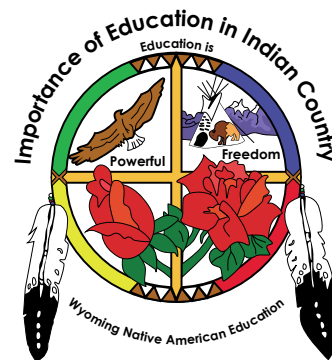




2026 Native American Education Conference Schedule

Central Wyoming College – Riverton, WY



Session Descriptions

Walking Together: Forging a Collective Path through Indigenous Knowledge

Rose Ann Abrahamson

As we walk in the footsteps of ancestors, we draw strength from their legacy, ensuring that their wisdom empowers our journey forward. This is the foundation of true resilience: knowing ancestral knowledge and carrying that strength into the future, as we walk with others along the way.

Honoring Roots, Creating Routes

Michelle Aldrich

Participants will leave with tools, templates and actionable ideas to engage business and industry in reciprocal relationships. We will focus on creating routes to opportunity that are rooted in respect, relationships, and the collective future of Native students and their communities.

Re-imagining Secondary Reading Intervention: A Tier 2 Literacy Lab that Parallels Language Arts and Social Studies

Stephany Anderson

This session presents an innovative Tier 2 Literacy Lab model that embeds high school Language Arts and Social Studies content within reading intervention. Participants will learn how this acceleration-based approach integrates disciplinary literacy and aligns instruction with core content to support struggling readers.

Walking Together Through Words: Building a Schoolwide Approach to Enduring Vocabulary

Stephany Anderson

This hands-on session supports educators in building a school-wide vocabulary approach grounded in enduring words that carry both disciplinary and cultural significance. Participants will design systems that center words such as sovereignty, stewardship, and identity as tools for thinking, connecting academic content to the lived experiences of Wyoming's tribal nations.

Buffalo Nation in Practice: Student Leadership, Cultural Revitalization, and the Power of Lived Indigenous Knowledge

Heather Bender, Jenn Runs Close To Lodge

This session shares outcomes from the Buffalo Nation exhibition, a collaboration between the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and Wyoming Indian Middle School. Over a year-long experiential project, students engaged in Indigenous knowledge systems by participating in the full cultural cycle of the buffalo with elders and community partners.

CTE Partnership: A Unified Vision for the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone

Ilaine Brown

This session explores how Career and Technical Education (CTE) serves as a vital bridge between classroom learning and tribal stewardship on the Wind River Reservation. By moving from simple participation to authentic partnership, the presentation highlights how the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes integrate “Grow Our Own” pipelines to foster economic sovereignty and local workforce development.

Indigenous Voices - Hear Our Youth Speak Out

Roy Brown and Riverton High School students

Riverton High School Native American Student Ambassadors will share their thoughts about their educational experience. Hear directly from them how educators have made an impact on their educational journey. Learn what we can do as educators to better meet the needs of our Indigenous youth.

Humanized Education

Dr. Jason Cummins

Thanks to advancements across a range of scientific fields, we know more about the human brain today than ever before. We also have a deeper understanding of the internal and external factors that profoundly impact students’ readiness to learn, their engagement, and their academic performance. This keynote presents an innovative, evidence-based framework designed to help traditional schools serve first and foremost as centers of wellness, healing, health, and balance. By doing so, schools can more effectively elevate every student to achieve high levels of learning.

Understanding the Foundations of AI: Building Student Awareness, Voice, and Critical Thinking

Heather Cunningham, Lien Diaz

This interactive session introduces the foundations of Artificial Intelligence in clear, accessible language for educators and community leaders. Participants will explore core concepts such as machine learning, pattern recognition, and Large Language Models (LLMs), while examining both the opportunities and limitations of AI in education and everyday life.

Co-designing Games to Teach Indigenous Rural History

AnnMaria De Mars

Game design for effective education will be discussed. Participants will play games that teach math for grades 3-8 in the context of Native American history and then provide their own suggestions for an educational game. Lessons integrating educational games will be provided.

Destination Imagination Creative Problem-Solving

Miriah Eisenman, Hillary Williams

In Destination Imagination (DI), students work together in teams to solve open-ended STEAM challenges designed to teach our Creative Process. Why is that important? DI’s Creative Process is a step-by-step approach that helps students better understand problems and ask better questions, come up with solutions, learn from failure, and celebrate their achievements.

Community Resource Mapping

Lucas Freeman, Steven Davis

The value of creating a resource map to build knowledge about available supports and services. An explanation of how to build a community resource map. An example of a built community resource map utilizing free tools provided through Google, and connecting students and families to local and state resources they may not be aware of.

Language In and Outside of the Classroom

Patricia Goggles and the other Arapaho Language Teachers of the Wyoming Indian Culture & Language Department

This presentation will describe the Language Curriculum that is navigating the Dual-Language and Language Classrooms of Wyoming Indian, Elementary through High School.

