



# Tribal Education Community Institute 2023

September 26-27, Albuquerque

## Report

Presented by the Tribal Education Alliance  
December 2023

## I. Introduction

The 2023 Tribal Education Community Institute, co-hosted by the Leadership Institute and the All Pueblo Council of Governors (APCG), brought together around 90 tribal educators, administrators, and officials from across New Mexico, representing the Navajo Nation, the Mescalero Apache Tribe, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and 13 Pueblos. Most participants worked in four key areas of tribal education: tribal education directors, tribal librarians, tribal language program directors, and tribal early childhood education directors.

The purpose of the community institute was to engage tribal stakeholders in refining the proposals contained in the *Tribal Remedy Framework*, the collective tribal plan for transforming education following the 2018 *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling. Participants were invited to share tribal education goals and needs, identify challenges and barriers, and propose solutions for strengthening tribal education capacity. The institute concluded with concrete recommendations for policy and funding, addressed at state policymakers.

### **The Tribal Remedy Framework: A Focus on Tribal Education Capacity**

The Tribal Remedy Framework (TRF) is a comprehensive plan for meeting the educational needs of Native students and fulfilling their constitutional and human rights. The TRF has been endorsed by New Mexico's 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. It is the collective tribal response to the landmark 2018 *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling and was developed jointly by tribal leaders, educators, communities, and Indigenous education experts.

The court ruling and the Indian Education Act of 2003 require New Mexico to improve educational inputs and outcomes for Native students. The TRF's proposals for meeting that obligation center on three solutions:

1. Increase tribal control over the schooling of Native children.
2. Expand community-based education, created by and centered in tribal communities.
3. Create a balanced education that sustains the strengths of Native children, their cultures, and their languages.

These solutions require a transformation of education to address historic injustices and advance equity for Native students. Tribal collaboration is essential in this effort. The TRF offers a framework for making tribal education sovereignty, as recognized in law, a reality in state education policy and in school districts. The key to change lies in strengthening the capacity of Tribes to support Native students and the schools that serve them.

For Tribes, enhanced capacity is critical for rebalancing the public education of Native children with the goal of sustaining Indigenous cultures and languages. For the State, a consistent and sufficient investment in tribal education is a precondition for increasing Native student engagement and academic outcomes.

## II. Values and Vision: Words of Encouragement and Guidance

APGC Chairman Mark Mitchell, Pueblo of Tesuque, and Leadership Institute Director Regis Pecos, Pueblo of Cochiti, opened the convening by inviting participants to join together and continue the journey toward a balanced, culturally and linguistically relevant education system for Native students, families, and tribal communities.

**Chairman Mitchell** described this gathering as the continuation of a series of tribal education community institutes held over the past decade. All Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos in New Mexico have taken part in developing and refining a collective tribal vision for the education of Native children. He recalled that it has now been five years since the landmark 2018 *Yazzie/Martinez* ruling by New Mexico's First Judicial District Court. While some in state government may point to large investments in education, the reality is that Native children and families are still facing the pressure of assimilation, which threatens Indigenous languages, cultures, and traditions, and perpetuates intergenerational trauma. Chairman Mitchell emphasized that much more needed to be done to transform education in New Mexico. He called on participants to bring all experiences and ideas to the table and build upon the progress Tribes have made together. This convening offers the opportunity to take another step toward enshrining Indigenous languages and cultures in the educational experiences of Native youth and families.

**Regis Pecos** recognized this as a critical moment in the history of public education and the harm it has done to Native children, families, and communities. For 150 years, official education policy sought to erase Indigenous identities, languages, and cultures. And yet, Mr. Pecos pointed out, not only are Indigenous people still here, but they are driving New Mexico's effort to redefine education. What Tribes bring collectively to this process will transform education. Together, Tribes can create a balanced education system that values language and culture, alongside Western skills and tools. Education is not just what happens in schools but takes place in tribal communities, tribal libraries, and childcare centers, and it involves tribal elders and culture bearers. Mr. Pecos reminded that the foundation of all learning is built in families and communities. That is where children are raised and where they come home to every day. It is these community-based education initiatives that the state must support, invest in, and build out. Mr. Pecos asked participants to share their goals, needs, and ideas for community education programs. Do early childhood education centers, language programs, and tribal libraries have adequate resources to provide what Native students need when they come home from school? What state laws and policies are required to support tribal education? Together, Tribes have made progress in the state legislature, but the unjust education paradigm persists.

Regis Pecos introduced New Mexico **Representative Derrick J. Lente**, Sandia Pueblo, District 65, as the legislative champion of Native students. Over the past few years, Rep. Lente has introduced education bills on behalf of tribal communities, and several have now become state law (see page 15).

**Representative Lente** shared in his address that he would always uphold Indigenous core values and work with tribal leaders, educators, and advocates to protect Native languages and cultures. He vividly recalled the large Pueblo Convocation of 2018, convened by the Leadership Institute, which brought together all New Mexico Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos to create a new vision for the education of Native children. At the close of that convening, a stack of papers containing tribal hopes, dreams, and wishes was placed in a traditional basket and passed around the conference hall. Every person breathed on those papers, bringing them to life. Rep. Lente remembered Regis Pecos handing him the basket with the words, “this is yours, do something with it.” He accepted this obligation.

This was the beginning of the **Tribal Remedy Framework**, the education proposals emerging from those papers. Rep. Lente recalled working with tribal advocates to turn those proposals into bills and standing up in the legislature to defend those bills. The papers that carried the collective breath of tribal leaders and members, Rep. Lente said, represent a sacred duty to tribal communities and Native children. They also represent the unity of Indigenous peoples in New Mexico. If Tribes stand together, they are strong. Together, Tribes can overcome assimilation, institutional racism, and systemic inequities. Indigenous people know what is best for their children. Rep. Lente stressed that much is at stake: if Tribes fail, Native languages and cultures may be lost. While progress has been slow, the Tribal Remedy Framework is a tool for Tribes to hold the state accountable. It lays out a vision of tribal education sovereignty, community-based education, and a balanced, culturally and linguistically relevant education. This vision, Rep. Lente concluded, enables Tribes to be bold and push for systemic change. New Mexico’s Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos need to come together and stand up for themselves. No one else is going to do this for Tribal Nations.

