

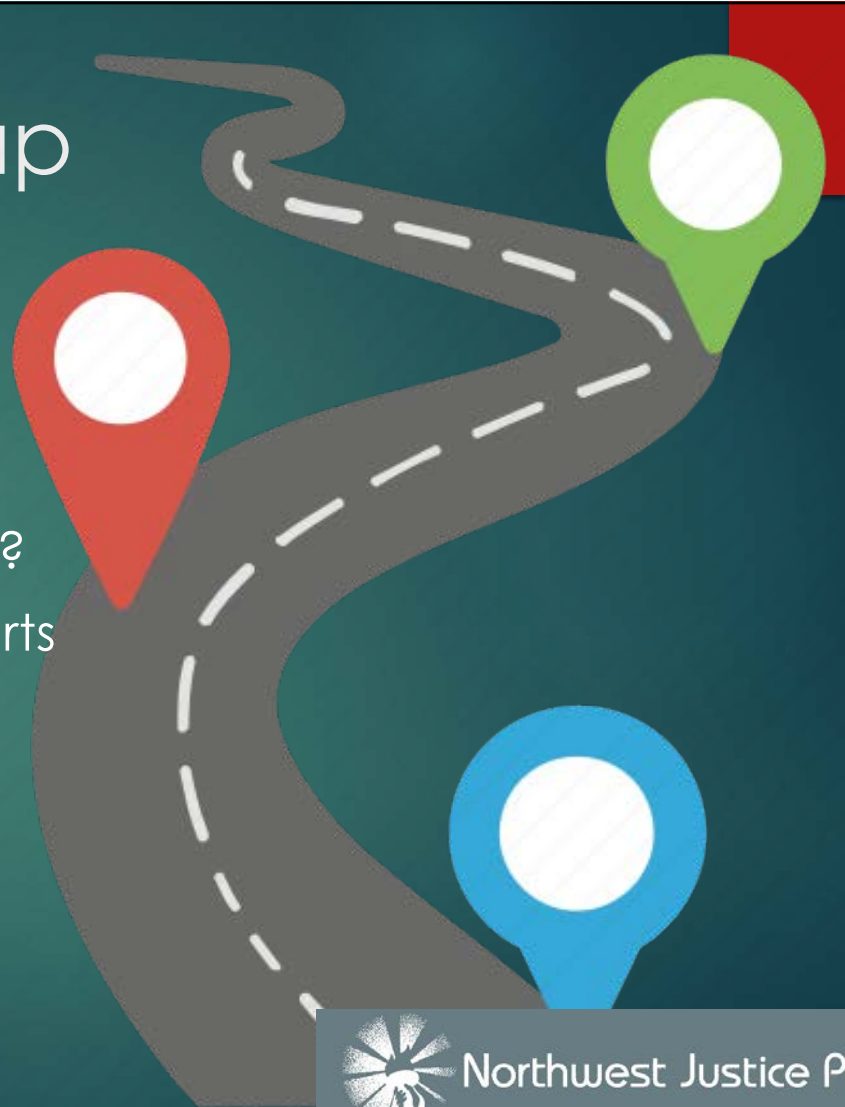


# Engaging Your Native American Families

2019 BECCA CONFERENCE – NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2019

# Presentation roadmap

- ▶ Who am I?
- ▶ Why are we here for this session?
- ▶ Words of wisdom from the experts
- ▶ Q & A with the audience



