



Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

NAME OF AGENCY: Salish School of Spokane

DATE OF AWARD: 2017 Q1

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 10271, Spokane, WA 99209

CONTACT: (509) 325-2018, <http://www.salishschoolofspokane.org>

GENERAL GOALS: The mission of the Salish School of Spokane is to create a vibrant community of fluent speakers of Interior Salish languages by providing Salish language instruction to children and by empowering parents and families to speak Salish in their daily lives.

SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:

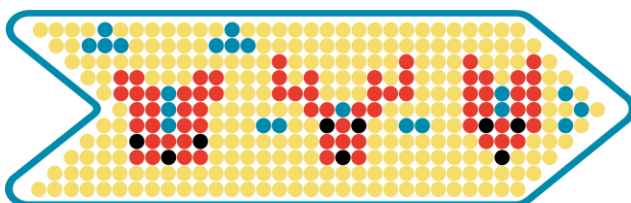
This award went towards programs and operational expenses.

For more information please read the attached report from Salish School of Spokane.

Sáxatkʷ Sńsisyústń ǰí ǰaǰtǰík

Native Youth Empowerment Center

2017-18 Project Report



salish
school of spokane



Project Summary

The **Sł̓x̓atk̓™ S̓nsisyúst̓n̓ x̓l̓ T̓aʔt̓ʔík** (Spokane Native Youth Empowerment Center) is a Native American language and culture-based center that seeks to provide Native youth with a strong academic program in an authentic cultural context. At the S̓nsisyúst̓n̓, we are seeking to enact deep systemic change in the way that Native American youth are academically and culturally educated. Youth who participate in S̓nsisyúst̓n̓ programming are immersed in Native language and culture, are academically engaged, build their leadership skills, and gain work experience. During the 2017-18 academic year, participating youth are spending 200 school days at Salish School of Spokane, as well as participating in evening and weekend academic labs. During the school day, students have completed on-line coursework and earn academic credit through Spokane Public Schools' *Spokane Virtual Learning* system, have participated in 90 minutes of Salish language instruction, have been mentored in Native cultural arts by Elders and Native knowledge keepers, and have had opportunities to practice leadership and act as mentors to Native children who attend Salish School of Spokane. During the 2017-18 school year, students are typically on site at the S̓nsisyúst̓n̓ from 8:30 am until 5:00 pm daily. The project is staffed with a Project Coordinator, an Academic Specialist, a Culture Specialist, Salish Elders and knowledge keepers, and it also includes funding for stipends for participating youth.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the S̓nsisyúst̓n̓ project is to improve the intellectual, cultural, and social well-being of Native youth in Spokane by providing them with educational and cultural services and providing them with leadership opportunities, work skills and internships. As a result of this project, Native youth will be more culturally grounded and empowered to engage in positive, productive, healthy behavior. They will be more connected to Native Elders, leaders, and knowledge keepers who can act as positive role models. Participating Native youth will be successful in school and, upon graduation, will be prepared to go to college or engage in productive work. The project goal will be accomplished by achieving three primary objectives:

- 1) establishing and sustaining a Salish language and cultural education program serving up to 25 Native youth annually with 300 hours per year of Salish immersion language instruction, 200 hours per year of Native cultural arts instruction, and 50 hours per year of cultural immersion experiences with Native Elders and other knowledge keepers;
- 2) establishing an academic program serving up to 25 Native youth annually with 800 hours of individualized academic support in a Native cultural context that supports the successful completion of high school, and;
- 3) establishing a cultural leadership and internship program serving up to 25 Native youth annually with 20 hours of leadership training, 10 hours of work and mentorship readiness training, and 100 internship hours working as cultural and academic mentors for Native children.