### III. Tribal Education in Practice: Examples of Goals, Challenges, and Solutions

New Mexico's tribal communities offer a range of educational experiences that take students beyond the classroom into their communities. The panel discussion explored the plans and practices of different components of tribal education. A tribal education director, a tribal librarian, a childcare director, and a language program director shared their goals, talked about their program's contributions and challenges, and offered ideas for a balanced education for Native students.

Panelists:

- Kevin Shendo, Pueblo of Jemez, Tribal Education Department Director
- Teresa Naranjo, Pueblo of Santa Clara, Tribal Librarian
- Samuel Villarreal Catanach, Pueblo of Pojoaque, Language Department Director, Chair of the New Mexico Tribal Language Consortium
- Tiffany Calabaza, Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Early Childhood Education & Care Director

Moderator: Dr. Glenabah Martinez, Pueblo of Taos and Diné, Institute of American Indian Education (IAIE) at the University of New Mexico



#### **Our Goals**

Dr. Glenabah Martinez opened the conversation by inviting panelists to talk about their goals for tribal education. Education sovereignty, culturally relevant knowledge transfer, and community participation emerged as key shared goals.

#### **1. Education sovereignty**

Panelists emphasized the importance of self-determination in education, with the goal of creating a seamless, comprehensive education system grounded in language and culture.

**Tiffany Calabaza** stressed that program development had to start with Tribes defining education for themselves, guided by the unique ways in which tribal members nurture their children. Programs and services should be specific to tribal history and culture, which means

they may be different in each Tribe. Santo Domingo Pueblo's early childhood education program uses language immersion and culturally centered pedagogy. Tiffany saw no reason for replicating Western ways.

**Kevin Shendo** echoed this approach, suggesting that tribal communities challenge current systems and determine for themselves what education should look like, rather than be defined by others. Jemez Pueblo looks at education comprehensively, from baby to college student, with the goal of creating a seamless education for all tribal members, whether they attend tribal or public schools, or live on or off tribal lands. For that reason, Jemez Pueblo placed all tribal education programs under one administrative umbrella. Kevin explained that each component of the Pueblo's education system shares the same philosophy and talks the same language: they are all rooted in the Towa language. The goal is to strengthen language capabilities across programs, from immersion to maintenance.

## **2. Culturally relevant knowledge transfer**

**Teresa Naranjo** emphasized the importance of meaningful, culturally relevant knowledge transfer, in which tribal libraries assume a central role. Santa Clara Pueblo's library seeks to build love for history and culture and supports community members in becoming more enlightened rather than going back to the doctrine of discovery. The library holds materials and historical records in the Pueblo's own language, which helps correct misinformation about Indigenous people and counter the racism that still exists. The library wants to create enthusiasm for reading, including in after and summer school activities. Teresa requested that tribal libraries be heard and treated as equal partners in education.

## **3. Community participation**

**Samuel Villarreal Catanach** emphasized the importance of creating ways for community members to engage with tribal languages. The goal is for community members to overcome the feeling of alienation from language and enable them to build a relationship with the language that is theirs and to feel proud of it. This is how language revitalization can become a source of community strength. Samuel explained that Pojoaque Pueblo's language department connects language learning to the community's value system, culture, and dances. That's why the department is creating a curriculum from scratch and uses an immersion-based teaching method. To be relevant to everyone in the community, language programs must be clear that language learning is not about translation or grammar.

**Teresa Naranjo** explained that libraries have a key role in getting the community engaged in learning about and appreciating their histories. Libraries are particularly good at reaching disenfranchised people, for example those without devices or internet, and non-formal learners, who can use a variety of library resources.

## **Our Challenges**

Next, panelists reflected on the challenges they have encountered when pursuing their goals for tribal education. They pointed to a prevailing disrespect for tribal sovereignty, a continued policy of assimilation, a fragmented education system, and lack of tribal capacity and funding.

### **1. Lack of respect for sovereignty**

**Tiffany Calabaza** reflected on state and federal partners' failure to understand the complexities of balancing Western and Indigenous approaches and impose a Western lens without respect for tribal sovereignty. She called for laws and rules that are more specific to tribal communities' needs, for example by recognizing that learning happens with and from tribal elders. This means tribal educators have to disrupt Western ways of thinking.

### **2. The assimilation paradigm**

**Kevin Shendo** framed the challenge as overcoming assimilation and supporting language immersion as the foundation for every child's education. State and federal agencies and funders continue to promote English language literacy first and foremost. Jemez Pueblo education programs do not formally introduce English until grade five. Kevin pointed out that these conflicting messages and practices confuse parents. It would be better if outside agencies dropped their assimilationist policy and supported full language immersion as decided by sovereign Tribes.

### **3. Fragmentation and silos**

**Kevin Shendo** explained how difficult it is to work across fragmented systems and funding streams, where everything is siloed. The challenge is to bring different funding streams and programs together. Jemez Pueblo is committed to creating a comprehensive education system and aims to certify teachers to work with children at all ages as well as adult learners. But that is difficult to fund, because funding rules are restrictive and do not allow Tribes to be creative and flexible. Kevin called for recurring and flexible funding streams.

### **4. Lack of capacity and funding**

**Samuel Villarreal Catanach** stressed the need for much more capacity in order to support the long-term effort to create new speakers. This is a big challenge, especially since there is not much time left to revitalize Native languages; many speakers are elderly. It is important to secure funding, people, and physical space to build this capacity. Samuel explained that this requires consistent funding that allows for the hiring, development, and retention of staff. Short-term grant cycles are not sustainable. Tribal language programs need to be able to pay language teachers appropriately and offer job security.

**Teresa Naranjo** agreed that both staffing and space have always been a challenge. While there are small pots of money here and there, there are also deep-seated misunderstandings, especially among legislators, about how libraries can access and use the minimal funding available. It is difficult to secure consistent funds to hire staff. Teresa highlighted the need for dedicated IT staff to help develop community members' technical skills and computer literacy.

## **Our Solutions**

In closing, panelists offered ideas for overcoming these challenges and developing solutions.

### **1. Exercise sovereignty**

Panelists stressed the need to exercise tribal sovereignty and make tribal education programs what Tribes want them to be. **Kevin Shendo** reminded that language and lands make Tribes sovereign: once Indigenous peoples lose their languages or their lands, sovereignty may be lost. Only when all 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos come together to exercise sovereignty, with one voice, then change can happen.

