

School Culture and Attendance: Native American Youth

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Who is Northwest Justice Project?

- ▶ Northwest Justice Project (NJP) is the largest non-profit law firm in Washington.
- ▶ NJP provides free civil (non-criminal) legal services to people who cannot afford a lawyer.
- ▶ NJP has 17 field offices and 4 satellite offices.



Northwest Justice Project

What is NJP's Native American Unit?

- ▶ NJP's Native American Unit (NAU) provides legal assistance in those areas of critical and unique importance to Native clients.
- ▶ The NAU offers free legal services in:
 - ▶ Housing issues;
 - ▶ Employment issues involving tribal employment;
 - ▶ Family law issues implicating the Indian Child Welfare Act;
 - ▶ Denial or termination of benefits; and
 - ▶ Other areas.

The NAU's priorities are centered around supporting Native families and elders.



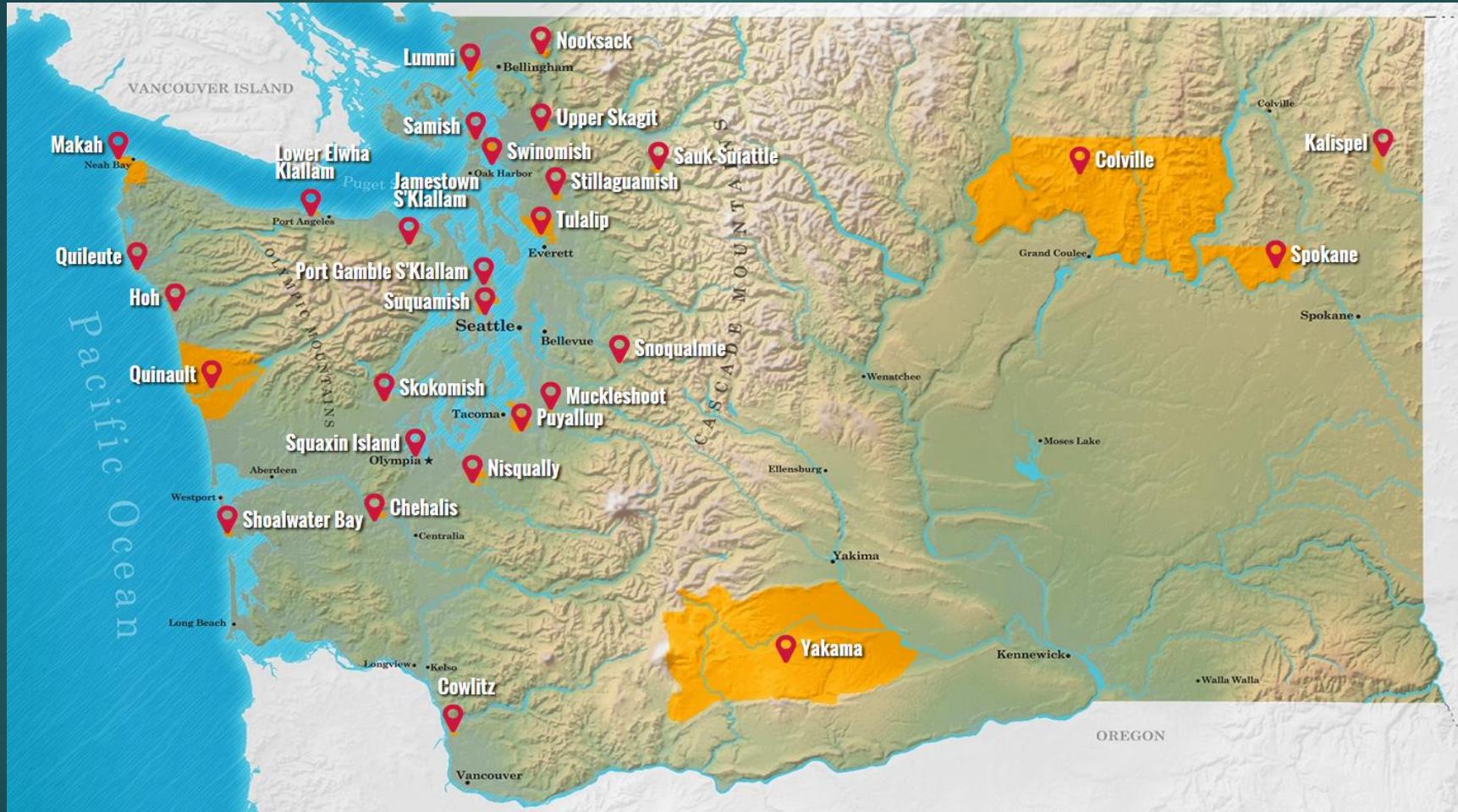
We are on tribal land



From: STI Resources

<http://www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd/TribalSovereignty/VideoTeacherGuides/TPNW/Map-NWTribes-USGSbase-TPNW.pdf>

Tribal Nations in Washington



From: www.washingtontribes.org/tribes-map

Take a moment to think about the history of public education and Native peoples

Native Nations and American Schools: The History of Natives in the American Education System

Produced by the National Indian Education Association

- ▶ Shares a concise summary of the way education was used as a tool by the US government to further goals of assimilation, and
- ▶ Highlights promising practices in Native Education

<http://www.niea.org/nieaflipbook/mobile/index.html#p=1>

Native American/Alaska Native Youth in WA State Public Schools Today

- ▶ 15,406 AI/AN** students enrolled
 - ▶ Does not capture mixed race AI/ANs
 - ▶ Does not capture Hispanic AI/Ans
 - ▶ Big #s because of assimilationist policies of intermarriage
- ▶ 60.6% graduation (79.1% state average)
- ▶ **32.6% chronic absenteeism** (16.7% state average)




Photo courtesy of the Suquamish Tribe

Why?