Native Herbal Medicine-Culture & Science

John Gookin

We will look at student research boards for specific herbal medicines, with cultural uses, scientific support, and recipe cards. We will also look at lab techniques used to process local herbs and turn them into salves, lotions, and teas. Ultimately we will address the commingled epistemologies of native wisdom and modern science.

Resources for Learning about Wind River Basin Water, Buffalo, and People

Clare Gunshenan, Albert Mason Jr., Colleen Friday, Martha Inouye

This session will share public data platforms and resources that are relevant to learning in the Wind River Basin. These resources will come from a summer 2026 teacher and researcher professional learning program that weaves water, people, and buffalo into place-based Wind River Basin learning experiences.

Building an MTSS System to Support Native American Students

Patrick Hall, Laura Frederick, Patryce Stephenson, Amanda Hellyer, Candace Hall, Kelly Norwood, Taralee Suppah, Michelle Spiess, Jessica Whaldron, Adelle Simon

In this session, we will share the four-year journey of implementing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) at Wyoming Indian Schools. From initial planning to ongoing implementation, we'll walk through the steps we took to build a strong foundation for supporting all students.

Advanced MTSS Implementation to Support Native American Students

Patrick Hall, Laura Frederick, Patryce Stephenson, Amanda Hellyer, Candace Hall, Kelly Norwood, Taralee Suppah, Michelle Spiess, Jessica Whaldron, Adelle Simon

This session explores high-leverage strategies for refining Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to better serve Native American students and their families. Participants will examine how to integrate culturally responsive practices and community-driven data into existing frameworks to improve academic and behavioral outcomes.

Your Life Matters, Your Voice Matters, Your Future Matters

Carol Harper

This presentation is centered on Native American youth and the strength, resilience, and importance of every young life, addressing the real and difficult issues many youths face today when it comes to the impacts of domestic violence, assault, abuse, as well as the importance of mental and spiritual health and well-being.

Creating Culturally Relevant Materials and How to Obtain Them

Victoria Jackson, Alfred Jackson, Brenda Jackson

As an author and creator of Shoshone language books and videos, Victoria Jackson and her Shoshone elder speakers will explain and demonstrate how to break down the Shoshone language to simplify the learning process. Victoria will also explain the steps she took to create her own books, using Native artists and speakers.

STEM and Voice: Partnering with Educators for Experiential Learning

Dr. Cindy Jones

This presentation explores how authentic STEM partnerships can amplify student voice and engagement in K–12 classrooms. Participants will learn practical strategies for connecting educators with professionals and university students in engineering, GIS, and related fields to create meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.

From Barriers to Supports: Rethinking Access to Reading and Classroom Learning

Shelby Kappler

Students who avoid reading and disengage from academic tasks are often viewed as unmotivated when in reality they are likely facing barriers to access. This session reframes reading avoidance as an access issue and provides educators with practical strategies to design more inclusive learning environments from the start.

Infusing Cultural Content for First Time and/or New Educators

Jordann (Bright Trail Woman) Lankford Forster

This session will explore practical strategies for infusing meaningful cultural content into instruction. Participants will learn how to align culturally responsive practices with Wyoming education standards while maintaining academic rigor and relevance.

Everyday Native: A Free Classroom Resource

Jordann (Bright Trail Woman) Lankford Forster

This session will introduce Everyday Native, a free classroom resource (featured on the Wyoming Department of Education's website) and demonstrate how educators can effectively integrate it into their teaching. Participants will explore cross-curricular materials including films, poems, and reading selections which support learning in Social Studies, English Language Arts, the Arts, and beyond.

Fostering Healthy and Regulated Classroom Environments

Jordann (Bright Trail Woman) Lankford Forster

This session will explore how educators can foster healthy, regulated classroom environments by understanding the impacts of generational trauma on student learning and behavior. Participants will examine strategies that support the physical, social, and emotional needs of Native American students while empowering youth to thrive in school settings.

Walking Together with Buffalo: Structuring and Sustaining Community-Engaged Workshops for Indigenous Education

Nichole Lumadue, Marlin Spoonhunter, Lynette St. Clair

This session highlights the structure, outcomes, and future direction of a multi-year workshop series developed through the CIRCLES Alliance to support culturally grounded K–12 teaching in Wyoming.

Understanding How Your Mexican and Latina/o Students are Indigenous People

Marcos Martinez

Most Mexican people can trace their ancestry back to Pre-Columbian times. The indigenous heritage that makes up the Mexican people can be uplifting and powerful when teaching students about how Mexicans have been indigenous to this land years before the European conquest. This workshop will trace the indigenous history of the Mexican people, and how this history can be impactful in today's racial/ethnic landscape.

Stewardship through an Indigenous Lens

Dallas Myers

Stewardship through an Indigenous Lens explores how place-based education and Indigenous perspectives share common values around land, responsibility, and future generations. Grounded in Wyoming and the Wyo Wonders curriculum, this session highlights three key parallels: relationship with the land, long-term stewardship, and balance through reciprocity.