### **2. Flexible, stable, and long-term funding**

An important way for the state to respect and support tribal sovereignty would be to give Tribes more control over programming decisions and funding streams. **Tiffany Calabaza** called on state and federal agencies to be more flexible, especially with regard to funding. Funding must have flexible parameters that allow Tribes to do their work and collaborate across departments. Short-term funding is not helpful. Tiffany requested multi-year funding and the option of carrying over funds. **Teresa Naranjo** asked for funding to be stable, so that Tribes can count on it year after year. This would enable the development of meaningful and sustainable programming that is not merely grant-driven.

### **3. A coordinated and integrated education system**

Panelists wanted to see greater integration of the different components of tribal education, from early education to college, and libraries to language programs. They also hoped for a more interconnected public education system, with a commitment to clear coordination with tribal programs. **Samuel Villarreal Catanach** said that the education system needed to prioritize the development of language teachers. He called for support in getting young people interested in language learning and teaching. **Teresa Naranjo** called for tribal libraries to be treated as equal partners in education, with a seat at the table when programming and funding decisions get made.



#### IV. The Path Forward: Assessing Goals, Needs, Barriers, and Solutions

The Community Institute brought together tribal educators and administrators to explore key components of tribal education and their various roles, goals, and needs. How do different tribal education institutions, facilities, and programs contribute to educating Native children? How do they work together, and what are the barriers – and potential solutions – to realizing their goals and strengthening tribal education?

In the first part of the discussion, the four tribal education cohorts – Tribal Education Departments (TEDs), Language Programs, Tribal Libraries, Early Childhood Education Programs – met separately to identify the goals and needs arising in their respective fields of work. When they shared their takeaways with the other groups, a set of common themes emerged. In the second part of the discussion, cohorts were dispersed into mixed groups and reflected on barriers to meeting tribal education needs, along with solutions for moving forward. It became clear that similarities across Tribes and across education areas were much greater than differences. Six primary themes emerged: capacity, sovereignty, school district accountability, funding, cultural and linguistic relevance, and policy responsiveness to Native students’ needs. These issue areas are woven throughout the discussions of tribal education goals, needs, barriers, and solutions.

#### Tribal education: key issue areas



## Tribal Education Goals:

### 1. Strengthen Capacity

- Develop and implement strategic plans (TEDs)
- Grow our staff and our spaces to fulfil our commitment to serving everyone (Libraries)
- Build systems to serve both children and their families (Language Programs)
- Support the family unit throughout a child’s life (prenatal to college) (Early Childhood)

### 2. Exercise Sovereignty

- Educate parents on the value of and need for maintaining our language; build a shared understanding that language impacts everything in our communities (Language Programs)
- Educate parents, community, and tribal leadership on the importance of maintaining language and culture (Early Childhood)

### 3. Ensure School District Accountability

- Improve partnerships with school districts (TEDs)
- Ensure continuity of learning through partnerships with schools (Early Childhood)

### 4. Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Education

- Balance classroom learning and cultural heritage (TEDs)
- Support cultural preservation through collecting and sharing cultural materials (Libraries)
- Connect language to core values; values start with language (Language Programs)
- Use language immersion (Early Childhood)
- Create a language curriculum for all grades (Language Programs)
- Facilitate intergenerational learning (Libraries)
- Reach learners that are put off by classroom education (Libraries)
- Use trauma-informed practices (Early Childhood)

**Tribal Education Departments:** Many TEDs see their role as balancing classroom education in schools with culturally relevant education in communities. This requires the capacity to build a community-based education infrastructure, and collaborative relationships with school districts based on shared responsibility. Yet even large departments report that districts lack respect for tribal sovereignty, thus thwarting tribal education goals. Tribal capacity challenges compound these problems. External funding processes make recruitment and retention difficult. Tribal administration would benefit from dedicated resources for collective visioning, strategic planning, and community engagement. This could support greater coordination between tribal programs, across Tribes, and with school districts.

## 5. Stable and Sufficient Funding

- Secure more resources for supporting students (prevention/intervention) and for growing educational and student support services staff (TEDs)

## 6. Policy Responsive to Native Students' Needs

- Promote libraries as community education hubs (Libraries)
- Facilitate children's access to adequate health care (Early Childhood)

## Tribal Education Needs:

### 1. Strengthen Capacity

- Support for preparing, implementing, and evaluating strategic plans (TEDs)
- Strengthen program capacity and leadership (Early Childhood)
- More collaboration with other departments and programs (Language Programs)
- Workforce development, staff retention, adequate staff pay and support (TEDs)
- Staff recruitment (from within our communities) and retention, especially more language instructors (Early Childhood)
- More library staff, with adequate pay and professional development (Libraries)
- Dedicated IT staff for libraries (Libraries)
- Increase community partnerships (Early Childhood)
- Parental and family engagement, learning, and responsibility (Early Childhood)

### 2. Exercise Sovereignty

- Strengthen community engagement (TEDs, Language, Early Childhood)

### 3. Ensure School District Accountability

- Strengthen relationships with schools, school districts, and school boards (TEDs)

### 4. Increase Capacity for Cultural and Linguistic Relevance

- More Native teachers, special education teachers, counsellors, and nurses (TEDs)
- A pipeline for developing Indigenous language teachers (Language Programs)
- Adequate time to teach students their own language (Language Programs)
- Dedicated space for language instruction (Language Programs)

### 5. Secure Stable and Sufficient Funding

- Flexible, continuous, non-competitive, and long-term funding that supports tribally determined needs and goals (TEDs)

**Language Programs:** Language programs see themselves as contributing to the strength, resilience, and growth of tribal communities. Language teachers point out that our languages are who we are as Indigenous people. If we lose our language, we will lose who we are. It must be a tribal priority to sustain and revitalize Native languages. This is why language programs have to engage communities and tribal leadership in the task of language preservation. Some Tribes do not have many language speakers left, so time is of the essence. Language programs highlight the need for more people to learn and teach Native languages. Local, state, and federal policy should facilitate this vital effort, rather than impede it.