2017-18 Project Accomplishments

1. Summer Culture Camp

On July 10, 2017, direct programming for Native youth began with a four-week Salish language and culture training camp. Twenty Native youth participated in the program, and each received a \$1,000.00 stipend for participating in the training. Over the course of the four weeks, youth received 40 hours of Salish language instruction, and learned a variety of Native cultural arts including: archery, beading, drumming and singing, hide tanning, preparation of traditional foods, sewing and regalia making, stick gaming, and the production of parfleche and salmon shields. Participating youth visited a Native art exhibit at the Northwest Museum of Art and Culture and met with Colville Tribal artist Ric Gendron, and they took a field trip to Latah Creek to learn about Spokane tribal history with knowledge keeper Margo Hill. The summer culture camp culminated in a showcase luncheon at which each student presented a short biographical speech in Salish, demonstrated their learning, and displayed everything that they made in their cultural arts classes. The showcase was attended by parents and families of the youth. The summer culture camp was a huge undertaking and was a resounding success.

2. Salish Language Achievement

Full-time, year-round academic, language and cultural programming for Native youth was launched on September 5, 2017. Participating youth have been receiving 90 minutes of Salish immersion instruction per day, and that will continue until the end of the academic year on August 8, 2018. The six students who have stayed with the program to date have had substantial gains in Salish language proficiency. They have completed their study of the textbook, *Ńsəl̓xciń 1: A Beginning Course in Colville-Okanagan Salish*, and all of them have earned an 80% or higher average on their Salish quizzes, tests and assessments. They are now studying from the text, *Captik̓w̓ł 1: Ńsəl̓xciń Stories for Beginners*. Having 6 Native youth working towards full fluency in Salish is a great achievement and gives a significant boost to the effort to preserve and revitalize Southern Interior Salish language.

3. Cultural Connections

Throughout the school year, Native youth at the S̓nsisyúst̓n̓ have built relationships with Native Elders and knowledge keepers. Every Tuesday afternoon, the youth work with Colville Elder Jim Tomeo to learn powwow dancing and the protocols of the powwow. On Wednesdays, they work with Spokane Tribal knowledge keeper Alec Tabish to learn to play stick game, learn stick game songs, and teach stick game to elementary students at Salish School of Spokane. On Thursday afternoons, the youth drum with Spokane Elder Pat Moses, learning traditional Salish powwow and social songs on the big drum. On Monday through Thursday, the youth work with knowledge keeper Patrina Spotted Blanket. Patrina teaches them beading, quillwork, and sewing. During the fall of 2017, the youth also worked extensively with Coeur d'Alene Tribal knowledge keeper Annette Matt. With Annette, 16 youth made their own hand drums by scraping raw deer hides, stretching the hides, and then painting their finished drums. On May 25, 2017, youth from the S̓nsisyúst̓n̓ put on a Native Youth Culture Day for other youth. On Culture Day, they taught other Native youth Salish language, how to play stick game, how to



scrape a deer hide, and how to bead. Our S̓nsisyúst̓n youth have made strong, intergenerational cultural connections and are becoming cultural leaders.

4. Academic Resilience

The on-line academic program through Spokane Virtual Learning proved to be exceptionally difficult for students. There has been a lack of individualization in the courses, questionable placement of students, low levels of support from on-line teachers, and a very heavy load of assignments associated with each course. Nonetheless, nine students successfully completed the first semester of on-line courses, and 6 students completed their second semester courses. The youth who completed the entire year's on-line courses worked very, very hard, and had big gains in academic resiliency. They have learned that they can take responsibility for their own learning, and that they are capable of overcoming adversity with productive and positive strategies. Students who completed the academic program include the very first high school graduate from Salish School of Spokane. Our new graduate has been awarded a full-tuition scholarship to Spokane Falls Community College.

5. Supporting Partners/Funders

Another accomplishment of the S̓nsisyúst̓n project was the garnering of financial support from outside funders. The Kalliopeia Foundation, Charlotte Martin Foundation, Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund and the Shakopee Dakota Charitable Fund all contributed matching funds in support of the S̓ł̓x̓at̓k̓m̓ S̓nsisyúst̓n ̓ł̓ ̓Taʔt̓ʔí̓k̓. The majority of project funding is provided by a federal grant from the Administration for Native Americans, but the federal grant requires a 25% match of the project budget. For the 2017-18 school year the federal grant award is for \$232,736.57 and requires a match of \$58,185.00. That full match amount has been provided by these key project partners in recognition of the innovative and transformative possibilities of the project. Funds from partner agencies funded Salish language instruction for youth and staff, furnishing and fixtures for the secondary classroom, and instructional supplies.