Stitching Together: Sewing with Students and Strengthening Shoshone Community Bonds

Randy Nagitsy, Rachel Ynostrosa

This presentation showcases the collaborative efforts between the Fort Washakie School Office of Indian Education and the Eastern Shoshone Cultural Center, uniting artistry and cultural pride to create meaningful experiences for our students at Fort Washakie School.

Using AI to Help Native Students Learn Their History And Enhance Their Education

Peter Carlo Paccone

This session shows how Native American middle and high school students can use AI to better understand their history and apply that learning through a structured hands-on project rooted in Native perspectives and issues.

Carrying the Story: Indigenous Student Storytellers and Anne Frank

Heather Simpkins Pasquinelli

This session highlights a collaborative program between the Anne Frank Center and Wind River Reservation schools that centers Indigenous ways of knowing through storytelling, relational learning, and student voice. By training students as docents for Anne Frank: A History for Today, this work transforms students from learners into carriers of history.

Incorporating Traditional Foods in our Schools

Kelly Pingree, Billie Spoonhunter, Krystal Northcott

Showcasing the partnership between Fremont County School District #21 and the Wind River Food Sovereignty Program highlighting events, collaborative work, and incorporation of traditional foods. This presentation will provide information and examples of incorporating indigenous foods into school breakfast and lunch programs.

The House that Mathematics Built

Fred Poutre

How does the structure of arithmetic tell us how to teach math? Knowing the structure of arithmetic gives us an understanding of why, not a set of rules to memorize. This helps with Order of Operations, Rules for Exponents (including fractional exponents, roots, and logarithms), and Solving for an Unknown in Algebra.

Traditional Cultural Landscapes and the Path of the Buffalo

Crystal Reynolds, Cadence Truchot

This presentation highlights the collaborative approach to archaeology, bringing together tribal knowledge holders, archaeologists, and Native and non-Native college students to explore a culturally significant high-altitude landscape in the Wind River Basin.

Navigating The Seasons Of Mental Health & Wellness

Tyler Ruby

Explore the different seasons educators experience during the school year and different mental health and wellness strategies educators can use to remain on the rollercoaster of emotions experienced in the school year. Learn about and navigate through the season of anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, reflection, and back to anticipation.

Supporting Students through Indigenous Project-based Learning

Elena Singer, Morning Rae Ferris

The Wyoming Indian Middle School art class provided cultural learning opportunities through project-based learning. Throughout the school year, students learned and strengthened their knowledge in the construction of hand drums, drum sticks, concho belts, and shawls. High student engagement and success were reflected in completed projects and student understandings.

Teaching Indigenous Languages and Knowledges through Computer Science

Marissa Spang, Veronica Miller, Elena Singer, Randy Nagitsy

Teachers from Wyoming Indian Schools, Arapahoe Schools, and Fort Washakie Schools will present computer science lessons they have created for their students. We will discuss how we approached using computer science as a way to support Indigenous language learning and share resources for other teachers.

Strengthening Resilience and Perseverance

Marlin Spoonhunter, Tillie Spoonhunter

This session focuses on strengthening resilience and perseverance by overcoming failures by learning from experiences. Focus on positive thoughts to accomplish short-term goals. Remain positive when challenges arise during life transitions. Always remember you're not alone and don't be afraid to ask questions - it is all part of learning.

NASNTI & CWC: Traveling Alongside Each Other in Higher Education

Rory Tendore, Dr. Coralina Daly

This collaboration aims to provide a comprehensive overview of support services at Central Wyoming College. Tendore's presentation will focus on quantifiable data and specific details regarding these services.

Free Native American Education Offerings at the Wyoming State Museum

Jeremy Thornbrugh

The Wyoming State Museum offers a wealth of free education opportunities for teachers to utilize within their classrooms. This includes a large selection of Native American educational field trips, education trunks, and corresponding classroom curricula.

Reclaiming Narrative Sovereignty Through Sand Creek Inquiry Kits

Aldora White Eagle

Grounded in Indigenous educational sovereignty and culturally sustaining pedagogy, this interactive session introduces tribally reviewed inquiry kits developed by the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation in partnership with the Library of Congress. Participants will analyze primary sources related to the Sand Creek Massacre using inquiry protocols that center Cheyenne and Arapaho narrative authority.

The Horse-Human Connection: Applications for Teachers and Clinicians

Terri Wofford

This presentation explores how the horse-human connection can support emotional regulation, communication, and relationship-building in educational and clinical settings. Participants will learn how equine-assisted approaches engage students and clients—especially those who are nonverbal or impacted by trauma—through nonverbal, experiential interactions.

Arapaho Language in Today's Society & Technology

Raphael Youngchief

This presentation explores how Arapaho storytelling traditions can frame and inspire modern coding projects, using narrative structures to teach sequencing, logic, and problem-solving in culturally meaningful ways. Participants will see examples of bilingual interactive stories, game-based activities that embed Arapaho language and cultural content while teaching programming concepts.