- Adequate, consistent funding (Language Programs)
- Unrestricted funding (Early Childhood)
- State funding for libraries should be sustainable and non-competitive, and, whenever possible, flow through the state tribal library program (Libraries)
- Fund new buildings for tribal libraries (Libraries)
- Build and expand facilities that are safe and welcoming (Early Childhood)

## 6. Adopt Policy Responsive to Native Students

- Recognize tribal libraries as integral to education policy (Libraries)
- Provide wrap-around services that promote healthy living environments (Early Childhood)

## Tribal Education Barriers:

### 1. Lack of Capacity:

- Many tribal administrations operate in silos, resulting in competition between programs
- Lack of cross-program, community-driven vision, reflection, and planning
- High staff turnover, little continuity
- Lack of physical spaces for teaching and learning

### 2. Lack of Recognizing Sovereignty:

- Lack of vision that things could be different
- Tribes have adopted Western administrative systems, leading to self-imposed limitations
- State agencies infringe on tribal sovereignty

### 3. Lack of School District Accountability:

- Poor relationships with school districts
- Many LEAs do not follow requirements for tribal consultation and collaboration
- Reports submitted by school districts are not always accurate

### 4. Lack of Capacity for Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Instruction:

- Lack of language teachers
- Lack of Native teachers
- Lack of physical spaces for language teaching and for libraries

**Tribal Libraries:** Tribal libraries see themselves as community education hubs. Their mission is to serve everyone, from young to old, in an informal, accessible, and inviting setting. From language preservation to the archiving of cultural resources, from after-school tutoring to summer school, college preparation, and continuing education, libraries stretch their capacity and space to fulfill their functions as educational community centers. But their needs for staff and facilities often remain unmet. Not all libraries are included in tribal education planning. While many are administered by TEDs, in at least eight Tribes, libraries are independent and have no direct access to education-related funding. Tribal libraries would benefit from streamlined, non-competitive state funding that does not pit libraries against other components of tribal education.

## 5. Lack of Funding:

- External funding is limited, restrictive, unpredictable, short-term, and it imposes conditions or incentivizes certain activities rather than responding to tribal needs
- Lack of physical facilities and infrastructure limits access to learning and opportunities

## 6. Policy Not Responsive to Tribal Needs:

- Tribal Education Departments feel disempowered by unfavorable state laws and regulatory framework

At the close of day one, participants brainstormed potential solutions to these barriers. They offered ideas for meeting tribal education needs and realizing education goals. These solutions served as guidance for developing actionable policy recommendations the following day.

## Tribal Education Solutions:

### 1. Strengthen capacity:

- Engage tribal communities in developing a vision and a comprehensive plan.
- Strengthen collaboration and coordination within and across Tribes, e.g., Tribes could pool resources for training language teachers.
- Expand workforce development, leadership development, and professional development.
- Build out education facilities, such as tribal libraries and early education centers.
- Connect all Navajo Nation Chapter Houses via broadband.

### 2. Exercise sovereignty:

- Tribes should exercise their sovereignty.
- Decolonization: disrupt oppressive systems and mindsets that harm our communities, including internalized oppression.
- Foster cultural identity within communities, create opportunities for communities to come together.
- Increase tribal community engagement.
- Educate everyone, including tribal leadership.

**Early Childhood Education and Care:** Early childhood educators envision an education system that supports the family throughout a child's life, from prenatal to college, by providing connections to wrap-around services, resources, and programs. This is important to break cycles of oppression and create healthy living environments and stable families. Because Indigenous families are deeply impacted by historical trauma, family relationships, including parenting, may be damaged and need extra support. Educators would like to see children embedded in their families, rather than institutionalized, and they prioritize family support and parental education. Centering language and culture in early childhood education is key to creating stronger families and communities. Tribal, state, and federal programs should actively support language immersion and trauma-informed support services for Native children.

"Native-led charter schools offer a unique and powerful opportunity to invest in tribal sovereignty as we lead the way in implementing innovative and responsive solutions to addressing the unique needs of Native students. We know best what our communities need and what they deserve. We urge you to honor our efforts and support us in expanding our impact."

*Kayla D. Begay, School Founder, Dził Dít'ooí School of Empowerment, Action & Perseverance (DEAP)*

- Tribal education departments could seek to become more like LEAs (see, e.g., the Navajo Nation Sovereignty in Education Act of 2005) and insist on recognition by school districts and state agencies.
- Consider creating an independent Navajo Nation library district.

"Tribal libraries, past, present and future, are the central hub for all our communities. We respectfully request increased funding, adequate facilities, and sustainability for our programming."

*Lillian Chavez, Tribal Librarian  
Mescalero Apache Tribe*

### 3. Ensure school district accountability:

- Strengthen collaboration and coordination with schools, school districts, and state agencies.
- Ensure that school districts implement the Native student needs assessments required by New Mexico's Indian Education Act and work with Tribes to develop plans and programs to meet students' needs.
- Enforce existing agreements between LEAs and Tribes and find ways to hold schools and districts accountable.
- Conduct a systematic assessment of policies and procedures to hold schools and districts accountable and identify options for strengthening those procedures.
- Require LEAs located on tribal lands to comply with tribal laws.

### 4. Implement a culturally and linguistically relevant education:

- Develop and invest in community-based education systems that create learning environments outside classrooms and enable organic learning within communities.
- Build Native teacher and language teacher pipelines.
- Prioritize language revitalization.
- Establish libraries in Navajo Nation Chapters in New Mexico and secure state funding.

### 5. Ensure stable and sufficient funding:

- Secure sustainable, flexible, consistent, and predictable funding for tribal education.
- Make language revitalization a funding priority.
- Provide a dedicated funding stream for tribal libraries.

"Make it easier: from applying to reporting, funding needs to be streamlined and flexible enough to allow room for tribally determined goals."

*Bettina Sandoval, Education Director,  
Pueblo of Taos*

### 6. Make policy more responsive to the needs of Native students:

- Increase Native representation in education administration and policymaking.
- Make language revitalization a policy priority.
- Secure representation for tribal libraries in tribal and state education conversations and decision-making spaces.

