



*John McCoy (Lulilais)*

# SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL

Tribal Sovereignty in Washington

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2025

## NAVIGATING COLLECTIVE ACTION

### **Interdependencies in Environmental Stewardship**

by Dr. Dawn Hardison-Stevens and Sui-Lan Ho'okono

#### IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP!

This moment signifies more than just a seasonal awareness of the changes in our ecological world; it also marks a shift within our collective humanity that is subtly stirring things up. **The need for awakening extends beyond the environment; it encompasses our responsibility not only to local communities and our nation but to a changing global perspective on how we engage with our surroundings.** We must learn from the messages the environment is conveying as we navigate this new seasonal shift. It is essential for us to be transformative in the way we approach this awakening. It's time for humanity to awaken!

We advocate for humanity, the environment, and the voices of our communities. Across different regions, individuals are awakening simultaneously, each shouldering their own responsibilities to the broader community. A poignant image comes to mind of our...

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## Navigating collective action, continued

Native relatives standing alongside significant peoples throughout history and across continents and communities, symbolizing the unity among Indigenous peoples as they unite to champion collective action.

**As we transition into these transformative seasonal shifts, we must examine how we are genuinely engaging our senses to guide our future actions.** Educators can encourage others to take a moment to observe their surroundings closely, looking up, down, and all around us. This practice opens up opportunities to engage narratives and create space for supporting each other. Right now, nettle is beginning to pop up. As I walk, I am mindful of how I step so I can be gentle in spaces of new growth. How can we support one another in determining our next steps in this time?

Winter symbolizes a season of rest and rejuvenation, presenting a chance for reading and storytelling—essential tools for learning and sources of endless entertainment. As the earth lies in a peaceful slumber, it serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of pausing and cultivating patience as life prepares for renewal. We, too, experience this transition. With the arrival of spring, we are invited to explore the landscape and witness the beginning of a new life cycle.

As time progresses, our ability to interpret the natural world—specifically, water and wind—becomes more nuanced. **Before launching our canoes, it is essential to invest time in observing tidal patterns, which serves as a metaphor for our engagement with the environment.** The attention we pay to the ever-changing elements around us fosters a deeper understanding of our ecosystem. This awareness extends to the subtleties noted by elders, often referred to as "those voices without sound," which emphasize the significance of quiet signals over the distracting noise of more overt communications.

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**“The land is the real teacher. All we need as students is mindfulness. Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the living world, receiving the gifts with open eyes and open heart.”**

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER



“The role of the steersperson in a canoe is pivotal; guiding those with less experience requires a shared commitment to the collective endeavor.

Every member of the canoe, as in our community, bears responsibility for the journey. Leadership must therefore invoke a call to action, revising our strategies as a cohesive unit.”

## Navigating collective action, continued

For learners to become attuned to their surroundings, it is imperative that they develop a capacity to discern the signs provided by wind, oceanography, and environmental conditions. This raises critical questions regarding collective understanding: how do we ensure that all individuals are equipped to interpret these signs effectively? How can we support those less familiar with the nuances of the natural world? Encouraging attentiveness to these indicators is vital for fostering collective awareness.

The role of the steersperson in a canoe is pivotal; guiding those with less experience requires a shared commitment to the collective endeavor. Every member of the canoe, as in our community, bears responsibility for the journey. Leadership must therefore invoke a call to action, revising our strategies as a cohesive unit. This period of awakening necessitates inviting our communities “into the canoe,” fostering an inclusive approach to environmental stewardship.

**As we become more aware, attentiveness to the conditions surrounding us becomes increasingly crucial, particularly as we face various challenges. Inaction is no longer an option; we must actively engage and motivate others to join our collective effort.** The time has come for all community members to conduct themselves with purpose, placing their paddles in the water and propelling us toward our shared goals.

**Our journey entails navigating toward sustainable indigenous environmental education frameworks that serve the broader community.** This endeavor transcends mere educational objectives; it encompasses a commitment to stewardship and collective care for our communities. The envisioned future reiterates the interconnections between our individual and collective journeys.

