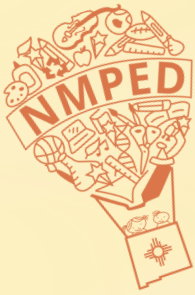


# Indigenous Instructional Scope



The Indigenous Instructional Scope was written by a committee of Indigenous people from across New Mexico who were nominated by their tribal leaders in collaboration with NM educators and NMPED.

1. Indigenous student identity and representation

2. Connecting tribal communities and schools: Culture, language, and food

3. Land-based learning and intergenerational learning

4. Historical trauma and trauma-informed care

5. Whole Indigenous child

6. Historical, political, and policy contexts

7. Current day events

8. Bridging the gap: Understanding cultural norms, protocols, customs, and prohibitions

9. Teacher dispositions

10. School district and charter school internal resources and events

## 10 Themes of Strategies/Resources

A set of ideas that can be incorporated with each of the 8 tenets in lesson planning and/or school programmatic design.

## Consistent Family and Community Partnership

### 8 Indigenous Instructional Scope Tenets

A set of overarching topics to help educators direct their focus as they consider the complex identities and lived realities of their indigenous students, which include educator actions (elements) and considerations.



Tenet 1

**Holistic Learning**



Tenet 2

**Gaps in Understanding**



Tenet 3

**Language and Stories**



Tenet 4

**Culture and Cultural Expression**



Tenet 5

**Community and Family Engagement**



Tenet 6

**Indigenous Ways of Knowing**



Tenet 7

**Culturally Relevant Teaching**



Tenet 8

**Contemporary Relevance**

# New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope

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**New Mexico District & Charter Educator Representatives** (Educator Working Group)

**One Generation**

**TNTP, Inc.**

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## Notes

This document is available on the PED website at [webnew.ped.state.nm.us](http://webnew.ped.state.nm.us)

## Special Recognition to our Indigenous Instructional Scope Collaborators

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**Rose Marie A. Lopez** (Chihene Ndé Nation of NM; Gila & Mimbreno Apache), Las Cruces Public Schools  
**Samantha Herrera** (Tamaya; Santa Ana Pueblo), Bernalillo Public Schools  
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**Sue Holland**, Raton Public Schools  
**Taté Wášte Wínyarj (Good Wind Woman)** (Ochéthi Šakówiŋ Tatánka Oyáte; Buffalo Nation), NCES District  
**Tish Howard** (Pueblo of Isleta), Los Lunas Public Schools  
**Dr. Valerie Grimley** (Pueblo of Cochiti and Diné), Santa Fe Indian School  
**Verna Calabaza** (Santo Domingo Pueblo), Bernalillo Public Schools

## New Mexico's Vision and Goals

The focus for the Indigenous Instructional Scope stems from the New Mexico Public Education Department's (PED) overall vision rooted in New Mexico strengths, through the mission with equity, excellence and relevance.

### ***Rooted in our Strengths***

*Students in New Mexico are engaged in a culturally and linguistically responsive educational system that meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of ALL students.*

### ***Equity, Excellence, and Relevance***

*The New Mexico Public Education Department partners with educators, communities, and families to ensure that ALL students are healthy, secure in their identity, and holistically prepared for college, career, and life.*

New Mexico educators know the strengths of our state are well rooted in the cultural and linguistic diversity of each of our local communities. Our student and teacher success stories become the foundation upon which New Mexico thrives and influences the success of our families and communities. The best instructional lessons must be rooted in the strengths of our people across this great state. The PED is committed to partnership with educators to assure all students can capitalize on their unique identity when they complete their K–12 educational journey prepared to pursue their life dreams. The Indigenous Instructional Scope is an example of one tool in support of that partnership.

## Background and Importance

Culturally responsive teaching and learning provide Indigenous students with the opportunity to learn and grow in their tribal communities with an emphasis on values, cultures, lessons, and worldviews through an Indigenized lens. The Indigenous Instructional Scope will provide the groundwork for school districts, charter schools, and local schools to develop and implement community-based and community-driven curriculum based on localized and Indigenized contexts within each community.

