

# Empowering and Deepening Indigenous Youth Service



New York State Education Department, Office of Indigenous Education  
October Board of Regents Meeting  
October 6, 2025

# Our Partners & Grants

Two complementary grants:

**Empowering Youth-Led Service**

*Allstate Foundation*

**Deepening Youth Service**

*Charles Stewart Mott Foundation*

**Participating Districts and Nations:**

Silver Creek CSD and Seneca Nation of Indians

Niagara-Wheatfield CSD and Tuscarora Nation

LaFayette CSD and Onondaga Nation





# Alignment to NYSED Frameworks

- Portrait of a Graduate
- Youth-led Portrait of a Graduate projects
- Seal of Civic Readiness







To enhance student engagement and educational opportunities for Indigenous students, we aim to increase:

- Connections between school and community
- Accuracy and inclusion of Indigenous content
- Community voice and participation in education programs
- Student support
- Culturally responsive professional learning opportunities
- Advanced coursework opportunities and credentials

## Why This Work Now?





# Empowering Youth-Led Service Student Projects

Development of youth-led service projects within Indigenous communities to:

- Enhance readiness for college, careers, and civic life
- Build meaningful connections between school and community
- Strengthen relationships between districts and Tribal communities
- Increase student knowledge of their community for all



# National Youth Leadership Council Service-Learning Standards of Practice

Five stages:

**Investigate → Plan → Act →  
Reflect → Demonstrate**

# Deepening Youth Service Building Capacity

Supported the development and expansion of Indigenous youth-led service-learning programs in NYS school districts through:

- Educator Guide
- Multi-media Communication
- Curricular Resources



## Deepening Indigenous Youth Service Grants

2024-2025

### Educator Resource Guide



## Empowering and Deepening Youth-Led Service Engaging Indigenous Students in Service-Learning Projects and Civics Education



Documenting the New York State Education Department's partnership with the  
New York Commission on National and Community Service



Grants supported by America's Service Commissions' youth-led service initiatives with funding  
provided by the Allstate and Charles Stewart Mott Foundations



# Partnering with Indigenous Nations



- Open mind and humility
- Work at the speed of community
- Asset-based and reciprocity focused

## Lessons We Are Carrying Forward

- Start before high school
- Build realistic timelines
- Leverage whole-district teams & community partners
- Interdisciplinary design deepens impact and inclusion
- Clear roles





# In Their Own Voices





# Service-Learning Projects





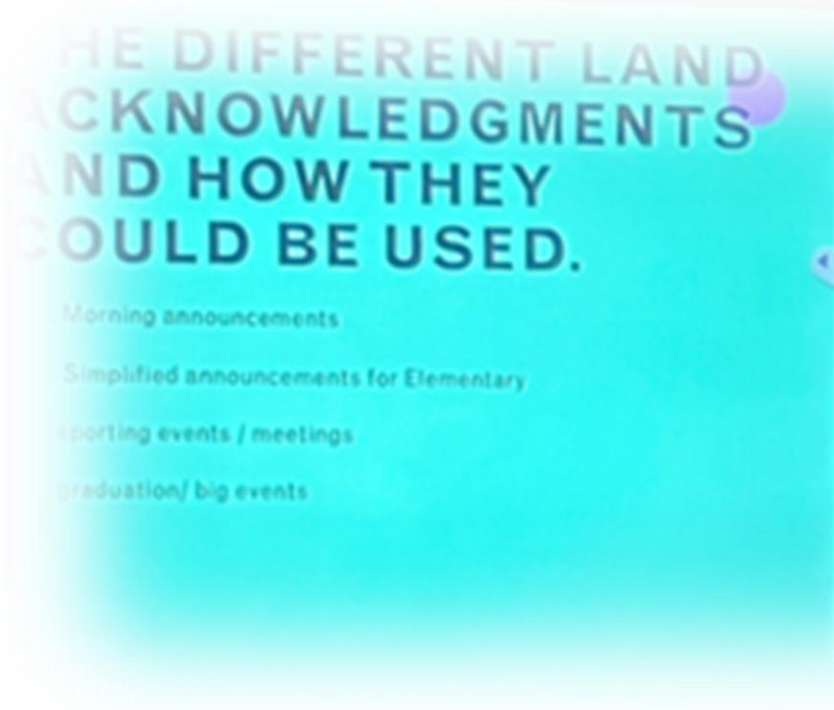
# District Spotlight: Silver Creek CSD and Seneca Nation

## Student Projects:

Reflection and future focus  
Global citizenship

## District Presenters:

Dr. Katie Ralston, Superintendent  
Michelle Helmer, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Amanda Austin, Native American Education Program Coordinator (Seneca and enrolled Mohawk)  
Ella Austin, 2025 Graduate of Silver Creek CSD, Student at The State University of New York at Buffalo (Seneca)





# Opportunity, Growth, and Next Steps

Expand access to the Seal of Civic Readiness

Multiple pathways to demonstrate proficiency

**Stronger belonging → engagement → persistence → empowerment**

Scaling up and scaling out

## Next Steps

Statement of Policy and Proposed Action

Indigenous Education Brief Project

Funding to support the continuation of this work

Additional Indigenous educational resources





# Questions?