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## Navigating collective action, continued

Reflecting on historical justice movements—spanning racial, environmental, and social issues—shines a light on the essence of our current struggle. **Leaders such as Billy Frank, Jr., Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Oakes, Walter Ritte, and Haunani Trask exemplify the powerful narratives that highlight our interconnected fights for equity and justice.** Billy Frank, Jr., Martin Luther King Jr., and Richard Oakes championed environmental and social justice. Haunani Trask and Martin Luther King Jr. focused on educational, social, and racial justice. Each of these leaders played a vital role in establishing the platforms we have today to voice the wellness and needs of our communities, and we bear the obligation to continue their work. They served as pillars of their communities, understanding the importance of collective action and solidarity—not just for Black, Native, Hawaiian, and Indigenous communities, but for all. We must rise together, much like they did in their time as they laid the groundwork for the ongoing struggle for justice.

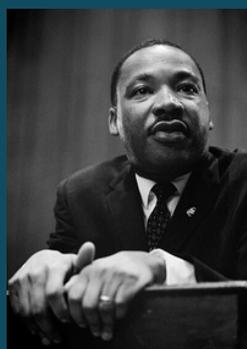
**Just as in a canoe, while each of us occupies distinct roles, we share a collective responsibility for the journey ahead.** This complex ecosystem of interdependencies emphasizes that no single component exists in isolation. The effectiveness of our collective action hinges on recognizing and valuing everyone’s contributions within the larger framework. Therefore, as we confront the challenges ahead, it is essential to cultivate an understanding of our interconnectedness and maintain a commitment to a shared vision of justice and sustainability.



Billy Frank, Jr.



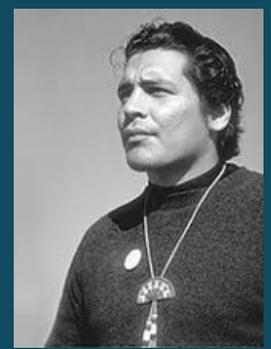
Haunani Trask



Martin Luther King Jr.



Walter Ritte



Richard Oakes

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Trask, H. K. (1999). *From a native daughter: Colonialism and sovereignty in Hawaii* (Revised edition). University of Hawaii Press.

Heffernan, T. (2015). *Where the Salmon Run: The Life and Legacy of Billy Frank Jr.*, University of Washington Press.

Salmon Defense Fund. (2024). *Together, we have the power to protect salmon* [Salmon Warriors]



# THEMATIC TEACHING WITH JOHN MCCOY (Iulilaš) SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL

by By Dr. Dawn Hardison-Stevens and Sui-Lan Ho'okono

Knowledge rooted in the land, along with culturally-based indigenous literacy and education, represents a significant movement for us. It fosters a deeper understanding of our ancestors and our interconnectedness. This awareness aids individuals in navigating life, as we often speak of the winds and the ripples.

Thematic teaching that emphasizes seasons or moons can facilitate connections between concepts across various subjects, enhancing understanding and relationships. Incorporating Native knowledge and Indigenous perspectives into daily lessons enriches the educational experience.

While we may refer to educational methodologies such as thematic learning, project-based learning, mastery-based learning, or competency-based learning, it is crucial to acknowledge that these approaches are deeply rooted in Indigenous and Native practices that have existed for centuries. These methods highlight the importance of educators selecting relevant topics and curricula that engage students, thereby fostering critical thinking and a passion for learning.

By linking concepts across various subjects and real-life experiences, we promote interdisciplinary activities where disciplines like math integrate with science, history, social skills, and language development. It is essential to recognize that although we use contemporary terminology, these practices reflect traditional knowledge transfer methods that have long been integral to Indigenous and Native cultures.

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**“While we may refer to educational methodologies such as thematic learning, project-based learning, mastery-based learning, or competency-based learning, it is crucial to acknowledge that these approaches are deeply rooted in Indigenous and Native practices that have existed for centuries.”**



## Thematic teaching, continued

Thematic learning can be inclusive of all grade levels and content areas:

**Choose a theme:** Select a seasonal theme such as harvests, salmon, wild strawberries, cedar, ceremonies, or moons.

**Integrate subjects:** Delve into the chosen theme by incorporating various subjects, including reading, writing, art, and science.

**Use essential questions:** Formulate open-ended questions that encourage students to analyze and critically evaluate information.

**Utilize primary sources:** Gather a compelling array of resources, including documentaries, photographs, artworks, and statistics.

