Indigenous Updates-October 2025

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.

"Hotda:kwe a:wan dewa"-Grandmother's Day

Ko' don dewan a:deya:ye? How have you all been these days? " K'ettsanishhi" would be the response! Mi:yashe:nak'ya (harvesting corn) is the literal translation Shiwi'ma (Zuni) and it signifies the Fall season. Important cultural events take place in our village. One of these events is "Hotda:kwe a:wan dewa," (Grandmother's day). As a Shiwi'ma Bena:we Yanikk'e:nona (Zuni Language) teacher, it is important that I share not only the language learning with students but cultural history as well. This is an example.

The standard set up by the Zuni tribe to teach Shiwi'ma Bena:we, the A:shiwi follow the cultural calendar of our people. A:shiwi (Zuni) continue to practice the rich, cultural traditions which have been in place since time immemorial. This means right now, our cultural leaders are setting time for "Hotda:kwe a:wan dewa," grandmother's day. Since A:shiwi are matrilineal, our grandmothers are honored, those who have passed on and those who are still living. My father told me this is just like how the other Pueblos honor "All Souls Day,".

Ever since I can remember, Grandmother's day was an important time in my mother's family. My mother's family have been caretakers of the Patron Saint of Zuni (Sandu) or Santo Nino, which the Spanish brought long ago. Sandu was rescued when the old church was burned to the ground during the Pueblo Revolt. This cultural tradition is one of the only traditions which blends Catholicism and the Shiwi ways. It is a time of harvest and to pay homage to our female ancestry. The dakkya:kwe a:wokya (Frog clan women) have always been the primary caretakers of Sandu (Santo Nino). Therefore, it is the grandmothers who are honored on this day.

Dakkya:kwe (Frog clan) men hang an old iron bell outside the old Mission church, and males of all ages can go and ring the bell, ringing the bell signifies this special day. Then as the sun sets, prayers and food offerings are made to our ancestors by feeding the cedar fires. Then A:shiwi a:wottsi (Zuni males) go around to homes in the same style of "trick or treating". When Shiwi (Zuni) males go to the homes, the person greeting them will say "bolesikkya" then the males sing a song that is Latin derived: it goes like this: "Ansalammo, mosalammo, ansalammo mosalammo, salammo, salammo," then households give out the treats of the harvest such as squash, fruit or chile.

Some northern New Mexican villages (Spanish and possibly other Pueblos) still practice this. This unique cultural tradition happens during the full moon.

I shared this important cultural event with the students last year and some have not ever heard of it. Oftentimes, when students do not experience something that is uniquely "Shiwi," I try my best to explain it. The best experience is to visit Shiwina (Zuni) and see it for yourself! Ma: wans le:wi, Elahkwa don Yadon k'okshi sunhhak'yanapdu!

Mila V. Padilla -Shiwi'ma Bena:we Yanikk'ye:nona

The Indian Education Act is a New Mexico state law aimed at ensuring equitable, culturally and linguistically relevant education for American Indian students. It promotes collaboration between the state, tribal governments, and public schools, particularly those serving Native communities.

Key Provisions:

- Equity & Cultural Relevance: Ensures Native students have access to education that supports their cultures and languages.
- Tribal Collaboration: Requires formal government-to-government relationships and collaboration on curriculum and programs.
- Needs Assessments: School districts must assess and prioritize Native students' needs in their budgets.
- Annual Reporting: Districts must submit Tribal Education Status Reports to Tribes, covering student performance, safety, attendance, and more.
- Funding: Establishes an Indian Education Fund and encourages districts to seek additional grants.

Implementation & Oversight:

- Indian Education Division: Within the Public Education Department, this division works with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and issues statewide reports.
- Indian Education Advisory Council (IEAC): Advises the state on the act's implementation.
- Accountability Measures (2019 Amendments): Strengthened oversight, requiring Historically Defined Indian Impacted School Districts to report progress and align budgets with assessed needs.

The act seeks to close educational gaps and promote academic success for Native students through sustained, accountable, and culturally informed efforts.

Consider this: The Indian Education Act after Yazzie/ Martinez

Get Involved:

- Indigenous Traditional Foods Workshops:
  - Roasting Corn & Squash in a Horno, Harvesting, Stories from Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, Polk Middle School, October 25, 2025, 10-12pm
  - Pueblo Indian Style Red Chile Tamales, Seed Saving, Stories from Knowledge Keepers, Los Padillas Elementary School, November 15, 10-12pm
- IAIA 205 Fall Visit Day, Institute of American Indian Arts, Friday October 17, 10am - 2pm
- Growing Future Speakers: Indigenous Youth Language Day 2025, Sandia Resort, October 24, 9am - 2:15 pm
- Senior Information Night for Parents and Students, APS City Center, Tuesday October 21, 6 - 8 pm
- American Indian Senior Day, UNM Student Union Building, Wed, October 29, 9:30 - 1:30 pm
- Maggie Peters, Centering Tribal Voices: Building California's Native American Studies Model Curriculum, UNM Zoom Meet, October 30, 1 - 2 pm
- 4th Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit, Berna Facio, Oct 31, 9am - 2pm
- National Indian Youth Council & CNM FREE Production Assistant Training (film), Address available at Registration, October 17 - 18, 8am - 4pm
- 5th Annual Indian Ed. Curriculum Fair, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, November 8, 8 - 4pm
- 2025 APS Leadership Pow Wow, AHS Commons, November 13, 4 - 10 pm
- Native American Indian Science & Engineering Fair 2026

