



SOUTH DAKOTA INDIAN EDUCATION SUMMIT

November 14, 2025

Best Western Ramkota Hotel, Aberdeen, SD

All times are Central Time

Summit Schedule: Friday, November 14, 2025		
8:00	–	Doors Open - Conference Center Lobby <i>You are invited to check-in for the summit from 8:00 am to 9:00 am</i>
9:00-10:45	1h 45m	Welcome & Opening Keynote: Julie Garreau Location: Convention Hall
11:00-11:50	50m	Featured Speaker: Christopher Bordeaux Title: Being Indigenous is Being Gifted Location: Convention Hall
12:00-1:30	1h	Lunch w/Cultural Presentation Student Drum Group - Aberdeen School District
<i>Breakout Session will be held in (3 Rooms) Dakota Room A&B, C&D, and E. See extended schedule for Session Info/Location</i>		
1:30-2:20	50m	Breakout Session #1
2:30-3:20	50m	Breakout Session #2
3:20-3:40	20m	Snack Break and Visit Vendors
3:40-4:30	50m	Breakout Session #3
4:40-5:30	50m	Breakout Session #4
5:30-7:00	2h30m	Summit Wrap-up & Dinner (Meal Served at 6:00pm)

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Breakout Session #1 – 1:30-2:20

Title: Leading Change: Transforming Mindsets to Elevate Native Graduation Rates

Presented by: Gina Curran, High School Principal, St Francis Indian School

Description: This session explores how strong, visionary leadership can shift mindsets, inspire cultural pride, and create systemic change that supports Native student success. Participants will examine strategies that empower educators, families, and communities to foster resilience, belonging, and academic achievement. By addressing barriers and reimagining support structures, we will highlight practical, culturally responsive approaches that raise graduation rates and open pathways to brighter futures for Native youth.

Location: Dakota Room A & B

Title: CTE Growth on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation

Presented by: Brian Sieh, Director of CTE St. Francis Indian School

Description: Career exploration and a 21st century mindset have students engaged while focusing on careers found on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, students can gain skills to begin a career or to go on to post-secondary education at a trade school or college. The St. Francis Indian School is in the fourth semester of having a Career and Technical Education school within the high school and has shown steady growth in participation numbers each semester. The students attending CTE courses also have less attendance issues and higher grade point averages as they are fully engaged in the program. Through community partnerships and internal partnerships students can show immediate success right after graduation by joining the workforce or going to post-secondary education.

Location: Dakota Room C & D

Title: Hands-On Learning: Suitcase Education Kits

Presented by: Ronette Rumpca, South Dakota State Historical Society

Description: The South Dakota State Historical Society's education suitcase kit program has grown from two cases on two topics in 1996, to 31 cases on fourteen topics today. Kits include hands-on objects, topic background information, worksheets, and lesson plans for activities using the hands-on items. At this session, attendees can see a kit, handle the objects, and learn how the kits are put together. The kits offered by the Society include "Buffalo & the Plains Indians" and "Dakota, Nakota, Lakota Life".

Location: Dakota Room E

Breakout Session #2 – 2:30-3:20

Title: Journeying to Better Results: The BARR Model and Crazy Horse School

Presented by: Marissa Simoes, Josh Omang, and Stephanie Gartner, BARR Center

Description: In 2023, when Crazy Horse School staff heard about the success of the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) model, they traveled eight hours by car to northern Minnesota to learn more. They visited Detroit Lakes High School in Minnesota's lakes country. There, Principal Josh Omang, who is from the White Earth reservation, told them how his high school cut chronic absenteeism in half and reduced failure rates by using BARR. He shared the story of how students from White Earth were showing pride in their cultural identity and, for the first time ever, had a float in the Homecoming Parade. Crazy Horse staff decided to give BARR a try. With their coach, Marissa Simoes, they worked together to implement BARR's relationship-based model. In this session, Marissa will facilitate a Q&A with Crazy Horse School Student Advisor Stephanie Gartner and BARR Center Associate Director of Engagement Josh Omang. They will tell the story of how BARR is partnering with Crazy Horse to build student and staff resilience and support positive growth at the school.

