



NACA INSPIRED SCHOOLS NETWORK



The NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN) is building a movement of students, families, and educators to create excellent schools relevant to the communities they serve. NISN works with fellows who are committed to Indigenous communities to create excellent and relevant schools that will create strong leaders who are academically prepared, secure in their identities, healthy, and ultimately transforming their communities.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

Native communities and families know and care about what's best for their children. It is through intentional community led innovations that hold Indigenous core values as the foundation of educational experiences, that we will build a movement around Indigenous education to reaffirm the inherent sovereignty of our Native people.

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY?

Key issues driving these concerning outcomes include

- **"Poverty-plus" socio-economic status** (e.g., low income, minority, low parent educational attainment etc.)
- **Culturally insensitive school curriculum and environment**

Native youth face some of the greatest challenges when it comes to education. Historically, schools in the United States have been a one-size-fits-all model, replicating systems of colonial oppression that fail to recognize indigenous identity and ways of knowing. Expectations for Native students have been set alarmingly low and this mindset has persisted for decades. These approaches to education have disadvantaged Native youth resulting in some of the lowest academic achievement scores, highest drop-out rates, and producing increased obstacles to health and wellness.

65%

of Native students complete high school on time compared to the national average of 81%.¹

2x

Native students are two times more likely to drop out of school compared to their white peers.²

17%

of Native 8th-graders proficient or advanced in math.³

1/3

of Native youth have thoughts of suicide; 2.5 times higher than the national average.


54%

of Native 8th-graders know some or a lot about their Native traditions & culture.


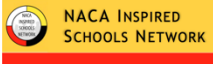


NISN BUILDS ON NACA'S SUCCESS

NISN builds on almost a decade of success at NACA, as well as three years of planning and preparation to replicate the model, which is not the cookie cutter approach that many charter networks take. All participating communities benefit from the capacity, engagement, research, staffing, heart, and expertise of the NISN team. The NISN Fellowship program trains educational leaders in the proven-effective NACA community-led model and provides them with support to start or grant schools in high-need areas.



2006-present
First community-led, urban charter school specifically focused on increasing the number of Native American students who are healthy, secure in their identities and who choose the path of college.



Launched in 2014
First new school incubator and network of high-performing schools dedicated solely to Indigenous education.
NISN seeks to re-imagine what Indigenous education and the school experience can be for Native students.

The NACA model has succeeded in putting students on the path to success in college and in their communities.

A—NACA received New Mexico's highest rating for student growth in 2012-2013, outperforming the state average for improving academic achievement.

92—of the 3 senior classes to date, 92% of students who attended NACA since 9th grade graduated.

100—100 percent of NACA seniors are accepted into college.

4x—Of graduating seniors, 83 percent have gone to college. This is four times the national average for Native American students.

NACA AND COMMUNITY-LED DESIGN

Community Transformation

- NACA is a key facilitator of connections within the community, creating and leading partnerships with organizations like the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, UNM's NAS, SYS, Inc., AIO
- NACA leads community events such as the NACA Feast day, Pow-wow and 1491s

Focus on holistic wellness

- Holistic Wellness Wheel used as a framework for students and staff to assess growth and set goals
- Services, supports, and programs oriented around Intellectual, Spiritual, Physical, and Emotional Health
- Respectful interaction between teachers & students sensitive to impact of boarding schools in Native communities due to colonization

Integration of Academic Excellence & Cultural Relevance

- Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments satisfy Common Core standards and practices, with data-backed evaluation of outcomes
- Education is done in whole or part using Indigenous Languages, or through Indigenous teaching practices (e.g. integrating geology curriculum with Native creation stories, impact of policy on tribes, impact of Indigenous Education)



WHAT IS THE NACA INSPIRED SCHOOLS NETWORK?

NISN is a nonprofit that recruits, identifies, selects, and supports educational leaders to participate in three-year Fellowships and facilitate a process to launch community-designed schools that integrate academic rigor with local Native culture, language, and community.

NISN Fellowship

Developing High-Potential Leaders

- A holistic, full-time fellowship spanning two years:
 - Year 1 - professional development in school leadership
 - operations
 - curriculum and instruction
 - community transformation
 - core values & culture
 - Year 2 - school-planning and design in support of launching an NISN affiliated school
- Recruits 3-6 fellows per year, starting in New Mexico, with future plans to grow to South Dakota, Arizona, Washington, Oklahoma, and others

NISN Schools

Starting and supporting schools of excellence and relevance

- A high-performing network of mission-aligned schools of excellence & relevance
- Schools are founded by NISN fellows
- Schools are independently operated & legally distinct, but commit to six core NISN commitments
- Schools are supported by NISN through financial investment, technical assistance, coaching, and provision of operational services
- Schools are held to high performance standards (Scorecard and School Review process)

NISN's commitment to each Fellow and network school includes building capacity to ensure long-term leadership and autonomy while committing to a shared vision and core cultural values that drive Indigenous Education. This includes identifying financing sources, supporting staffing, and ensuring that legal paperwork is in order. All NISN affiliated schools are under their own charters and sign a performance contract/MOU with NISN that stipulates: performance commitments, how schools will be valued, management fee structure, how NISN will support schools and in which areas.



Because of the high level of engagement with the NISN Fellow for the duration of the program, communities must be willing to work with this person and be aware of the potential benefits of doing so. Supporting this consideration, NISN prioritizes Fellows who come from the communities they will serve to facilitate the community engagement and relationship building processes, and help to build community capacity on a fundamental level. Regardless of place of origin, all

NISN Fellows have a commitment to Indigenous Education, have a connection to the community in which they will serve, and understand the long-term commitment of this work.



HOW ARE NISN AFFILIATED SCHOOLS DIFFERENT?

The early planning of NACA focused on engaging and capitalizing on the strengths and assets of the community with a small start-up team. NACA was designed in collaboration with 150 community members to establish a school that reflects their values/priorities including personal wellness, cultural identity, and academic preparation.

The fundamental characteristic of community-led schools is that members of the community play an active role in making decisions about the educational experience they want their students to have. It is a process by which you connect the community to resources, build capacity of local leaders, promote community ownership, while acknowledging the resources that already exist at a local level. These schools are, by definition, not a one-size-fits-all model.

Community collaborations provide exciting experiential education opportunities for students that help improve positive sense of self, positive associations with peers, healthy beliefs, and establish clear standards for behavior, ultimately keeping kids healthy, decreasing dropout and drug use rates, and minimizing depression among our students.

Key Considerations

- NISN communities are highly sensitive to encroachment on sovereignty from external entities
- Western-based education is viewed with skepticism
- Tribally-led schools are **ultimately accountable to tribal governance**



How NISN schools are different

- A “one-size-fits-all” approach to a school model does not support our mission
- NISN schools need to incorporate Indigenous values and teach culture **and** achieve high-quality outcomes
- Beyond affiliation, NISN will not have formal mechanisms to enforce accountability with schools

CONTACT INFORMATION:

1000 INDIAN SCHOOL RD NW
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87104
(505) 266-0992

ADMIN@NACAINSPIREDSCHOOLSNETWORK.ORG

WWW.NACAINSPIREDSCHOOLSNETWORK.ORG

WWW.NACASCHOOL.ORG