## V. Tribal Remedy Framework: Progress Since 2019

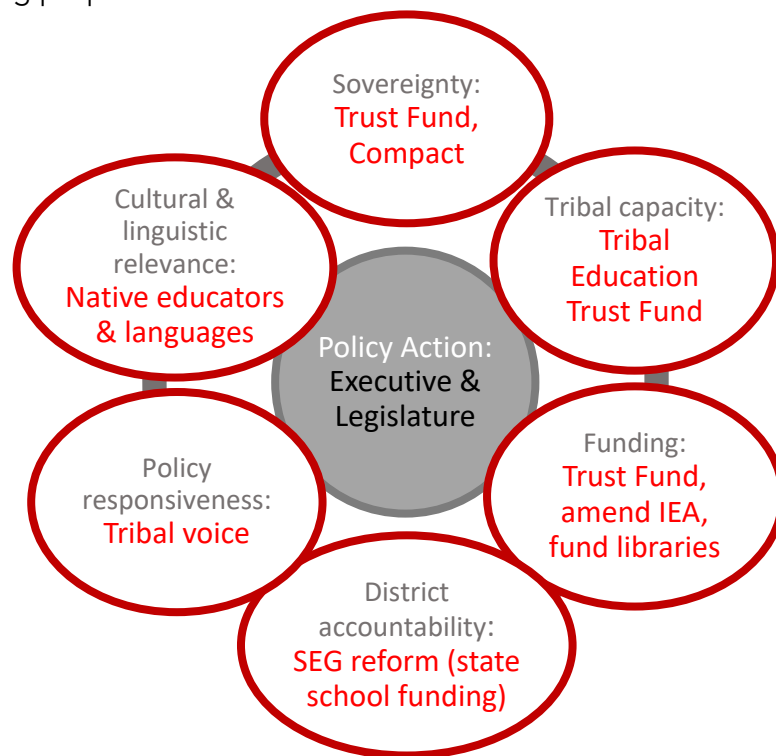
Regis Pecos and Conroy Chino of the Tribal Education Alliance and Teran Villa, Executive Director of the All Pueblo Council of Governors, reported on the legislative progress of the Tribal Remedy Framework (TRF). The TRF offers guidelines and solutions for transforming education for Native students, which tribal education advocates use to develop specific policy proposals and legislation. The TRF-related bills are refined and updated annually with input from tribal leaders, administrators, and educators.

TRF Legislative Progress Since 2019		
Goal	Bill Passed	Budget Secured
<b>Strengthen Tribal Education Sovereignty</b>	<b>HB 148 (2023):</b> Directs the Early Childhood Ed. Dept. to allow Tribes to operate self-determined early childhood programs, with state funding but without state interference.	
<b>Strengthen Native Languages and Tribal Community-Based Education</b>	<b>HB 60 (2022):</b> Salary parity for Native language & culture teachers (520 certificate holders).	\$13.3m for tribal community-based extended learning (2022); \$10.6m for tribal ed. depts, tribal libraries, Native language programs (2021)
<b>Build Tribal Education Infrastructure</b>		\$20m for tribal libraries' design, construction, renovation (2023); \$12m for tribal libraries and ed. resource centers (2022)
<b>Implement the Indian Ed. Act</b>		Indian Education Fund: \$20m in 2023; \$15m in 2022; \$5m in 2021
<b>Shared Governance with Public Schools</b>	<b>HB 250 (2019):</b> Public schools must work with Tribes on Native student needs assessments and systemic plans for meeting needs.	
<b>Coordinate State, BIE &amp; Tribally Controlled Schools</b>	<b>HB 198 (2023):</b> BIE schools will receive career tech ed. funding to give Native students equal access to high-quality CTE programs.	\$1.4m for career tech. education in BIE schools (2022)
<b>Collaborate with Tribal Colleges and Higher Ed.</b>	<b>HB 280 (2023):</b> Two Technical Assistance Centers will assist Tribes and schools to better meet the needs of Native students.	\$1.75m recurring funding for tribal education initiatives in higher ed. (since 2022)

## VI. Recommendations for Policymakers

To craft actionable recommendations for policy and funding, tribal educators reviewed the needs, barriers, and solutions identified on day one. Considering the Tribal Remedy Framework’s proposals and the progress made to date, participants focused their attention on the roles of the New Mexico governor, state agencies, and the state legislature. What concrete actions are needed to fulfill Native children’s right to a balanced education – an education capable of sustaining Indigenous identities and enabling Native children to thrive in Western society?

Participants’ recommendations for policymakers reflect and refine the legislative proposals of the TRF. The graph below shows how the six key areas of recommendations align with the TRF’s policy and funding proposals.



### List of Recommendations:

#### 1. Strengthen Tribal Education Capacity:

- Expand tribal capacity to create balance in education, ensuring that both Indigenous cultures and Western skills are included.
- Increase tribal capacity to create their own definitions of success in education, without prescriptions from the state.
- Support and resource tribal strategic and policy planning, including for collaborating with school districts.
- Support tribal workforce development, including training, recruitment, and retention.



- Coordinate and align plans and resources with the overlapping nature of tribal services and programs (education, social services, courts, etc.) to avoid fragmentation and competition.
- Proactively support collaboration among various tribal programs and services.

## **2. Exercise Tribal Education Sovereignty:**

- Exercise our sovereignty: open our own schools, create our own educational pathways.
- Enact a State-Tribal education compact to run our own schools.
- Preserve our languages, as our oral teachings have instructed us since time immemorial.
- Encourage our communities to support learning in organic and holistic ways.
- Collaborate with traditional Indigenous practitioners.

**"A tribe needs to exercise its sovereign right to determine how to administer funds for delivering a basic human right: accessible, equitable and culturally grounded education."**

*Tiffany Calabaza, Child Care Director,  
Santo Domingo Pueblo*

## **3. Ensure School District Accountability:**

- Strengthen the statutory accountability of school districts for conducting Native student needs assessments and working with Tribes to create and implement plans to meet student needs.
- Ensure that districts respect and implement tribally agreed decisions, strategies, curricula, and cultural observances.
- Hold districts accountable for conducting meaningful tribal consultation and collaboration.
- Ensure that the Public Education Department enforces legal agreements (e.g., 520 certification process)
- Require the Public Education Department to hold districts accountable for following the recommendations of Equity Councils.
- Conduct a systematic assessment of current policies and procedures to identify whether schools and districts are implementing agreements with Tribes.
- Ensure that schools follow protocols for parent teacher organization agreements.

## **4. Implement a Linguistically and Culturally Relevant Education:**

- Train, hire, and retain more Native teachers and Native language teachers, both in school districts and in Tribes.
- Develop an Indigenous bilingual early childhood educator workforce through establishing an early childhood teacher preparation program with a focus on bilingual or Native language education.
- Fully implement the Indian Education Act, including its stated purposes relating to maintenance of Native languages and tribal control over schools.
- Ensure that the Public Education Department holds district administrators and principals accountable for implementing bilingual education requirements for heritage languages.
- Reform bilingual education programs to fit better with the urgent preservation needs of Native languages.

- Make Native language classes a requirement, not merely an elective, and allocate classroom space for language classes.
- Ensure that districts adopt and implement a culturally relevant curriculum.
- Reform state and federal assessments to ensure they reflect tribal priorities.
- Ensure the full implementation of two technical assistance centers for tribal education in accordance with tribal guidance and needs and include tribal libraries as stakeholders.