Honoring Native Culture and Achievement in APS: A message from Superintendent Blakey

From the 2025 Tribal Consultation

Learn with us:

Resources

- Indigenous People's Day Lessons - Elementary
- An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People Lesson Plan
- Native Ways of Knowing [educator] micro-courses (free/ async)
- Native Ways of Knowledge Books
- Indigenous People's Day - Zinn Project Resources
- Illuminative IPD Lesson Plan
- Why More People are Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Challenging How History is Written
- History of Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Indian Pueblo Cultural Center: IPD Celebrations
- Albuquerque adopts IPD 2015- Indian Country Today
- Indigineity Curriculum
- Tips for Teachers: Developing Instructional Materials about American Indians
- Native American Resources NM
- Encyclopedic Resources for Projects on American Indians
- NDN Girls Book Club

Indigenous Peoples' Day: Origins, Current Standing, and Significance

How It Started

Indigenous Peoples' Day began as a response to Columbus Day, which many view as a celebration of colonization, violence, and the erasure of Native American cultures. Activists, scholars, and Indigenous communities pushed back against the glorification of Christopher Columbus, whose arrival in the Americas led to the exploitation, enslavement, and death of countless Indigenous people.

Key milestones:

- 1977: The idea was formally proposed at a United Nations-sponsored conference on discrimination against Indigenous populations in the Americas.
- 1992: Berkeley, California, became the first U.S. city to officially replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, coinciding with the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landing.
- Over the next few decades, the movement grew as more cities, states, and institutions adopted the holiday in place of Columbus Day.

Current Standing (as of 2023)

- 29 U.S. states do not observe Columbus Day and instead recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day or similar alternatives.
- Recognized officially or via proclamation in states like California, Alaska, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Washington, D.C.
- South Dakota observes Native Americans' Day, Hawaii has Discoverers' Day, and Alabama celebrates American Indian Heritage Day.
- In 2021, President Joe Biden issued the first-ever presidential proclamation of Indigenous Peoples' Day at the federal level—an historic moment for national recognition. However, Columbus Day remains a federal holiday, meaning federal offices still close.

Significance Today

Indigenous Peoples' Day:

- Honors the history, culture, and contributions of Native peoples in the Americas.
- Challenges the myth that the Americas were "discovered" by Columbus, acknowledging that Indigenous peoples had lived there for thousands of years.
- Serves as a form of historical correction and cultural recognition, confronting the lasting impact of colonization, displacement, and systemic injustice faced by Indigenous communities.
- Promotes education and awareness about Indigenous histories, languages, and sovereignty.
- Encourages broader conversations around racial justice, historical accuracy, and national identity.

In essence, Indigenous Peoples' Day is not just about replacing Columbus Day—it represents a deeper shift toward truth-telling, reconciliation, and respect for the original inhabitants of the land now called the United States.

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

That's a banned book?!

Banned Books by Indigenous Authors on Indigenous Experiences

Books by Indigenous authors that center Indigenous perspectives are frequently targeted for bans—often labeled as "divisive" or accused of being "racist" for simply telling the truth about history.
At the heart of these bans is often an uncomfortable reality: these books challenge dominant, sanitized narratives of American history and ask readers to consider whose voices have been silenced.
Whether for children, young adults, or adults, the titles listed here—all included on the PEN America Index of School Book Bans—offer powerful stories that deserve to be heard.

Visit your local library and check them out—literally and figuratively.

Firekeeper's Daughter
Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story
Indian No More
We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga
Hiawatha and the Peacemaker
Kapaemahu
At the Mountain's Base
The People Shall Continue
Sharice's Big Voice: A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman

OUR CULTURE IS NOT A COSTUME
ENJOY HALLOWEEN EQUITABLY BECAUSE APPROPRIATION IS SCAAARRY.

- Native Halloween Costumes Are Offensive, Support Native Designers Instead
- That Indian Princess Costume is Not Honoring Native Culture
- Indigenous students speak out on Halloween: We are people, not costumes
- My culture is not your Halloween costume

Indigenize your library

- Never Whistle at Night
- Avati : Discovering Arctic Ecology
- Grandmother's Pigeon
- Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children
- Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future
- Rez Ball
- Ocean Mother
- As We Have Always Done
- Love Medicine
- Bad Indians
- Legendary Frybread Drive-In
- Native Presence and Sovereignty in College
- Healer of the Water Monster
- Dog Flowers
- The Sky Once was a Dark Blanket
- The Round House
- Little Big Bully
- IEP Jaltok
- A Council of Dolls
- The Missing Morningstar and Other Stories
- Blue Corn Tongue: Poems in the Mouth of the Desert
- A Body More Tolerable
- My Powerful Hair
- Indigenous Ingenuity
- 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)