



Engaging Your Native American Families

Cina Littlebird

Cina Littlebird (Laguna Pueblo) was born and raised in Santa Fe, NM. After graduating from Stanford University with a J.D./M.A. Education, she moved to Seattle to join Northwest Justice Project's Native American Unit as an attorney supporting Native American students and their families across the state. Prior to pursuing her graduate degrees, Cina interned with a New Mexico non-partisan think tank, worked as a youth corps leader with an environmental non-profit, taught English in Thailand, and danced professionally with the all-indigenous contemporary company, Dancing Earth. She is passionate about breaking cycles of inequity through making the invisible visible and still tries to incorporate dance into her professional life whenever possible.

Sara Marie Ortiz

Sara Marie Ortiz (Pueblo of Acoma) is a graduate of the Institute of American Indian Arts' Creative Writing Program graduating with her BFA and graduated with her Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (Creative Nonfiction) from Antioch University Los Angeles. She has formally studied law, Indigenous education, and global self-determination in Indigenous communities, radio, theater, film, and creative writing and has worked in some capacity in Native Education and urban Native community advocacy for over twenty-three years. Ms. Ortiz is an author and public speaker with over sixteen years of publishing, editing, and speaking credits to her name with publications in such prestigious publications as the Kenyon Review, the Denver Quarterly, the Yellow Medicine Review, and Indian Country Today, currently serves as the Native Education Program Manager for Highline Public Schools and is the Urban Representative on the Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee to the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction.

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Sandra Gordon

Sandra Gordon (Ojibwa/Oglala) graduated from The Evergreen State College Reservation-Based Community Determined (Native Pathways) Program in 2016. Since 2010, she's managed Yelm Community Schools' Title VI Native Education Program in tandem with the K-12 Education Department. One of her roles as a coordinator is to provide a communication link between YCS Administration, Native families, Nisqually Truancy, and Thurston County Truancy staff. Additionally, she provides resources to families to help remove attendance barriers, promotes culturally responsive strategies to engage Native students in the classroom. Along with tribal officials, she is an active member of the YCS Community Truancy Board, supporting families through the CTB and attendance contract process.

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