Location: Dakota Room A & B

Title: Pte Oyate Storytelling and Role Play

Presented by: Belinda Joe Rencountre

Description: A presentation of cultural teachings and life lessons through storytelling and role play scenarios.

Location: Dakota Room C & D

Title: Engaging Families in the Science of Reading: Building Bridges to Literacy

Presented by: Alissa Adams, BHSSC Community and Family Services

Description: This hands-on session equips educators with practical strategies to foster meaningful family involvement in early reading. Rooted in the Science of Reading—covering phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—participants will learn how to communicate these concepts in family-friendly, inclusive ways. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and ready-to-use resources to engage families in literacy, along with a deeper understanding of how family involvement supports student success.

Location: Dakota Room E

Breakout Session #3 – 3:40-4:30

Title: Building Bridges, Not Barriers: Partnering with Families for Lasting Impact

Presented by: Danielle Ducheneaux-Kucera, Winner School District

Description: Strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities are key to the success and well-being of Native students. This session explores how educators and advocates can work together to create meaningful, culturally responsive relationships that honor Native voices and strengthen student belonging. Through examples of collaboration and family engagement within Native and non-Native communities, participants will learn practical strategies to foster trust, communication, and shared responsibility. Attendees will leave with tools to bridge gaps, build relationships grounded in respect, and create lasting impact through authentic partnerships that uplift Native students and their families.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify key elements of culturally responsive family and community engagement for Native students.
- Recognize common barriers to partnership and strategies to overcome them.
- Apply practical approaches for building trust and collaboration between schools, families, and Native communities.
- Reflect on their role in fostering authentic relationships that support student success and belonging.

Location: Dakota Room A & B

Title: Wolakota: Building Resilience and Healing Intergenerational Trauma

Presented by: Elfreda Cottier - Curriculum Specialist; Faith Holmes - Director of Development & Training; and Cindy Catches - CEO, Oceti Wakan Organization (Sacred Fire)

Description: The Oceti Wakan Life Skills Curriculum helps break cycles of intergenerational trauma, fosters cultural pride, and equips our children with skills for healthy, resilient lives, we use the concept of the Medicine Wheel to systematically educate, nurture, and develop the four aspects of a human being—physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental—to promote overall well-being and a balanced life (Wolakota).

Location: Dakota Room C & D

Title: Raising Self-Disciplined Responsible Children

Presented by: Connie Hermann, Boys Town Common Sense Parenting Trainer, BHSSC

Description: The research-based Boys Town Common Sense Parenting Program is offered at no charge throughout South Dakota. Parents/Teachers/Coaches will learn skills for setting children up for success.

Location: Dakota Room E

Breakout Session #4 – 4:40-5:30

Title: Cultural Competency in the Classroom

Presented by: Gerald Zephier - Dakota Language Teacher; George Howe - Elementary Culture Teacher; Greg Grey Cloud - Equine Instructor; Isaac Charger - HS Dean of Students

Description: Cultural Competency refers to the ability to understand, communicate, and interact effectively with individuals from a diverse cultural background. The presentation highlights, definition of culture and cultural competency, and importance in education and practical strategy.

Location: Dakota Room A & B

Title: Woiyukcan-Working together for the Betterment of All!

Presented by: Brian Brown-Principal - Canup Sapa Owayawa, Norris Elementary - WRSD

Using the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings to transform your school's culture to motivate students to attend school and achieve their potential.

Location: Dakota Room C & D

Title: We Walk Together: Sacred Knowledge in Education

Presented by: Dera Iyotte BS - Cultural Resource Management, St Francis Indian School

Description: A Culturally Responsive Look at Indigenous Academic Acquisition

Location: Dakota Room E