

## STATEMENT ON TEACHING & LEARNING

On behalf of the **Yolo County California Indian Curriculum and Professional Learning Advisory**, we request that Yolo County school districts end the teaching and perpetuation of Native American-related misconceptions, stereotypes, inaccuracies, and erasure that cause harm.

We ask that districts postpone implementation of Native curricula including such topics as Columbus, California Missions, and Thanksgiving, until they can be taught within a historically accurate framework.

Historically accurate curriculum would include but not be limited to the following:

- Teaching about the violence, slavery, trafficking, and genocide that explorers--particularly Columbus--initiated.
- Teaching about the violence, slavery, trafficking, and genocide initiated by John Sutter and other European and American settlers to California.
- Teaching about the California Missions not only from a Spanish perspective but also discussing violence and slavery and the negative impact that the Missions had on California Indians
  - Mission-building projects should be eliminated as the California Missions were sites of violence.
- Teaching policies such as the Homestead Act, indentured servitude, the Morill Land Grant Act, and the Mexican Land Grants from a critical stance, asking who benefited from and who was harmed by those laws.
  - Understand that land grants were sold or stolen and that those who purchased the land were receiving stolen property.
- Teaching who the Wintun Homeland Tribes are, where they are located, and who the neighboring tribes are
- Teaching about the 18 Unratified Treaties of California with an emphasis on Wintun Homeland
- Teaching about recognized and unrecognized tribes, discussing how recognition is determined and who benefits from and who is harmed by these decision-making processes

In order to dispel harmful stereotypes of California Indians, we ask that districts take the following actions:

- Avoid generalizations that assume all Indians are alike. Recognize that there is great diversity among tribes in California, each with distinct and unique cultural perspectives and that these have been affected by removal/relocation. For example...
  - California Indians from Wintun homeland have Big Times, not pow wows
  - California Indians do not make dreamcatchers
- Ensure that staff do not expect Indian students or their parents to share their history or to know or use sign language or symbols
- Ensure that teachers do not reduce Native culture to “arts and crafts” through decontextualized activities that use Native symbols or images.
- Ensure that teachers do not ask students to give themselves Indian names or ask Indian students to share their Indian names with the class. Some tribes do not share their names with people outside the native community.
- Direct teachers and staff to consult with local tribal people for information about Native peoples

rather than relying on internet-based sources

- Ban Halloween costumes depicting Native or ethnic people.
- Use present tense when talking about Indians and ensure that teachers do the same.
- Place the local land acknowledgement on the district website and share it at all meetings.
- Accommodate Indian students' absences from class for ceremony gatherings.
- Recognize the following:
  - California Native American Day (4<sup>th</sup> Friday in September)
  - Indigenous People's Day (October)
  - Native American Heritage Month (November)
- Encourage staff to take the following steps to increase their own and their students' understanding of Native histories and cultures:
  - Take or audit a Native American Studies course, ideally one that includes the perspective of local tribes. Woodland Community College currently offers classes. UC Davis is developing courses that should be approved to teach in 2024-25.
  - Engage with [California Native American Studies Model Curriculum \(NASMC\)](#) project and explore resources.
  - Study the CSU California Indian Curriculum vetted by California Indian tribes
  - Visit the [Gorman Museum of Native American Art](#), UC Davis
  - Visit the Maidu Cultural Museum in Roseville
  - Visit the Tending and Gathering Garden at the Cache Creek Nature Preserve
  - Invite California Indian speakers to address staff and students in the district
  - Explore the [Yolo California Indian Curriculum & Professional Learning](#) webpage for additional resources for educators and relevant events in the region.