**Add an element of fun:** Prepare snacks featuring seasonal produce, forage for local foods, and explore seasonal holidays.

A valuable resource for thematic learning is the Seattle-based organization [Children of the Setting Sun: 13 Moons - Swinomish](#). Another excellent source is the [Salmon Defense Fund's](#) video "[Fish Wars](#)," which emphasizes the need for immediate action.

Improving learning processes is essential, particularly in engaging students with the content. Nelson-Barber and Trumbull Estrin (2009) emphasize the need to enhance mathematics and science education for American Indian students, who are often underrepresented in scientific and technical careers. They attribute this issue to the educational system's shortcomings, which often fail to acknowledge and build upon the cultural knowledge and learning strategies of Native American communities. The authors argue that American Indian students possess significant knowledge rooted in naturalist traditions and subsistence lifestyles which could serve as a solid foundation for success in mathematics and science. However, conventional teaching methods frequently neglect this knowledge and the distinctive ways in which these students learn, leading to missed opportunities and high dropout rates.

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## Thematic teaching, continued

Nelson-Barber and Trumbull Estrin (2009) advocate for culturally responsive teaching methods that weave students' cultural experiences and knowledge into the curriculum. **They stress the importance of constructivist learning, where students actively construct knowledge based on their lived experiences.** The authors recommend the use of ethnomathematics and ethnoscience, which involve integrating mathematical and scientific practices within cultural activities, to render learning more relevant and engaging for Native American students.

**The authors emphasize the necessity for educators to cultivate cross-cultural competencies and to establish a classroom environment that acknowledges and values the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. They advocate for a transformation of educational practices to integrate more culturally relevant content and pedagogical approaches. This shift aims to enhance the academic success of American Indian students, particularly in the fields of mathematics and science.**

The authors emphasize the importance of teachers developing cross-cultural competencies and creating a classroom environment that respects and values students' cultural backgrounds. They advocate for transforming educational practices to include more culturally relevant content and teaching methods, with the ultimate goal of improving the academic success of Native and Indigenous students in mathematics and science.

The emphasis is not on compartmentalization, systems, or individuality; rather, it centers on benefiting the collective. **In Washington State, a mastery learning approach aligns with competency-based education found in other states, as well as with universal design and project-based learning.** This foundational concept, deeply rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and sharing knowledge, has been passed down through generations. While it is not a novel or innovative idea, the world is increasingly turning to these practices to address contemporary social issues, environmental challenges, health and wellness in food, and social-emotional well-being. By embracing these traditional methods—such as outdoor, experiential, and community-based learning—we are paving the way for effective solutions.

Nurlaela, Samani, Asto, & Wibawa (2018) investigated the impact of thematic learning models, learning styles, and reading abilities on students' learning outcomes. Key findings include:

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# Thematic teaching, continued

## Key findings include:

1. Thematic learning models **significantly improve student achievement** compared to conventional models.
2. **Students with visual learning styles perform better** than those with auditory learning styles.
3. **Students with high reading abilities achieve better outcomes** than those with low reading abilities.
4. There is an **interaction between learning models and learning styles** affecting student achievement.
5. **No significant interaction was found between learning models and reading abilities, learning styles and reading abilities, or among all three factors.**

**Benefits of thematic teaching for students include the ability to:**

**Connect** their learning across different subjects

**Explore** their interests and passions

**Study** the Earth's rotation

**Discover** seasonal foods

## Considerations for Thematic Learning include:

1. **Acknowledge that individuals have different learning styles.** Differentiating instruction may be necessary to engage all learners effectively.
2. Collecting resources can be difficult. **Utilize local expertise, libraries, peers, and other available resources** to support your efforts.
3. **Be ready to think creatively about how to align certain standards** that may not initially seem relevant to the chosen themes.





## Thematic teaching, continued

Nurlaela, et al (2018) concluded that **thematic learning is more effective and can accommodate different learning styles and reading abilities**. It suggests the importance of applying thematic learning in elementary schools and paying attention to individual differences and reading abilities.

