

Race Equity Tool
Considerations of the
“Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State”
Curriculum

1. Educate on racial issues and raises racial consciousness

- a) How does the program, policy or procedure educate about the history and current realities regarding race, racism, and/or culture?
- b) How does the program, policy or procedure educate and encourage sharing about race and racism, including connections between individual feelings and experiences and race-related systemic issues?

The “Since Time Immemorial (STI): Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State” curriculum was developed to respond to House Bill 1495 that was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2005 officially recommending the inclusion of Tribal history in all common schools. The following is a historic narrative about the STI curriculum shared on September 25, 2012 by Denny Hurtado, Director of the OSPI Office of Native Education:

This effort started in 2003 at the first Tribal Education Summit with tribal leaders, educators and Washington State representatives held at the Quinault Reservation. Tribes met for two days to discuss issues around Indian education. The first day was meeting with then Governor Gary Locke, and the second day was meeting with Terry Bergeson, our former State Superintendent of Public Instruction. At the close of the summit, it was clearly evident that tribes wanted curriculum about their history, culture, language and government. John McCoy, Representative, Washington State Legislature, pledged to get a bill passed to address these issues. The bill, first introduced in 2004, did not pass; then in 2005 House Bill 1495 was passed by the legislature, encouraging school districts to partner with local tribes to start the development of their curriculum. It is now RCW:28A.320.170: 28A345.070.

In 2007 OSPI’s Office of Native Education launched an effort to develop tribal sovereignty curriculum for the state of Washington. This endeavor has been a true collaboration between many players in education, OSPI, Tribes, Washington State School Directors Association, Washington State Board of Education, Indian organizations, environmental organizations, institutions of higher education, and the Gates Foundation just to name a few.

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The STI curriculum is web-based, free and easy to use. It is aligned with our state standards, grade level expectations in social studies, curriculum based assessments, and state common core standards in English/language arts. It is also in levels so that any teacher could use our curriculum and was developed to be integrated into existing content. For example, in elementary school it can be integrated in social studies, in middle school it can be integrated with Washington State history, and in high school it can be integrated into U.S. History as well as contemporary world problems. There is also an amazing amount of resources to support the curriculum. In addition, we have trainers to help train your staff to use this unique curriculum.

2. Promote racially inclusive collaboration and engagement

- a) How have people affected by the policy, program or procedure been involved in its development, implementation and evaluation?
- b) How does the program, policy or procedure foster greater engagement in the PSESD community?

STI has been endorsed for use by all 29 federally recognized Tribes in Washington State. The curriculum was developed in collaboration with the Tribes, based upon five essential questions:

STI Essential Questions:

1. How does physical geography affect Northwest tribes' culture, economy, and where they choose to settle and trade?
2. What is the legal status of the tribes who negotiated or who did not enter into United States treaties?
3. What were the political, economic, and cultural forces that led to the treaties?
4. What are the ways in which tribes responded to the threats and outside pressure to extinguish their cultures and independence?
5. What have local tribes done to meet the challenges of reservation life? What have these tribes, as sovereign nations, done to meet the economic and cultural needs of their tribal communities?

Instructional materials developed for this curriculum provide educators accurate and reliable information that may be used confidently with students. The intent of the curriculum is to connect student learning to the Tribes in their local area. District leaders and school boards, schools, and teachers are encouraged to establish and maintain good relations with local Tribes.

3. Assess community conditions and set goals affecting desired community impact

- a) Are community conditions, including racial inequalities, clearly documented?
- b) How will goals be adjusted regularly to keep pace with changing community needs and racial demographics?

Note: to be anti-racist, the assessment and goal setting should be a process driven by the community. People using the toolkit should be working with the community.

Supporting documentation directly connected with the development of the STI curriculum includes:

- 1) The 1989 Centennial Accord (available online through the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs at www.goia.wa.gov)
- 2) The 1999 Millennium Agreement (available online through the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs at www.goia.wa.gov)
- 3) The Native American Achievement Report: "From Where the Sun Rises" (available online through the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs at www.goia.wa.gov)
- 4) House Bill 1495 (available online through STI website at www.indian-ed.org)

4. Expand opportunity and access for individuals

- a) How does the program, policy or procedure increase opportunity and/or access for those who historically have been excluded? This means, more explicitly, who benefits from and/or who is harmed by the program, policy or procedure?
- b) What are the strategies to improve access for immigrants and refugees, including appropriate interpretation and translation policies?

The “From Where the Sun Rises” report highlights the benefits of the inclusion of the STI curriculum for both Native and non-Native students. The benefits for teaching Native history, language and culture in schools include:

Benefits for Native students:

Increase comfortability for Native students in school
Assist in keeping Native culture alive
Promote positive Native identity and sense of pride
Increase Native American youth and families’ awareness
Protect Native American rights

Benefits for Others:

Increase respect, understanding and awareness for Native people and culture and the hardships they have faced
Reduce/eliminate stereotypes and ignorance about Native Americans
Demonstrates that schools value Native culture

Harm is only evidenced when we have a strong and viable instructional tool like STI and fail to incorporate and integrate into instruction with all students.

5. Affect systemic change

- a) How does the program, policy or procedure make changes within the organization to eliminate institutional racism (including the promotion of accountability)? How are the issues of internalized racial oppression and internalized racial superiority acknowledged and attended to?
- b) How does the program, policy or procedure work to address structural racism?

Note: to be anti-racist, an analysis of power and gatekeeping is critical.

The STI curriculum does not provide direct instruction for students in the principles associated with Critical Theory. However, to the extent that internalized racial oppression and institutional racism are perpetuated and sustained by omission and silence within our curriculum about the unique and distinctive experience of Native peoples, the direct and intentional inclusion of the STI curriculum (including the foundational relationship building between the schools and the Tribes) to reach every child in every school challenges and dissolves these practices. Further, the breadth and depth of STI units that have been developed through the lens of the five Essential Questions address past and present Tribal realities.

6. **Develop and implement strategies for eliminating racial inequity**
- a) What are the overall goals and outcomes of the program, policy or procedure? What are the specific strategies for decreasing racial inequity? How do the specific strategies work to decrease racial inequity?
 - b) How will strategies be adjusted regularly to keep pace with changing community needs and racial demographics?

If we hold within our hearts the elimination of achievement opportunities for our Native American students we must commit with our time and intent to take this first step and ensure that the STI curriculum is included in every school for every student within the PSESD. We must be mindful that this is just that, a first step. What comes from this work is a deeper and enriched understanding for all our students developed through knowledge and relationships. And with this as our foundation, further steps will emerge.

After conducting the analysis, think about:

What are the lessons learned?

Your reflection and feedback is appreciated and welcomed.

What resources are needed to make the changes?

STI is a web-based curriculum available to all educators and students at no cost. What is needed is awareness to other educators about the availability of this amazing resource and the constant and continued support of its implementation and use.

What are the next steps?