## **5. Ensure Stable and Sufficient State Funding:**

- Make tribal education funding sustainable, recurring, and upfront (not reimbursable).
- Amend the Indian Education Act to align the Indian Education Fund with tribal sovereignty principles. Make funding procedures efficient, effective, and seamless: multi-year, recurring, upfront funding that can be carried over. Disburse funding through intergovernmental agreements, not grants. Ensure that distribution happens at the beginning of the fiscal year.
- Provide sufficient and flexible early childhood education funding from childcare to pre-K to early elementary school; fund an early childhood cost analysis.
- Provide earmarked funding specifically for tribal libraries.
- Flow tribal library funding through the state tribal library program whenever possible.
- Reduce funding reporting requirements.
- Create a separate funding stream and separate guidelines for Native language programs, whose needs differ from Spanish language programs.

"Our main need, our priority, is to build our capacity, including staffing. This requires recurring, predictable funding. We can't hire with a one-year grant that arrives after the school year has started. We can't sustain our operations with short-term planning.

*We need resources we can count on, year after year, to build effective educational systems for our children."*

*Kevin Shendo, Tribal Education Director,  
Pueblo of Jemez*

## **6. Enact Education Policy Responsive to Native Students' Needs:**

- Increase Native representation in state agencies and in the legislature.
- Strengthen the role and operations of the Indian Education Advisory Council and reform its composition to ensure better representation of tribal educators, including tribal librarians and early childhood educators.
- Adopt stronger accountability and enforcement policies and rules to ensure school districts address Native students' needs and respect tribal sovereignty.
- Allow tribal self-determination in the use of state education funding.
- Amend the Indian Education Act to ensure funding is aligned with tribal sovereignty.
- Allow tribal self-determination of program participants' eligibility (e.g., no mandatory means-testing).
- Include tribal librarians in education policy and funding decision-making processes.
- Adopt and fund an integrated approach to education that addresses health and well-being through wrap-around services.
- Reform teacher licensing to allow holders of non-education degrees to become teachers.

## VII. Turning Recommendations into Legislative Proposals

The recommendations developed by tribal educators, administrators, and officials reflect and affirm the solutions contained in the Tribal Remedy Framework, and, at the same time, serve to update and refine the TRF's legislative proposals. In the final plenary discussion, participants reviewed their recommendations in light of progress made since the 2018 court ruling.

It became clear that, despite legislative achievements and increased funding, the need for investing in the TRF's solutions remained as important as ever. Participants shared how recent legislative wins, while welcomed, did not sufficiently address consistency and stability of tribal education funding, self-determined program development, and cross-program collaboration, among other issues. Much more needed to happen at the state level to strengthen tribal education capacity and sovereignty.

To Governor Lujan Grisham:  
"The *Yazzie/Martinez* case continues to be an issue of concern in New Mexico since the State and PED have not adequately implemented the court order. What is your plan to ensure that this order is carried through and that funding is adequately provided?"

*Virginia R. Chavez, Councilwoman,  
Pueblo of Zuni*

"Support the proper funding of the *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling and outcomes and respect the Indigenous students of the 22 sovereign Tribes of New Mexico."

*Matthew Tso, Diné Dept. of Education*



The chart below illustrates how TRF goals relate to the six areas of participants' recommendations, and how these give rise to and refine upcoming legislative proposals.

Tribal Remedy Framework: Upcoming Legislative Proposals	
Issue Areas & Goals	Legislative Proposals
<b>SOVEREIGNTY</b> <b>Strengthen Tribal Education Sovereignty</b>	<b>Tribal Education Trust Fund:</b> Stable, consistent, and flexible funding for strengthening tribal education capacity, recurring and growing year after year.
<b>CAPACITY, Culturally &amp; linguistically RELEVANT education</b> <b>Strengthen Native Languages and Tribal Community-Based Education</b>	<b>Tribal Education Trust Fund</b> to increase capacity for community-based learning, tribal libraries, Native language programs, tribal early childhood education, etc.
<b>CAPACITY</b> <b>Build Tribal Education Infrastructure</b>	<b>Invest in Tribal Libraries'</b> construction and renovation.
<b>Stable &amp; Sufficient FUNDING, Culturally &amp; linguistically RELEVANT education</b> <b>Implement the Indian Education Act</b>	<b>Reform the Indian Education Fund</b> to align funding with tribal sovereignty and ensure efficient and effective distributions. <b>State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) reform:</b> Add a Native student factor to the funding formula to help schools that support Native students. Also add a Native language factor.
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b> <b>Shared Governance with State &amp; Public Schools</b>	Strengthen school district accountability, including implementation of needs assessments, through <b>SEG reform</b> .
<b>SOVEREIGNTY</b> <b>Coordinate State, BIE &amp; Tribally Controlled Schools</b>	<b>Enact a State-Tribal Education Compact</b> to allow Tribes to run their own state-funded schools, based on tribal education standards.
<b>Culturally &amp; linguistically RELEVANT education</b> <b>Collaborate with Tribal Colleges and Higher Ed. Programs</b>	<b>Fund Indigenous higher education programs and Tribal Colleges</b> to develop pipelines for Native teachers, social workers, counselors, and behavioral health professionals, culturally relevant curricula & pedagogy, Native language programs, etc.

Regis Pecos, the Chair of the Tribal Education Alliance, concluded the discussion by calling on state policymakers to implement tribal educators' recommendations. Despite the state's considerable financial investment in education over the past few years, Native students and their

communities have seen few improvements. Five years after the *Yazzie/Martinez* court order and 20 years after enacting the Indian Education Act, the state is still failing to meet the needs of Native students. As long as investments are made into the same system that has promoted the assimilation paradigm and produced today's education crisis, outcomes are unlikely to change. Given the long history of systemic and institutional racism in education, an influx of funding into these same systems and institutions, without a strategy or plan for transformation, merely perpetuates the marginalization of Native students and threatens the survival of Native languages and cultures. When policymakers use large amounts of public money to buy additional days in the school calendar, they try to prop up and extend a failed system. Once again, Native children are left behind.

Unlike the State, Native Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos have a plan for change. It is this plan, the Tribal Remedy Framework, that deserves state investment. Such targeted investment would enable the creation of new systems and institutions, guided by the needs of Native students and respectful of tribal education sovereignty. This means, first and foremost, strengthening and expanding education capacity and infrastructure in each and every Tribe to support Native students in their own communities.