Throughout the past few decades, there has been a push from a one-size-fits-all, mainstream, dominant model of education to a well-developed, localized, multicultural model of education that emphasizes the unique idiosyncrasies of each community. According to the National Equity Project, "culturally responsive teaching incorporates and centers unique student experiences and identities, supporting educators to build learning



partnerships that result in increased student engagement and ownership of learning.”<sup>1</sup> The culturally responsive model itself leans on the local tribal community as they are the experts of their language, culture, and epistemologies and it is from them and through them that we can collaborate and partner to create a framework that will result in positive student outcomes. We want all students in New Mexico to be holistically successful in academics and in life because these students will become the leaders in their tribal communities, towns, cities, and nations.

Throughout their research, Castagno and Brayboy emphasize the vital importance of “contextualizing or localizing curriculum and pedagogy so that it bears some connection and resemblance to the knowledge and learning of the local [tribal] community. The examples also illustrate how the knowledge, norms, values, resources and epistemologies of local [tribal] communities must be viewed as legitimate and valuable and intimately integrated into schools. And finally, many of the examples highlight the ways in which Indigenous students are engaged and learning school knowledge at the same time and through experiences that also facilitate the learning of their local [tribal] community knowledge, culture and epistemology.”<sup>2</sup>

New Mexico is on a strategic trajectory, bringing the state’s overall vision for equitable education for all students to life. A steering committee member shared the importance of equitable education by stating that “equity leads to enhanced self-esteem for the students; healthy identity formation leads to positive influence in the tribal community,” as our students will be the leaders and knowledge holders. This is achieved by assuring that teachers are supported in the effective use of content standards as well as in the use of strong pedagogical practices, which assure all students in New Mexico have consistently been exposed to culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices. The implementation of the Indigenous Instructional Scope is designed to help educators begin to meet the needs of their Indigenous students in a way that respects their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In fulfilling this promise to the students in New Mexico and then delivering on that promise, the Indigenous Instructional Scope will support educators in utilizing culturally responsive practices to ensure equitable education for Indigenous students.

## Development of the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope

### *Indigenous Instructional Scope 1.0*

To ensure that the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope reflected the lived realities of our Indigenous students and was culturally and linguistically responsive to them, the PED partnered with New Mexico Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos by forming a steering

committee and requested that the leaders of the Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos located within the state appoint an official representative to serve on the committee. The steering committee consisted of individuals who hold a wealth of varied expertise in advising on concepts, worldviews, core values, pedagogical strategies, and emphasizing a culturally responsive perspective and Indigenous tenets. In addition, PED also sought input from district and charter Indigenous educators and those who served in leadership positions.

The steering committee held several meetings to develop an Indigenized tool to equip educators with a conceptual framework for rethinking how they can construct student experiences and promote equity in education to enhance support for Indigenous students in New Mexico classrooms. One steering committee member shared that the Indigenized tool they were developing must be “broad enough to support Indigenous students of any background but respectful enough that we acknowledge the uniqueness of every Pueblo, Tribe, and Nation.”

In addition to this committee, the PED also held several open community design sessions and solicited feedback directly from the Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos. The committee as well as the community meetings sought to strike a balance between creating a tool that was useful to educators across New Mexico while respecting both tribal sovereignty and the specifics of tribal identity. A contributor of the community design session shared that “an approach which equitably incorporates individuals’ culture, values, and experiences into an inclusive learning environment” is critical. The committee’s and community participant’s thoughtfulness and commitment to these concepts as well as to ensuring a high-quality education for our Indigenous students will be evident throughout the Indigenous Instructional Scope.

After several steering committee meetings and community design sessions, the Indigenous Instructional Scope was carefully crafted to reflect the insights and feedback gathered from both educators and community members. These collaborative efforts ensured that the Indigenous Instructional Scope would be a meaningful and practical tool for educators. The resulting framework is designed not only to honor the unique cultural and educational needs of Indigenous students but also to empower educators with strategies that drive engagement and academic success. The Indigenous Instructional Scope includes:

- 8 Tenets: A set of overarching topics to help educators direct their focus as they consider the complex identities and lived realities of their indigenous students. Each tenet includes the following nested information:
  - Elements are actions that should be taken by educators to ensure cultural responsiveness in their schools and classrooms.