### REFERENCES

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Nelson-Barber, S., & Estrin, E. T. (1995). *Bringing Native American perspectives to mathematics and science teaching*. *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), 174–185.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849509543677>

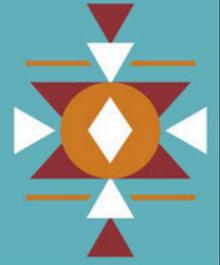
Nurlaela, L., Samani, M., Asto, I. G. P., & Wibawa, S. C. (2018). *The effect of thematic learning model, learning style, and reading ability on the students' learning outcomes*. In IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering (Vol. 296, No. 1, p. 012039). IOP Publishing.



“The emphasis is not on compartmentalization, systems, or individuality; rather, it centers on benefiting the collective.”



# NIEA 4th Annual Educator Day Spokane, Washington 2025



*Providing the most extensive in-person learning experience on Native American education*

## National Representation at Educator Day



**34** states



**264** Unique Cities



**700+** Participants



**287** School Districts



**195** Tribal Nations

## Educator Day Themes

-  Culturally Relevant Curriculum & Instruction
-  Whole Child Prevention & Wellness
-  Native Language Education
-  Family & Community Engagement
-  Post Secondary / Workforce Support

*Additional themes embedded throughout the day include Early Childhood, Special Education, and Native Education policy and advocacy.*

**Support Educator Day and invest in educators that empower the Native brilliance of our students:**

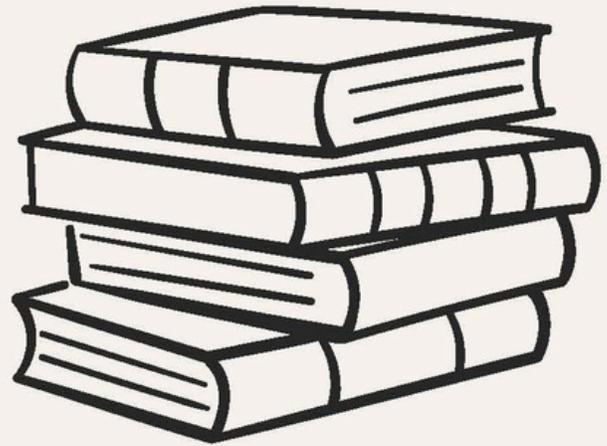
- Sponsor an author
- Sponsor lunch for educators
- Sponsor a coffee break

For opportunities to partner, collaborate, or sponsor, contact **NIEA Educator Initiative Manager**, Dezi Lynn, at [dlynn@niea.org](mailto:dlynn@niea.org)



# BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK WORKSHOP

Hands-on workshop designed for participants to develop an authentic knowledge base to better engage with the atwi John McCoy Iulilaš Since Time Immemorial Curriculum



Presented by **kwasa** |  
**Confederated Tribes and Bands of  
the Yakama Nation Member**

## LEARNERS WILL:



- Engage with atwi John McCoy Iulilaš Since Time Immemorial curriculum
- Examine the importance of code-switching and how to identify it
- Deepen knowledge of Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Analyze Collectivist pedagogy and structure of schooling

**APRIL 2025**

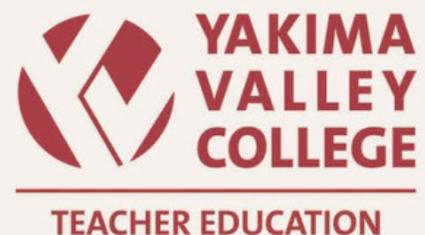
**FROM 5-7:00PM**

HERITAGE UNIVERSITY SMITH FAMILY HALL  
DINNER WILL BE SERVED.

Register using the QR code or  
link below



<https://www.cognitoforms.com/YakimaValleyCollege6/FebruaryBeyondTheTextbook>



We would like to take a moment and reflect on the lands which we reside, the ancestral homelands and traditional territories of the people of the Yakama Nation. We acknowledge and honor the Yakama People. We offer gratitude for the land itself, for those who have stewarded it for generations, and for the opportunity to study, learn, work and be in community on this land. We acknowledge that our college's history, like many others, is fundamentally tied to the first colonial developments in the Yakima Valley

Yakima Valley College is an equal opportunity institution.  
Learn more at: [yvcc.edu/nondiscrimination](http://yvcc.edu/nondiscrimination)



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# Call to Conference

“EMPOWERING NATIVE  
EDUCATION”

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## 40th Annual Washington State Indian Education Association Conference

April 1-3, 2025

Northern Quest Resort/Casino  
100 North Hayford Road  
Airway Heights, WA 99001

*Featuring:*

Workshops, Clock Hours, Culture Room, Merit Awards, Vendors,  
Parent and Teacher Training Opportunities, Native Student College Fair & Post-Secondary Opportunities  
Day, and much more!

