



Board of Directors

Kevin Lewis, President
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Our Promise

We will **know**, **value**, and **support** every student, helping them **graduate ready** to pursue a **promising future**.

November 4, 2025 - Study Session Minutes

Central Office Board Room
1202 Wood Ave
Sumner, WA 98390

Call to Order

School board President Kevin Lewis called the November 4, 2025 board study session for the Board of Directors at Sumner-Bonney Lake School District No. 320 to order at 6:02pm.

Sumner-Bonney Lake School District Strategic Plan Update

Jason LaFontaine (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), Martha Sherman (Hoopa Valley Tribe), and Assistant Superintendent Kelly Denn presented the Native American Education Program to the Board of Directors. While Angelina Nockai wasn't able to join the group, she was recognized for her contribution to the work being done in this program. Assistant Superintendent, Kelly Denn started the discussion with the land acknowledgement in recognition of Native American Heritage month.

While Martha led the board in cultural activities that are traditionally used to pass down cultural knowledge, Jason and Kelly shared information about the Puyallup Tribe of Indians ten year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which is the first of its kind in Pierce County to support the development of the first language course for students who wish to speak their native language as well as promoting elective credits for Native youth who work within the Heritage Youth Paid Internship program. Sumner-Bonney Lake School District data shows that about 210 students are signed-up for the Native Education Program and 17 have self-identified with the Puyallup Tribe. In sharing his story, Jason touched on the importance of the program to remove invisibility for many students who identify as Native American. The majority of the project cost and budget allocation is supported through Title VI grant money which comes from the Office of Indian Education but Sumner-Bonney Lake does provide \$10,000 a year to help with staffing costs, field trips, and supplies.



Martha led the board in the cultural activities of beaded corn and creating a medicine wheel. The beaded corn activity allows students to share the value of squash, corn and beans, also known as the "three sisters", and how they complement each other nutritionally. In the spring Jason purchases corn, beans and squash seeds to plant starters for students to take home as a reminder of the value of working together. The second cultural activity was the medicine wheel, which is an all encompassing concept with different meanings for Nations. Tribal groups use it to represent the connections (mental, spiritual, physical and emotional phases), the four directions (N,S,E,W), four life-cycles (birth, youth, adult and elder). Students are led through this activity to connect emotionally, physically and mentally and what that looks like for each.

Jason and Kelly shared that the program benefits students by creating connections for students that honor their cultural identity, which they believe has contributed to student persistence toward graduation and cultural pride. At the district level tribal consultation support and partnership is offered to students and families looking for resources. Areas where the programs continue to improve include easier access to Native students, education of non-native students and staff, increasing program participation.

Jason purchased Corn is Maze: The Gift of the Indians by Alik, as a gift to the district's elementary school libraries in honor of the school board.

With no further discussion, the board study session ended at 7:23pm

Attest

Laurie Dent, Secretary
Board of Directors

Kevin Lewis, President
Board of Directors