- Considerations are specific ideas that need to be thought about when planning for instruction and are meant to drive action.
- 10 Themes of Strategies/Resources: A set of ideas that can be incorporated with each of the 8 tenets in lesson planning and/or school programmatic design.

A steering committee member shared that the Indigenous Instructional Scope, “creates interest and relevance for the Indigenous students that will help make instruction more identifiable, thus student engagement and success will increase as it is used or implemented.”

As a tool, the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope is designed to support educators in being intentional about taking specific considerations that might impact Indigenous students and communities into account as they seek to provide a high quality culturally responsive education. Within the context of New Mexico and the fabric of its rich diversity it is critical that those tenets are focused on meeting student needs within the context of their local community. It is critical to capitalize on our communities’ strengths while ensuring equal access to grade-level content across our state, districts, and hallways of our schools. In consideration of the importance of the culture and diversity of our learners, the Indigenous Instructional Scope is a tool to help assure that all students have access to cultural and linguistic instruction that respects and seeks to help educators understand the importance of Indigenous identity. The Indigenous Instructional Scope is “a guide that is voiced from our Native community, youth, teachers, and elders” as shared by a steering committee member.

### ***Indigenous Instructional Scope 2.0***

Following the establishment of the Indigenous Instructional Scope 1.0, PED determined an additional scope of work to expand understanding and implementation of the Indigenous tenets from a practitioner lens. This approach included recruiting a group of New Mexico educators to create definitions and align both cultural and instructional resources and approaches for each tenet. Using the guidance provided by the committee of Indigenous community members, the working group members collaborated to determine how the tenets can be leveraged by educators and practitioners in school communities to build belonging and inclusion amongst all stakeholders inside and outside of the school walls.

Working group members attended five virtual sessions to begin not only aligning the strategies and resources previously established within each tenet but also evaluating ways that each tenet can be leveraged instructionally. Additionally, the working group spent time deepening their understanding of the Indigenous People of New Mexico and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. This included both synchronous and asynchronous

collaboration, summing a total of 30 hours for engagement and participation in this iteration of work. Alongside the deep engagement with the tenets, the working groups also provided feedback on the structure of the Indigenous Instructional Scope and how to ensure this information is accessible to all stakeholders in schools across New Mexico.

The working group members shared that this work was “exhilarating to be able to impact our Indigenous students & all teachers in the way they need,” restructuring the Indigenous Instructional Scope in a user-friendly way and layering in additional resources for educators to elevate their instruction to be inclusive of all students. It was evident that appreciation for this additional work was shared because ‘the collaborative atmosphere encouraged open dialogue and the sharing of diverse perspectives’ to extend the work of the tribal representatives and district and charter representatives.

## How to Use the Indigenous Instructional Scope

The 1.0 or the steering committee of Tribal Representatives created a framework for the Indigenous Instructional Scope which created a set of tenets, elements, and considerations that when combined create a set of themes and strategies that can be used to support educators in providing a culturally and linguistically responsive inspiration for Indigenous students. The 2.0 or educator working group committee suggests guidance on how to weave the tenets into daily instruction.

The 8 tenets are a set of overarching areas to help educators direct their focus as they consider the complex identities and lived realities of their Indigenous students. Each of the 8 tenants is composed of several elements which are actions that should be taken by educators to ensure cultural responsiveness in their schools and classrooms. These actions are driven by considerations which are specific ideas that need to be thought about when planning for instruction.

Using this framework of tenets, elements, and considerations, the committee found themes to focus on in regards to instruction and support for Indigenous students. These themes were used to create specific strategies and provide resources for educators to use. The instructional alignment and practices provide tangible ways to embed the themes into daily instruction within any curricula. The goal of the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope is to provide not only a resource for educators as they seek to improve their practices, but also to provide a bank of resources that can be used in the classroom to positively impact students. It is important to remember that this resource is meant to be a living document that is responsive to the specific needs of the communities in which it is



used. That means that it should be used as a guide in partnership with the Indigenous communities that are in our classrooms and in our communities.

## **Commitment to the Districts**

The PED is deeply committed to collaborating with districts to ensure that educators receive the necessary support, professional development, and coaching to create culturally responsive, student-centered educational experiences.

