

# AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

SUPPORTING DISTANCE EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH AMERICAN INDIAN LEARNERS

BRIEF 4

## WHO IS THIS LEARNER?

### Value of Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic presents Oklahoma educators with an opportunity to engage with American Indian learners about the value of resilience. Infectious disease has impacted indigenous people throughout American Indian history. Educators can remind American Indian students that resilience is part of their heritage. Research suggests building resilience is related to the ability for a student to command bicultural points of view (Dvorakova 2018).

### Value of Relationships

American Indian cultural knowledge places value on the interconnectivity between space, place and people (Deloria 1992). As educators manage digital relationships with American Indian learners, it is critical that they be intentional in matching cultural resources with the student's tribal affiliation. Emerging American Indian STEM research suggests that coordination with tribal nations strengthens culturally responsive teaching and reduces barriers that impede motivation (Miller and Roehrig 2018).

## WHY IT MATTERS

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) is committed to supporting tribal partnerships and lifelong learning for all American Indian students to reach their full potential, regardless of whether instruction occurs in person or digitally. It is critical that educators prioritize ongoing communication with American Indian students and their families, particularly during periods of distance learning. Title VI and Johnson-O'Malley programs can support distance learning connections which are highly needed.

- Oklahoma has received \$25.9 million in Title VI formula funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Indian Education (SY 2019-2020)
- 409 school districts in Oklahoma receive Title VI funding representing 127,951 American Indian students (SY 2019-2020)
- 324 school districts are served by Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Programs representing 73,173 American Indian students

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

Additional American Indian resources to consider for connections during distance learning include:

- Native Knowledge 360 by the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)  
<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/resources.cshtml>
- K-12 Books by Native Authors by the National Indian Education Association (NIEA)  
<https://www.niea.org/s/Reading-List-fmjz.pdf>
- Native Heritage Collection by the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA)  
<https://oeta.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/NativeAmericanHeritage/>
- Pre-Curated Educational Videos by PBS Learning Media: Vision Maker Media  
<https://sites.google.com/view/vmm-pbs-media/home>

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How has my district reached out to local tribal education departments within a 50- mile radius of my school to support distance learning?
- How has my district reached out to local tribes to form an Indian Parent Committee (IPC)?
- How have we asked Native students what sort of cultural resources they would like to see in their classroom?
- What professional development opportunities exist for educators to learn ways to support tribal affiliation diversity?
- In what ways can we connect with tribal families and students who do not have internet access?

## ATTENDING TO EQUITY

For some American Indian students and their families, the relationship to learning has been distant since before the coronavirus pandemic occurred. Strengthening those relationships should always be a priority. As educators design equitable distance learning experiences, they may benefit from online resources developed by tribal nations:

- Osage Nation K-12 Lessons  
<https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov/k-12-lessons>
- Cherokee Nation Learning Materials  
<https://language.cherokee.org/learning-materials/>
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation Distance Learning Platform  
<https://www.mcstep.com/>
- Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Teachings  
<https://www.potawatomi.org/language/cultural-teachings/>
- Chickasaw Nation K-12 Curriculum  
<https://chickasaw.net/Our-Nation/History/Chickasaw-Nation-Curriculum.aspx>
- Oklahoma Indian Education Resource (OIER)  
<https://sde.ok.gov/oier>
- Comanche Nation Language Resources  
<https://www.talkcomanche.org/>

**OFFICE OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION**  
**(405) 522-5311**  
**[BIT.LY/INDIANED](https://bit.ly/indianed)**



**OKLAHOMA**  
**Education**