*Sponsored by the  
Washington State Indian Education Association*

For more information: <https://wsiea.org/2025-conference/>



MUCKLESHOOT  
TRIBAL COLLEGE

MUCKLESHOOT  
TRIBAL COLLEGE  
PRESENTS



# 5TH ANNUAL EFFECTIVE TEACHING INSTITUTE

Registration form and Muckleshoot Resort  
booking link available via the QR code.  
Early bird ticket pricing available until April  
18, 2025.

For Questions or registration  
accommodations, please contact Justine  
Koble at [Justine.Koble@muckleshoot.nsn.us](mailto:Justine.Koble@muckleshoot.nsn.us)  
or (253) 876-3375.



## JUNE 24-26, 2025



# 2025 Programming Will Include:

- Experience learning from Muckleshoot Tribal members about History, Culture, and Language
- Learn more about Government to Government Partnerships and partnership best practices
- Experience field trips to locations such as Tomanamus Forest, this visit highlights Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Place Based Education, and more.
- Learn how to start Indigenizing your classroom, buildings, curriculum, and cultivating relationships in Tribal communities
  - Participate in hands on Cultural Art Activities
- Discover Native Books by Native/Indigenous Authors for Pre-School to grade 12, and Adult & Higher Education
  - Best Practices in Native Education including working with Native students with Disabilities
- Dive into lively discussions and connect with peers in a Research Symposium.
- Learn from individuals with expertise in specific areas related to Native Tribes and peoples, including but not limited to Natural Resources, Native Culture, Native History, Fishing, Language, Writing, Reading, Health & Wellness, Technology, Economics, and more!
- Share a meal highlighting traditional foods & be inspired by Native Musicians!

And much more!

tə sčali?čəł gwələ swələx<sup>w</sup> dx<sup>w</sup>?al syayusčəł

Our hearts are strong towards our work



# SAVE THE DATE

**tmix<sup>W</sup>**

## WA State Indian Education Summer Teaching Institute June 24-26, 2025

A forum to share & learn *Best Cultural-Responsive Practices & Policies alongside Tribes, Indigenous Scholars and Schools* highlighting positive outcomes for all Washington Students, Teachers, School Leaders, and citizens.

### WHAT:

Professional Development to Learn alongside Washington State Tribes, Indigenous Scholars, Elders and First Peoples

### WHO:

WA Pre-12 Teachers, School Administrators, Board of Directors, & Post-Secondary Higher Education Professionals.

### WHY:

Numerous WA State Legislative Policies reaffirms the state's commitment to the centennial accord with Tribes and educating the citizens of our state the contributions of Tribes historically and contemporarily.

*Partners: Wenatchee Valley College Omak, Omak School District, Paschal Sherman Indian School, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, OSPI Office of Native Education, North Central Educational Service District.*

**tmix<sup>W</sup>**

In this place, we are all related...

Indigenous Theory:

*"Everything on earth has a purpose, every disease a herb to cure it, and every person a mission."*

Christine Quintasket –Mourning Dove



**WHERE:** Omak WA-Wenatchee Valley College Omak, Omak School District, and Paschal Sherman Indian School

**HOW:** Registration begins March 1, 2025! Visit Wenatchee Valley College's website soon for more information.



FNTI 2017 - Washington State University



**APRIL 22-24, 2025** ←

**Hosted by:** Green River College and the University of Washington, Tacoma.

**Times:** Teams will arrive late afternoon on Tuesday, April 22; the event will conclude by 1:30pm on April 24.



### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Need hotel rooms? Those expenses will be covered for your participants! **Registration is now open through March 24, 2025**, and space is limited. Register via our Survey Monkey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025FNTI>.