A new, balanced approach to education begins close to home, with tribal education departments, early childhood educators, tribal librarians, and language teachers. Everyone is part of the solution. Everyone's contribution has shaped, and continues to shape, the Tribal Remedy Framework, the tribal blueprint for a just and equitable education system that nurtures Native children and sustains Native cultures and languages.

To Governor Lujan Grisham and State Legislators:

"Native students are impacted by inequity of educational achievement. My children and the other students I represent as education director have been personally impacted by this injustice, which continues within your public schools.

I know you want to be committed to our tribal nations and you have passed bills to support our communities. Please continue to support our tribal communities by passing legislation that addresses the Tribal Remedy Framework."

*Marsha Leno, Education Director,  
Pueblo of Zia*

## APPENDICES

### 1. List of Participants

Lola	Ahidley	Mescalero Apache Tribe
Cameron	Becenti	Kewa Child Care and Development, Santa Domingo Pueblo
Shirley	Bellson	Pueblo of Zuni
Valarie	Bellson	Library, Pueblo of Zuni
Camilio	Calabaza	Kewa Keres Language Program, Santo Domingo Pueblo
Simone	Catanach	Tewa Language Department, Pueblo of Pojoaque
Christy	Chapman	Law Office of Christy Chapman, LLC, Pueblo of Zuni
Lillian	Chavez	Library, Mescalero Apache Tribe
Virginia	Chavez	Tribal Council, Pueblo of Zuni
Wendell	Chino	Tribal Administration, Pueblo of Acoma
Shana	Coriz	Library, Santo Domingo Pueblo
Azul	Cortes	Dual Language Education of New Mexico
Kevin	Facer	Department of Education, Pueblo of Santa Ana
Tracy	Garcia	Library, Santo Domingo Pueblo
Teresa	Garcia	Pueblo of Santa Ana
AnnaMarie	Garcia	LANL Foundation
Eleanor	Griego	Zia Language Program, Pueblo of Zia
Alyssa	Hardy	Pueblo of Zia
Cordelia	Hooee	Lt. Governor, Pueblo of Zuni
Mark	Hume	NM Dept. of Early Childhood Education and Care
Jeannette	Jagles	Health and Wellness Division, Pueblo of Tesuque
Arden	Kucate	Governor, Pueblo of Zuni
Marsha	Leno	Department of Education, Pueblo of Zia
Andrea	Leno	Early Childhood Department Pueblo of Zia
Aileen	Lopez	Department of Education, Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh
Charlene	Lucero	Department of Education, Pueblo of Isleta
Nate	Lujan	Library, Pueblo of Isleta
Francine	Manwell	Jicarilla Apache Nation
Melanie	Martinez	Department of Education, Pueblo of Santa Ana
Tiana	Nieto	Pueblo of Zia
Adrian	Notsinneh	Legislative Council, Jicarilla Apache Nation
Cassandra	Osterloh	State-Tribal Library Program, NM State Library
Bernadette	Panteah	Department of Education, Pueblo of Zuni
Stephanie	Pena	Library, Pueblo of Nambé
Andrea	Pesina	Head Start and Childcare, Pueblo of Isleta
Ronny	Petago	Jicarilla Apache Nation
Donovan	Pete	Navajo Nation Library
Jonathan	Pino	Department of Education, Pueblo of Zia
Jean	Pino	Pueblo of Zia

Danielyn	Pino	Department of Education, Pueblo of Zia
Cathleen	Pino	Pueblo of Zia
Charlene	Quintana	Department of Education, Pueblo of Tesuque
Tammy	Salazar	Jicarilla Apache Nation
Jessica	Sanchez	
Joanie	Sanchez	Department of Education, Pueblo of Acoma
Birdena	Sanchez	Tribal Council, Pueblo of Zuni
Joanie	Sanchez	Department of Education, Pueblo of Acoma
Bettina	Sandoval	Department of Education, Pueblo of Taos
Jeneka	Shije	Pueblo of Zia
Nicki	Shije	T'siya Enrichment Center, Pueblo of Zia
Jennifer	Shije	Zia Enrichment Library, Pueblo of Zia
Evelyn	Shije	Zia Language Program, Pueblo of Zia
Christine	Sims	Dept. of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies at UNM, Pueblo of Acoma
Cotillion	Sneddy	Assistant Secretary, NM Dept. of Early Childhood Education and Care
Kelton	Starr	Education Department, Mescalero Apache Tribe
Charles	Suazo	Library, Santa Clara Pueblo
Cristal	Suazo	Pueblo of Pojoaque
Amy	Suman	Department of Education, Pueblo of Laguna
Thelma	Tapia	Taytsugeh Oweengeh Library, Pueblo of Tesuque
Andrew	Toribio	Education Department, Pueblo of Zia
Roy	Tracy	Department of Diné Education, Navajo Nation
Loretta	Trujillo	Transform Education New Mexico
Matthew	Tso	Department of Diné Education, Navajo Nation
Nolan	Valdo	Department of Education, Pueblo of Acoma
Alyssa	Valencia	Acoma Learning Center (Library), Pueblo of Acoma
Leslie	Vallo	Department of Education, Pueblo of Acoma
Bernalyn	Via	President, Mescalero Apache Tribe
Victoria	Vigil	Library, Pueblo of Nambé
Lisa	Vigil	Jicarilla Apache Nation
Cassandra	Zamora	Department of Education, Pueblo of Santa Ana
Roberta	Zayas	Community to Careers Program, UNM Health Sciences

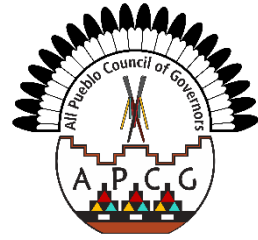
## 2. List of Organizers, Facilitators, and Presenters

- Avery Aguilar, Leadership Institute at the Santa Fe Indian School, Santo Domingo Pueblo
- Jovanna Archuleta, LANL Foundation, Pueblo of Nambé
- Tiffany Calabaza, Kewa Child Care and Development, Santo Domingo Pueblo
- Melissa Candelaria, J.D., New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, San Felipe Pueblo
- Samuel Villarreal Catanach, Tewa Language Department, Pueblo of Pojoaque
- Conroy Chino, Tribal Education Alliance and Tribal Lobbyist, Pueblo of Acoma
- Dr. DeeJay Chino, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Diné and Northern Cheyenne