Unpack more of the past and it's continued influence on the present:

- ▶ **History:** Look at boarding school practices, including surprise and forcible removal of children from families, punishment for use of Native languages, and sexual abuse.
- ▶ **Culture:** Deepen understanding of cultural variances between families, schools, and educators and how they influence student learning, self-perception, and connection to school;
- ▶ **Curriculum:** Revisit how we teach about Native peoples (past and present, not limited to an historical archetype)



“For Indian education to succeed, federal and state governments must allow tribes the opportunity to regain control and make decisions, be accountable, and help shape their children’s future and their own future as tribes.”

–Melody McCoy, NARF

Tribal Consultation

- ▶ **Centennial Accord (1989), Millennium Agreement (1999), ESSA (2015)**
 - ▶ Institutionalization of the government-to-government relationship
 - ▶ Meaningful consultation of tribes on Title programs
- ▶ Superintendents should contact Tribal leaders to initiate and develop consultation protocols – formal letter to Tribal Council
- ▶ LEA and Tribal leaders have agreed upon the time, place, and length of meeting.
- ▶ Establish future consultation protocols.

**Reference the OSPI Office of Native Education Consultation Checklist for best practices:*

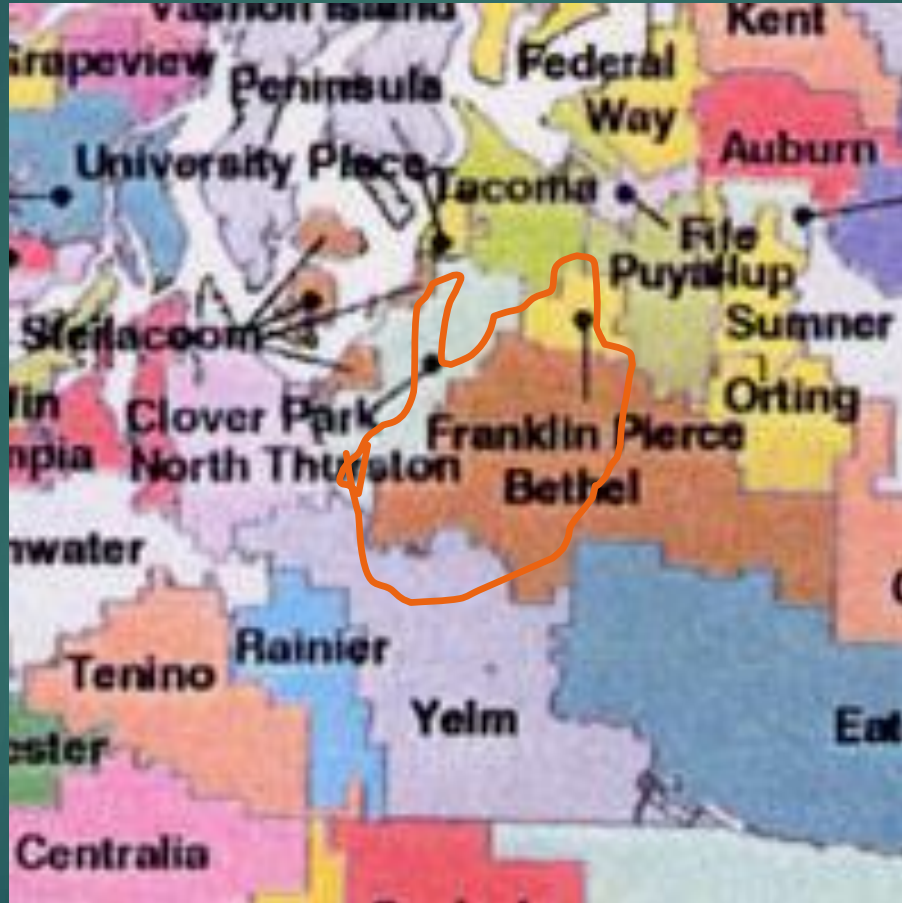
<http://www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd/default.aspx>

Differing Circumstances, Differing Needs

Every tribe and district will have different needs, resources, & priorities.

- ▶ Tribes working with (sub)urban school districts, rural school districts, or both
 - ▶ Snoqualmie Tribe is nearest tribe to about 10 districts, which are primarily nearby and among the largest and most affluent in the state.
- ▶ Tribes working with numerous school districts
 - ▶ Colville Confederated Tribes and Spokane Tribe are each the nearest tribe to roughly 40 districts – most of which are small, far away, and have high percentages of low-income students.
- ▶ Districts working with multiple tribes
 - ▶ Some districts, from the 54,000 student Seattle Public Schools to the 800 student Chewelah School District, have more than one tribe with whom they should be partnering.

North Thurston Nisqually Yelm



*Disclaimer: I am not excellent with maps.

Thank you!



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Panel of experts

- ▶ **Karlita Quintana**

Juvenile Probation / Truancy Officer

- ▶ **Sandra Gordon**

Native Education Liaison, Yelm Community Schools

- ▶ **Jerad Koepp**

Native Student Program Specialist, North Thurston Public Schools