Northwest Justice Project

# 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 18 field offices.



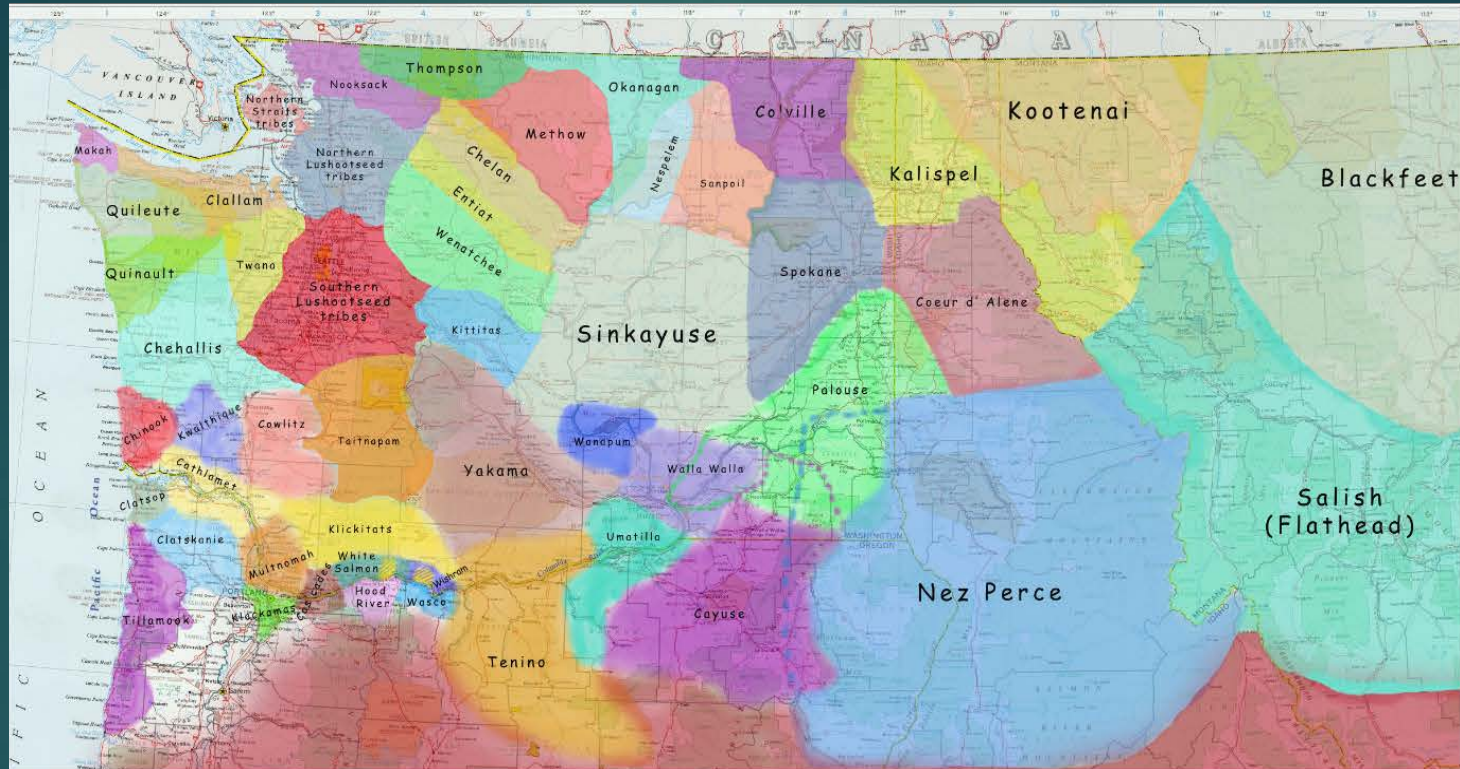
Northwest Justice Project

# 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:
  - ▶ Cases involving state agencies' policies and practices that have had disproportionate, harmful impacts on Native communities;
  - ▶ Cases that strengthen tribal sovereignty and self-governance; and
  - ▶ Cases involving the civil collateral consequences arising from being a victim of crime.



# We are on tribal land



From: STI Resources

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



# 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

- ▶ 15,074 AI/AN\*\* students enrolled (out of 1,133,973)
  - ▶ Does not capture mixed race AI/ANs
  - ▶ Does not capture Hispanic AI/ANs
  - ▶ Big #s because of assimilationist policies
- ▶ 60.4% graduation (80.9% state average)
- ▶ **64.7% regular attendance** (82.9% state average)