- Tyla Chopito, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Pueblo of Zuni
- Casey Douma, J.D., Douma Law LLC, Pueblo of Laguna and Hopi Tewa
- Derrick J. Lente, State Representative District 65, Pueblo of Sandia
- Dr. Glenabah Martinez, Institute for American Indian Education at UNM, Pueblo of Taos and Diné
- Dr. Natalie Martinez, Dept. of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies at UNM, Pueblo of Laguna
- Mark Mitchell, Chairman, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Pueblo of Tesuque
- Teresa Naranjo, Tribal Library, Santa Clara Pueblo
- Regis Pecos, Leadership Institute and Tribal Education Alliance, Pueblo of Cochiti
- Dr. Carmela Roybal, Native American Budget and Policy Institute at UNM, Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh
- Dr. Anja Rudiger, Leadership Institute and Tribal Education Alliance
- Kevin Shendo, Tribal Education Department, Pueblo of Jemez
- Kaitlin Victorino, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Pueblos of Acoma and Laguna
- Teran Villa, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Pueblo of Jemez



### 3. Community Institute Agenda



## Tribal Education Alliance

### Tribal Education Community Institute 2023

September 26-27, 2023, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque

#### Purpose of convening:

This Community Institute will bring together tribal education directors, tribal librarians, tribal language program directors, and tribal early education directors from New Mexico Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos. Participants will share and refine tribal education goals and plans, review progress made on the *Tribal Remedy Framework*, and identify challenges and solutions for building tribal education capacity. Participants will make concrete recommendations for advancing tribal education goals with state policymakers.

#### Objectives:

1. To review progress made by tribal advocates in implementing the *Tribal Remedy Framework*, the joint tribal response to the landmark 2018 *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling.
2. To improve coordination among the different components of tribal education, from libraries to languages to early education.
3. To share tribal education plans and discuss challenges encountered in planning and implementation.
4. To identify solutions for strengthening tribal education capacity and meeting tribal education needs.
5. To make recommendations to state policymakers about supporting and funding tribal education.

#### AGENDA

##### DAY 1, Tuesday, September 26

8:00 Breakfast Buffet

8:30-8:45

**Invocation.** Followed by a **welcome from APCG Chairman Mark Mitchell** and an **overview of the agenda by Regis Pecos.**

8:45-10:00

**Introductions** (moderated by Conroy Chino)

Each Tribe introduces their delegation and shares an example of an education initiative or aspiration.

10:00-10:15 *Break*

10:15-10:30

**Legislative support for tribal education: Address by Representative Derrick Lente** (Chairman, NM House Tax and Revenue Committee)

10:30-11:00

**Progress report: Tribal Remedy Framework** (presented by Regis Pecos and Teran Villa)

Overview of the TRF, *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruling, progress made since 2018, and future outlook.

11:00-12:15

**Panel discussion: Creating balanced tribal education programs** (moderated by Dr. Glenabah Martinez).

Panelists:

- Kevin Shendo, Pueblo of Jemez, Tribal Education Department Director
- Teresa Naranjo, Pueblo of Santa Clara, Tribal Librarian
- Samuel Catanach, Pueblo of Pojoaque, Language Department Director, Chair of the New Mexico Tribal Language Consortium
- Tiffany Calabaza, Pueblo of Santo Domingo, Early Childhood Education and Care Director

*12:15-1:00 Lunch*

1:00-2:15

**Planning session 1: Our plans and needs**

(Breakout groups for each cohort –TEDs, librarians, language programs, early childhood education)

- What is your department's/program's role in tribal education?
  - Consider your Tribe's vision for education and how your work helps to advance it.
- What are your department's/program's goals and plans?
  - Consider your plan or what you might need to create a plan.
- What do you need to realize those goals and implement your plan?
  - Consider your needs for expanding capacity, coordination, staffing, budget, etc.

*2:15-2:30 Break*

2:30-4:00

**Planning Session 2: Barriers and solutions**

(New breakout groups)

- What are the barriers to building our capacity and achieving our goals?
  - Consider challenges at program, tribal, public school, and state level.
- What solutions and actions do we propose?
  - Consider ideas for improving coordination, funding, policy, etc., at tribal, school, and state level.

Report back

4:00-4:45

**Closing plenary: Reflections on today's discussions** – what have we learned from each other?

4:45

**Closing benediction**

DAY 2, September 27

8:00 Breakfast Buffet

8:30-8:45

**Invocation, welcome, overview of today's agenda**

8:45-9:15

**Recap of Day 1: Goals, plans, barriers and solutions**

9:15-10:15

**Recommendations for building tribal education capacity**

(Breakout groups, facilitated by members of the Tribal Education Alliance)

- What must change to fulfill Native children's right to a balanced education that sustains their Indigenous identity, grounded in their traditions, languages, and cultures?
- What concrete actions do you propose for policymakers and funders?
  - Consider tribal sovereignty
  - Consider critical programs, how to support and sustain them
  - Consider the flow and amount of funding
  - Consider administrative changes

10:15-10:30 *Break*

10:30-12:00

**Plenary discussion: Review and refinement of recommendations** (facilitated by Regis Pecos)

- Work groups report back their recommendations
- Discussion and refinement of recommendations

12:00-12:45 *Lunch*

12:45 – 1:45

**Panel discussion: Reviewing and refining *Tribal Remedy Framework* legislative proposals** (moderated by Teran Villa, APCG)

Panelists:

- Melissa Candelaria, Pueblo of San Felipe, New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, Education Director and Legal Counsel for *Yazzie* Plaintiffs
- Conroy Chino, Pueblo of Acoma, Tribal Education Alliance
- Regis Pecos, Chair, Tribal Education Alliance

1:45 – 2:15

**Turning our recommendations into advocacy: Craft your message to the New Mexico Governor, state agencies or state legislators** (facilitated by Conroy Chino)

- Create an advocacy pitch: participants pair up to draft an elevator speech that makes the case for supporting tribal education recommendations

2:15-2:30 *Break*

2:30 – 3:00

**Listening Plenary: Presenting our advocacy messages** (facilitated by Conroy Chino)

- Participants share their messages: presentation of advocacy pitches to the full group

3:00 – 3:30

**Closing plenary:** Conclusions, next steps, and feedback

3:30

**Closing benediction**



**TRANSFORM**  
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