In releasing the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope, the PED acknowledges the importance of honoring Indigenous cultures, knowledge systems, and languages as essential components of education. A central goal of the Indigenous Instructional Scope is to ensure that all students, especially Indigenous children, have equitable access to strong instruction that reflects their cultural identities, experiences, and community values. The concept of “scope” refers to a framework that provides flexibility for districts to integrate culturally responsive practices, ensuring that all students are taught in ways that respect and affirm their backgrounds.

### ***District Leadership’s Role in Cultural Responsiveness***

We understand that district leadership, in collaboration with tribal communities, principals, teachers, and other educational professionals, plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the Indigenous Instructional Scope. The implementation should be guided by district leadership and informed by the cultural context of local schools and tribal communities. The PED encourages districts to use culturally responsive approaches when designing pacing guides and sequencing standards, ensuring alignment across schools and grade levels while reflecting the specific cultural and community contexts of Indigenous students. This includes using a balanced assessment system that recognizes and supports Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and worldviews in classroom instruction.

### ***Lesson Planning with Cultural Responsiveness at the Forefront***

Lesson planning is central to the art and science of teaching. As educators, teachers are leaders closest to our students and must design lessons that honor students' cultural identities and lived experiences. The Indigenous Instructional Scope is not a set of lesson plans but a resource collection of instructional tenets and strategies that teachers can use to create culturally responsive lesson plans that are aligned with content standards and ongoing formative assessments. The Indigenous Instructional Scope is designed to help educators weave culturally responsive instruction into their teaching, considering the needs, values, and knowledge systems of Indigenous communities. It offers tools and strategies for teachers to reflect on their practices and ensure that their lesson plans are

inclusive, respectful, and empowering for Indigenous students. Teachers are encouraged to use the Indigenous Instructional Scope as a lens to design lessons that reflect Indigenous cultural perspectives, integrate local histories, and respect Indigenous languages and ways of knowing. This approach supports a more equitable and responsive educational environment for Indigenous students, allowing them to see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

The PED is committed to fostering a statewide culture of equity and inclusion in education. By working together with districts, schools, and educators, we will ensure that Indigenous students receive culturally responsive, high-quality instruction that respects and affirms their identities and prepares them for academic success. Through this commitment, we honor the rich tradition and contributions of Indigenous communities, ensuring all students have the opportunity to thrive in a learning environment that is reflective of their cultural realities.

## Looking into the Future

Please note, this body of work parallels that of a dynamic classroom. The work of the classroom teacher is enduring as they work tirelessly to adjust to meet the needs of each student with each passing year. To that end, the inaugural release of the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope is purposely released as a 1.0 version. This work will be ongoing and will rely on a partnership with you as we continually utilize input from New Mexico classrooms to create updated versions.

Revisions will be developed based on feedback, as we work collectively as a professional body of educators to positively impact all students across the state. The unique cultural assets and the diverse needs of our students will drive the process improvements with each new release. A steering committee member shared that the “Indigenous Instructional Scope offers both continuity and flexibility,” as it is a living document. Research on educational practices and culturally and linguistically responsive education along with feedback from the Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos as well as, our New Mexico educators will nourish the metamorphosis from version 1.0 to 2.0 from 2.0 to 3.0 and so on and so forth.

This is a living document that will reflect the needs of our educators and their students, so please refer back to the New Mexico Indigenous Instructional Scope for ongoing upgrades and revisions.

## Version History

| Date                | Description of Changes  | Version    |
|---------------------|---|------------|
| <b>August 2024</b>  | Creation of Indigenous Instructional Scope by Steering Committee: Representatives from New Mexico Pueblos, Tribes, and Nations                          | <b>1.0</b> |
| <b>January 2025</b> | Creation of Indigenous Instructional Scope implementation resources by Educator Working Group: New Mexico District and Charter Educator Representatives | <b>2.0</b> |
|                     |   |            |
|                     |   |            |

## References

1. National Equity Project, "Culturally Responsive Teaching," June 14, 2023, <https://www.nationalequityproject.org/culturally-responsive-teaching>.
2. Angelina E. Castagno and Brayan McKinley Jones Brayboy, "Culturally Responsive Schooling for Indigenous Youth: A Review of the Literature," *Review of Educational Research* 78, no. 4 (2008): 981.