6. Vision Fulfillment

The launch of the S̓ł̓x̓at̓k̓m̓ S̓nsisyúst̓n ̓ł̓ ̓Taʔt̓ʔí̓k̓ is a substantial movement forward toward the achievement of the vision of the founders of Salish School of Spokane. Our founders envisioned building a community around a school that could care and educate children in a Salish language and cultural environment from cradleboard to college. With the launch of the S̓nsisyúst̓n, we are able to serve Native youth aged 14 to 18. In the coming years we will work to integrate our established Salish immersion P-6 school program with the S̓nsisyúst̓n in order to achieve our vision of a comprehensive school experience for our children and community.



2017-18 Program Challenges

1. On-line Learning with SVL and Student Participation

The on-line learning element of the SÁxatk^w Sńsisyústń xí Taʔtʔík has been very challenging. We began the school year on September 5, 2017 with 16 students enrolled in Spokane Virtual Learning (SVL) courses through the Sńsisyústń. Each student was enrolled in five classes. Each class was taught and supervised by a certified SVL teacher, students had the support of two full-time Sńsisyústń teachers, one of whom is a certified high school teacher. Even with high levels of support, most students were overwhelmed by full-time, on-line learning, and within 60 days, 7 of the 16 students left the program and returned to conventional public schools. Problems with the on-line courses included: 1) inappropriate placement of students in courses; 2) unresponsiveness of on-line teachers; 3) excessive numbers of assignments for full-time, on-line study, and; 4) failure to accommodate students who needed special education services. A major problem with the on-line learning element of the project was that SVL required that students be placed in courses based on their age or assigned grade level, regardless of their skills or background. This led to students being placed in math and science classes that were too difficult and inappropriate given student skill levels. SVL's response to our concerns about placement was to offer the students access to tutorial software and more assignments, leading to assignment overload and student frustration. Throughout the school year, there were also persistent issues with the responsiveness of on-line teachers to student questions. Teachers often took several days to answer student questions, and sometimes never responded. Even with Sńsisyústń staff following up on student inquiries with their own emails and calls, there was a general failure to reply to student inquiries in a timely or helpful manner. By the mid-point of the first semester, it became clear that SVL was unprepared to accommodate full-time, on-line students, and that there was little to no coordination among SVL teachers to ensure that the total academic load for Sńsisyústń students was balanced and achievable. SVL courses tended to be loaded with high quantities of tasks and assignments and lacked strong qualitative assignments that took into account student interests or abilities. Even our most capable students struggled to complete the busy work from a full slate of SVL courses. And, finally, some of our Sńsisyústń students needed special education services. Across the board, SVL failed to take proactive measures to accommodate the needs of these students and implement appropriate learning and teaching strategies for them. Due to the challenges associated with the SVL on-line academic program, only 9 of the 16 students who started the program stayed with us through the end of the 1st semester. For the 2nd semester, one more student left the program voluntarily, and we ended services for another because SVL could not meet her academic needs. Of the 7 students who began the 2nd semester in the program, 6 completed their courses. One of the six students successfully graduated, and one moved out of the region at the end of the semester, leaving 4 students who will continue in the Sńsisyústń program for the 2018-19 school year.

2. Personnel

While the SVL academic program was our greatest challenge, we also had personnel issues. Our first full-time Cultural Specialist resigned from her position in December of 2017, citing a clash of personalities with the Academic Specialist and the difficulties of the on-line learning program. In January of 2018, we transferred the Academic Specialist into the Cultural Specialist position and hired a new Academic Specialist. In March, the new



Cultural Specialist was fired from the project due to professional misconduct, and a new part-time Cultural Specialist was hired. These changes in personnel exacerbated the problems with the on-line academic program and added to program instability and weakened our serves to Native youth.

