians**
- **Native American Resources NM**
- **Encyclopedic Resources for Projects on American Indians**
- **Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask - Micro Asynch Course**
- **NDN Girls Book Club**

scholarships

APS Education Foundation Varsity Award Scholarship
Deadline: March 31, 2026

Diane Gillen Future Educator Scholarship
Deadline: March 6, 2026

Joan Kent Drama Scholarship
Deadline: March 6, 2026

APS Education Foundation Varsity Award Scholarship
Deadline: March 31, 2026

Tillery McNerney Scholarship
Deadline: April 10, 2026

Smith Engineering Company Scholarship
Deadline: July 1, 2026

Calling all senior student-athletes! The Chris Eaton Foundation Scholarship is now open!
Apply by March 31, 2026

Culturally Responsive Resources

Helpful reflections to consider when selecting Native American lessons or activities.
Be mindful of where and by whom resources have come from. Is it written in past tense?
Is the creator a Native person?
Are othering or stereotypical terms used?
Be critical of sites like TeacherspayTeachers.

When in doubt check out: American Indians in Children's Literature by Debbie Reese

Native Education for All

Supporting Indigenous students and teaching non-Indigenous students during National Native American Heritage Month can be impactful and meaningful. Here are some actionable ways teachers can engage in this effort:

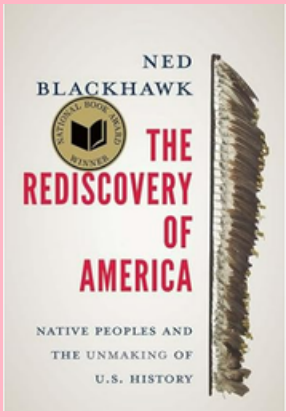
For Supporting Indigenous Students:

- **Create Safe Spaces:** Establish classrooms that respect and celebrate Indigenous cultures. Encourage open dialogue about identities and experiences.
- **Integrate Indigenous Voices:** Include literature and resources written by Indigenous authors or created by Indigenous artists. This representation helps Indigenous students see themselves in the curriculum.
- **Celebrate Indigenous Cultures:** Organize events or activities that highlight Indigenous traditions, such as storytelling sessions, art workshops, or music performances.
- **Involve Community Members:** Invite local Indigenous leaders or elders to speak with students, share their knowledge, and provide mentorship.
- **Offer Support Services:** Ensure that Indigenous students have access to counseling and support services that understand and respect their cultural backgrounds.

For Teaching Non-Indigenous Students:

- **Curriculum Integration:** Incorporate Indigenous history and perspectives across subjects, such as social studies, science, and art. Focus on the contributions of Indigenous peoples to various fields.
- **Interactive Learning:** Engage students in projects that explore Indigenous cultures, such as research presentations or creative arts projects that reflect Indigenous themes.
- **Encourage Critical Thinking:** Discuss historical and contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities. Encourage students to think critically about stereotypes and representation.
- **Promote Respectful Engagement:** Teach students about the importance of respectful language and interactions when discussing Indigenous cultures and issues.
- **Utilize Diverse Resources:** Use documentaries, podcasts, and digital content that present Indigenous perspectives. This helps to broaden understanding and foster empathy.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can create an inclusive environment that honors Indigenous heritage while educating all students about its significance.

Indigenize your library

- TOO MUCH!
- CHOOCH HELPED
- BRAIDED ROOTS
- FIERCE AUNTIES
- WE WEAVE
- FOR A GIRL BECOMING
- RAVEN'S RIBBONS
- SUMMER OF THE BONE HORSES
- OUTFOXED
- RED BIRD DANCER
- SISTERS IN THE WIND
- SHEINE LENDE
- THE UNFINISHED
- SUPER INDIAN
- WHERE WOLVES DON'T DIE
- THE RIBBON SKIRT
- JOJO MAKOONS: THE SUPER SCARY SLEEPOVER
- LEGENDARY FRY BREAD DRIVE-IN
- LOST AT WINDY RIVER: A TRUE STORY OF SURVIVAL
- THIS PLACE: 150 YEARS RETOLD
- THE REDISCOVERY OF AMERICA: NATIVE PEOPLES AND THE UNMAKING OF U.S. HISTORY
- AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
- DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES: RESEARCH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
- RECLAIMING YOUTH AT RISK (NATIVE VALUES/ CIRCLE OF COURAGE)