### QUESTIONS

For more information, please visit our website: [www.futurenativeteachers.org](http://www.futurenativeteachers.org) or email Angie Benjamin at Green River College: [abenjamin@greenriver.edu](mailto:abenjamin@greenriver.edu)



FNTI 2018 - Western Washington University



# FUTURE NATIVE TEACHERS INITIATIVE

**JOIN US FOR FNTI 2025**

**REGISTRATION OPEN THROUGH MARCH 24**

### WHAT IS FNTI?

The Future Native Teachers Initiative (FNTI) is a 2.5-day immersive experience designed to inspire Native American/Alaska Native high school students to explore careers in education. The event features dynamic workshops led by Native educators, an exploration of educational pathways, a visit to a local school, and more. Students will learn alongside peers from across Washington, building a strong foundation for future roles as educators in public, private, and tribal schools.

#### • STUDENTS - Why should you attend?

FNTI is a powerful experience designed to nurture your passion for a career in education. You'll learn from inspiring Native educators, join engaging workshops, explore various career pathways, and visit a local school to see education in action. Leave with new insights, valuable guidance, and tools to start shaping your future as an educator.

#### • EDUCATORS- Why bring your students?

Native American educators represent just over 1% of Washington's nearly 74,000 teachers, highlighting a critical need for increased representation. By bringing your students to FNTI, you offer them a unique opportunity to connect with Native leaders and explore diverse careers in education. Together, we can help shape the future of education by inspiring the next generation of Native educators who will bring valuable perspectives to public, private, and tribal schools throughout Washington State.

#### FNTI is proudly presented by:

- Washington Education Association
- Center of Excellence for Careers in Education
- University of Washington, Tacoma
- Green River College Foundation
- OSPI Office of Native Education
- Tribal Leaders Congress on Education



FOR UPDATED  
INFORMATION,  
VISIT [WWW.FUTURENATIVETEACHERS.ORG](http://WWW.FUTURENATIVETEACHERS.ORG)





## EVENTS (IT'S POWWOW SEASON!)

### **Powwow Dance Classes (weekly, free)**

Thursdays, now through May 13, 2025, Seattle

<https://unitedindians.org/events/>

### **21st Annual Squalli Absch Wellbriety Pow-Wow**

April 4-6, 2025, Olympia

<http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov/index.php/calendar/events/april-4th-6th-21st-annual-squalli-absch-wellbriety-pow-wow/>

### **Pah-Loots-Puu Powwow**

April 19, 2025, Pullman

<https://native.wsu.edu/pah-loots-puu-powwow/>

### **Suquamish Renewal Powwow**

April 25-27, 2025, Suquamish

<https://suquamish.nsn.us/event/suquamish-renewal-powwow/>

### **Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women/People Walk**

May 5, 2025, 12-1:30 p.m., Olympia

<http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov/index.php/calendar/events/may-5th-mmiw-mmip-walk/>

### **40th Anniversary WWU Spring Powwow**

May 10, 2025, Bellingham

<https://calendar.powwows.com/events/western-washington-university-spring-pow-wow/>

### **Legends Casino Powwow & Stick Game Tournament**

May 16-18, 2025, Yakima

<https://calendar.powwows.com/events/legends-casino-pow-wow-stick-game-tournament/>

### **All My Relations Powwow**

May 16-18, 2025, Mt. Vernon

<https://skagit.edu/powwow>

### **In Honor of Our Children Powwow**

May 17, 2025, Kelso

<https://kelsochildrenpowwow.wixsite.com/my-site>

“Relationships  
are the  
foundation  
of this work”



Join us to learn and share!

John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial educator preparation program planning team monthly meetings

Contact  
[Leiani.sherwin@k12.wa.us](mailto:Leiani.sherwin@k12.wa.us) for dates and times

## Resources

More resources on are available at:

- **PESB** - [John McCoy \(Iulilaš\) Since Time Immemorial](#)
- **OSPI** - [Office of Native Education](#)

## Contacts

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**Representatives on John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial Education Preparation Program team**

### Career and Technical Education (CTE)

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**Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE):**

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- **Dr. Dawn Hardison-Stevens**, University of Washington - Tacoma, [dawnes@uw.edu](mailto:dawnes@uw.edu)

**Washington Council of Education Administration Programs (WCEAP)**

- **Dr. William Makoyiisaamainaa**, [makoyiw@wwu.edu](mailto:makoyiw@wwu.edu)