3. Facilities

A general challenge for the program that was not directly tied to project goals and objectives was the lack of adequate facilities to accommodate all the programming goals of Salish School of Spokane. In 2017, our Board of Directors and Administrative Team worked to complete a small capital campaign that would have allowed us to place a modular building on our site. The additional of a modular building would have allowed us to have enough space to launch the S̓n̓sisyúst̓n̓ while also maintaining our existing P-6 school program. The capital campaign came up short, and so we had to suspend our toddler preschool program and reduce the number of seats in our ECEAP/preschool classes in order to free up classroom for the S̓n̓sisyúst̓n̓. Over all, our ability to achieve the mission of Salish School of Spokane is compromised by our lack of funding to secure adequate facilities to carry out our mission.

2018-19 Programming Response

1. Transition to Private Secondary School with in-person instruction

In order overcome the problems we have had to date with the academic elements of the S̓ł̓x̓at̓k̓™ S̓n̓sisyúst̓n̓ ǻ̓ ǻ̓a̓t̓ǻ̓í̓k̓ project, we have made the decision to drop on-line learning with SVL, and to expand our private school certification with the State of Washington to include grades 7 through 12. While taking full responsibility for offering a high quality secondary educational program of Native youth will offer its own unique challenges, we feel that that is the best way to ensure that our youth can be academically successful and that instruction can be tailored to match student needs and interests. Our P-6 Salish immersion school has been very successful with students achieving at a high academic level, and we will work to bring that same level of excellence to Native youth. To launch our secondary academic program, we will be purchasing standards-based math and science curricula, but our own teachers will design and present instructional activities, labs, and field work to make the math and science curriculum relevant to students and appropriate for their academic skill level. Salish School of Spokane has strong relationships in place with Gonzaga University, Whitworth University, and Eastern Washington University, and we will be working to further strengthen and expand those relationships to support math and science instruction for Native youth at the S̓n̓sisyúst̓n̓. As for language arts, social studies, fine and performing arts, and modern language, we are confident that we have the staffing and programming in place to ensure high levels of student achievement in those areas. We will be working to increase student enrollment, with at least 10 students enrolled for the 2018-19 school year, and up to 25 secondary students served in the 2020-21 school year.

2. Personnel

For the 2018-19 school year we will making changes in staffing for the S̓n̓sisyúst̓n̓ to achieve our academic, culture, Salish language, and youth leadership goals. In August of 2018, Dominique Camacho Wiley-Camacho



will join the S̓nsisyúst̓h as a full-time teacher and project leader, replacing the part-time Cultural Specialist. She will be the lead math and science teacher, will teach intermediate Salish language, and will assist with cultural education. Dominique is an advanced apprentice speaker of Salish, and holds a Master's degree from the University of California. She will bring much needed leadership to the S̓nsisyúst̓h program. Other staff are expected to continue with the program. With a stronger instructional team in place, we will be able to offer interdisciplinary instruction in language arts, social studies, math and science, along with Salish language, culture, health and wellness, and fine and performing arts.

3. Integration with K-6 Salish immersion program

The preschool through 6th grade classes at Salish School of Spokane are a full immersion program with Salish as the language of instruction during the entire school day. Over the next several years, we will be working to integrate this full-immersion program with the academic program in the S̓nsisyúst̓h. Over time, we expect the secondary program to be a strong bilingual program, with students becoming advanced Salish speakers, and spending a majority of their school day in Salish language immersion even as they excel in English language arts, math and science.

Conclusion

The S̓ł̓x̓at̓k̓w̓ S̓nsisyúst̓h ǰí ȚaȚȚíȚ has achieved substantial mile stones and has encountered serious challenges. Participating Native youth who have stayed with the program have made big gains in their cultural knowledge, Salish language proficiency, and academic resilience. We have helped youth to build important relationships with Salish Elders and knowledge keepers, and we have learned a lot about the limitations of on-line learning systems. We have worked with our youth, families, staff and funders to develop effective responses to the challenges faced by the project, and we are implementing improved programming for the 2018-19 school year in order to improve and sustain the project. Overall, the project has help Salish School of Spokane to achieve its mission of Salish language preservation and revitalization and the improvement of the quality life of Native American people in the Spokane metro area.