Photo courtesy of the Suquamish Tribe

# How public schools can better serve our students

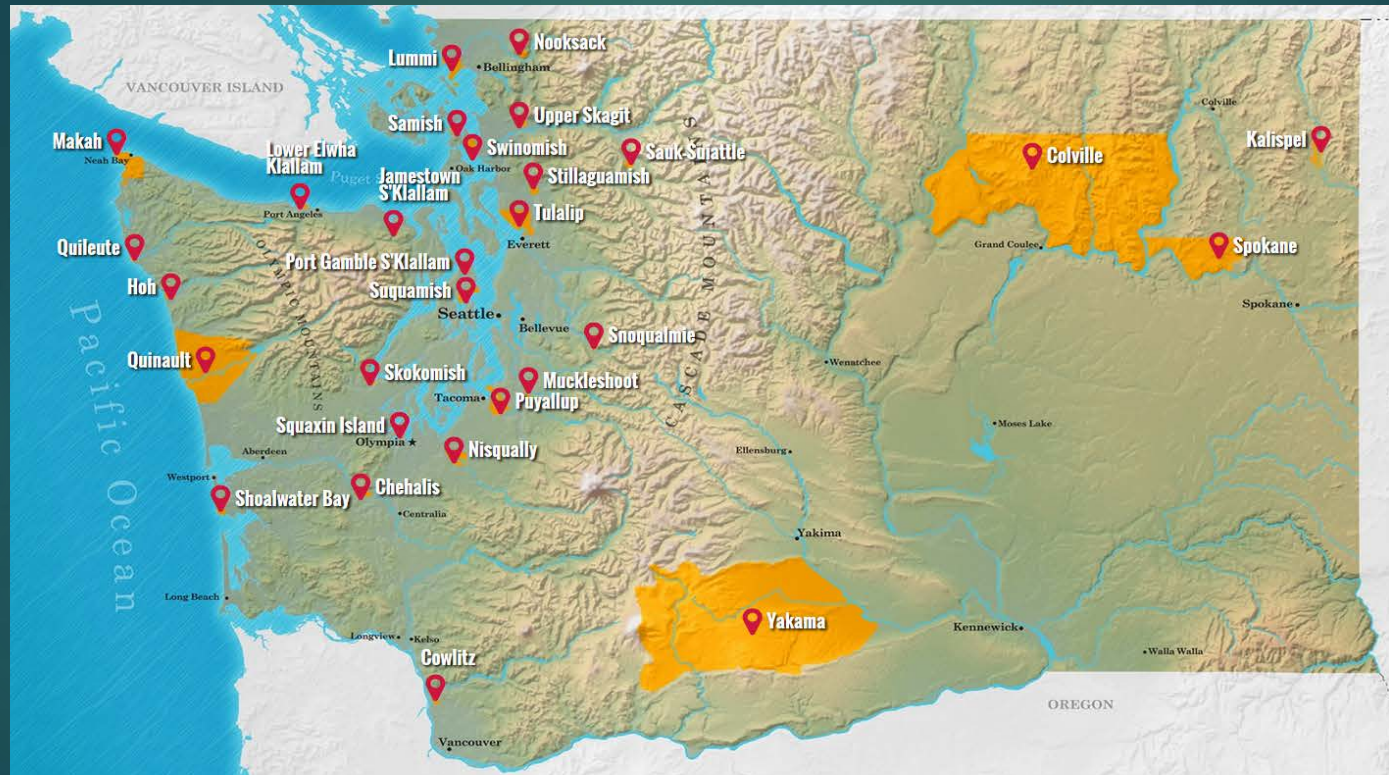
- ▶ **History:** Acknowledge impact of boarding school practices;
- ▶ **Culture:** Deepen understanding of cultural variances between families, schools, and educators and how they influence student learning, self-perception, and connection to school;
- ▶ **Curriculum:** Revisit how we teach about Native peoples (past and present, not limited to an historical archetype)



Photo courtesy of NIEA



# Tribal Nations in Washington



From: [www.washingtontribes.org/tribes-map](http://www.washingtontribes.org/tribes-map)

# 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.

# Panel of experts

- ▶ **Sandra Gordon**  
Native Education Liaison  
Yelm Community Schools  
[sandra\\_gordon@ycs.wednet.edu](mailto:sandra_gordon@ycs.wednet.edu)
- ▶ **Sara Marie Ortiz**  
Native Education Program Manager  
Highline Public Schools  
[sara.ortiz@highlineschools.org](mailto:sara.ortiz@highlineschools.org)
- ▶ **Robin Pratt**  
Native American Education Coordinator  
Auburn School District  
[rpratt@auburn.wednet.edu](mailto:rpratt@auburn.wednet.edu)

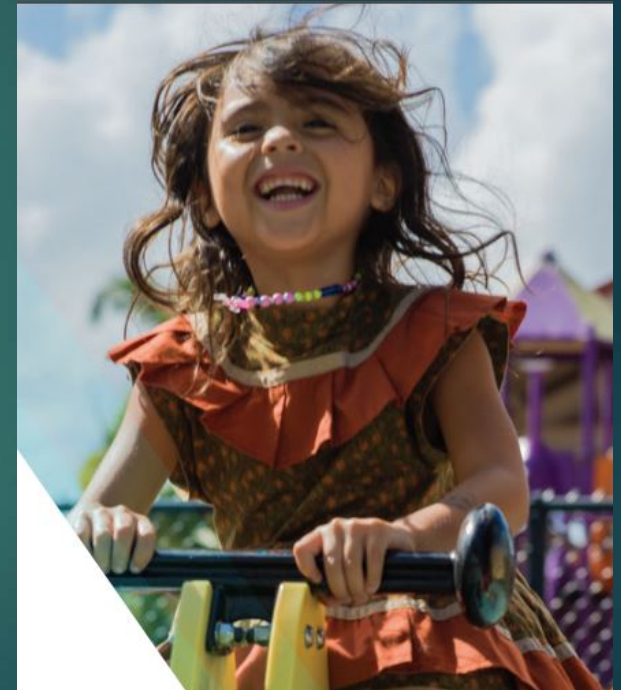


Photo courtesy of NIEA

Thank you!



**Cina Littlebird**  
[cina.littlebird@nwjustice.org](mailto:cina.littlebird@nwjustice.org)  
206.707.0919