

NATIVE EDUCATION

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians: Tribal Curriculum Development

Partner Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

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Creating historically accurate, culturally responsive Tribal curriculum

Oregon Senate Bill 13 (Tribal History/Shared History) provided funding to all nine federally recognized Tribes in the state to develop their own Tribally specific curriculum. We have partnered with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians (CCBUTI) for the past four years to develop lesson plans in multiple subject areas, spanning from kindergarten through grade 12. The lesson plans include Tribally specific background information, teacher scripts, PowerPoint presentations, assessments, and online learning adaptations.

CCBUTI wanted to develop high-quality, engaging, culturally responsive teaching materials with a specific focus on the Tribe's history, culture, language, and contemporary contributions. They sought a partner with deep experience in developing Tribal curriculum and a focus on strong collaboration throughout the process.

Engaging in culturally appropriate collaboration

The Education Northwest team met regularly with staff members from the Cow Creek Education Department and other Tribal departments as necessary to choose the lesson topics and gather materials and resources. The process also included multiple opportunities for feedback and revision to ensure lesson plan content was accurate, authentic, and covered learning material and content the Tribe found important and vital to share.

Promoting better understanding of Native American Tribes in Oregon

The history of Oregon and the American West has rarely been taught from a Native American perspective, nor have students had the opportunity to learn about the historical and contemporary cultural contributions of the CCBUTI and other Tribes in the state. This new material challenges established narratives and allows for better understanding of the Tribe, including how they have persevered despite decades of forced assimilation, maintained and revitalized their cultural traditions, sought to regain some of their traditional homelands, and provided new cultural and economic opportunities for Tribal members.

To ensure widespread use of the curriculum, the Tribe also provides training and professional development for educators in their area. For the first time, Oregon students have access to teaching materials that were generated and shared by Native American Tribes in the state, allowing for a more accurate history to be taught.