

Nakia Academy Indigenous Educator Cohort 2: Building Community, Growing Together

The Office of Native Education (ONE), in partnership with BEST, the Washington Education Association (WEA), and Muckleshoot Tribal College, is excited to continue the **Nakia Academy Indigenous Educator Cohort** for the 2026–27 school year.

Nakia Academy is a community by and for BIPOC educators, offering affinity-based professional learning designed to support educators through mentorship, reflection, relationship, and community. The Indigenous Educator Cohort creates dedicated space for Indigenous Educators to learn alongside one another while honoring the knowledge, identities, experiences, and communities they bring to their work.

[Applications for Cohort 2 are open now.](#)

Indigenous Educators, you belong here.

Building on Our First Year



The inaugural Indigenous Educator Cohort demonstrated what becomes possible when Indigenous Educators have dedicated space to gather, reflect, learn, and grow together.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Cohort 1 was facilitated by **Dr. Annette Woolley (Yakama and Swinomish)** and **Bawaajigekwe Boulley (Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe)**. Dr. Woolley, a Nakia Academy alum, Indigenous Educator, and scholar, curated the Nakia curriculum specifically for Indigenous Educators, centering Indigenous Ways of Knowing and weaving story, reflection, and pedagogy throughout the learning experience.

Our first gathering began at **Muckleshoot Tribal College**, and that mattered.

We know that **place matters**. Beginning an important and transformational learning journey at a Tribal college, grounded in community, relationship, song, and story, helped establish how we wanted to be together and learn together from the very beginning.

We extend our deep gratitude to **Dr. Denise Bill and Muckleshoot Tribal College** for their partnership and for welcoming Nakia Academy as our host. Dr. Bill's generosity, leadership, and care helped create a place where Indigenous Educators could gather in a way that honored who they are and the communities they carry with them.

We are grateful to return to Muckleshoot Tribal College this fall to begin another year of learning in relationship and community.

Meet Our Cohort 2 Facilitators

This year, the Indigenous Educator Cohort will be facilitated by **Dr. Sonia Barry and Mrs. Yolanda Gallegos**, two experienced educators who bring deep commitments to Indigenous Education, mentorship, and educator belonging.

Dr. Sonia Barry brings a special connection to Nakia Academy. She was one of the original creators of the Nakia Academy content and brings experience with both BEST and Nakia Academy. Her return to this work offers Cohort 2 an important connection to the foundations and intentions that shaped Nakia Academy.

Mrs. Yolanda Gallegos brings the perspective of a Nakia Academy alum, carrying forward what it means to experience Nakia as a participant and now return as a facilitator. Her experience as an educator, administration, and cohort 1 alum offers an important bridge between participation, mentorship, and leadership.

Together, Dr. Barry and Mrs. Gallegos bring classroom and administrative experience and a shared commitment to creating meaningful spaces where Indigenous Educators can learn, reflect, and grow in relationship with one another.

What Cohort 2 Will Explore

Throughout the 2026–27 school year, selected participants will move through a series of learning experiences focused on mentorship, identity, relationships, reflection, and navigating educational spaces.

The cohort will explore:

- **Attending Fully and Listening with Grace**
- **Turning Inward: Attending to the Mentor**
- **Mentoring in White Spaces**
- **Building the Mentoring Relationship**
- **Conversations Count**
- **Showing Up Fully and Celebrating Who We Are**

These experiences are not simply about developing mentoring skills. They invite Indigenous Educators to consider how we care for ourselves and one another, how relationships shape our practice, and how mentorship can support Indigenous Educators in navigating and transforming educational spaces.

2026–27 Indigenous Educator Cohort Schedule

The Indigenous Educator Cohort will gather eight times throughout the school year, with a combination of virtual and in-person learning:

September 26, 2026 | In Person at Muckleshoot Tribal College

Kickoff and Community Building

October 31, 2026 | Virtual

Attending Fully and Listening with Grace

November 14, 2026 | Virtual

Turning Inward: Attending to the Mentor

November 21, 2026 | Virtual

Mentoring in White Spaces

December 5, 2026 | Virtual

Building the Mentoring Relationship

January 9, 2027 | Virtual

Conversations Count

January 16, 2027 | Virtual

Conversations Count, Continued

February 27, 2027 | In Person at WEA

Celebrate! Show Them Who You Are

Sessions are held from **9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

More Than Professional Learning

Nakia Academy offers something that can be difficult to find in traditional professional learning: a space where Indigenous Educators can bring their whole selves to the learning.

Participants gather not only as professionals, but as people carrying relationships, communities, cultures, experiences, responsibilities, and knowledge.

That is why the Indigenous Educator Cohort matters.

It creates opportunities to build relationships across schools and communities, learn alongside other Indigenous Educators, strengthen mentorship practices, reflect on experiences within educational systems, and celebrate the knowledge and gifts Indigenous Educators already carry.

As we build upon our inaugural year, we are grateful for the Indigenous Educators, facilitators, and partners who helped establish this community. We look forward to seeing how Cohort 2 will continue to grow and shape this work.

Apply for Cohort 2

Applications for the **2026–27 Nakia Academy Indigenous Educator Cohort are open now.**

Apply:

- [Nakia Academy Application](#)

Learn more:

- [Nakia Academy at WEA](#)
- [Video - NAKIA Mentoring and Leadership Academy](#)
- [OSPI Beginning Educator Support Team](#)
- [BEST Tips for Mentors: August 2026](#)

We invite Indigenous Educators across Washington to apply. We also encourage colleagues, administrators, Tribal education partners, and community members to share this opportunity with Indigenous Educators in their networks.

Indigenous Educators, you belong here.

Apply today and be part of Cohort 2.