

LCSD Indian Education students travel to U.S. capital, meet with Schrader's office

From the Lincoln County School District; posted June 28, 2022

When Secondary Director Majalise Tolan wanted to take graduating Title VI Indian Education students from the Lincoln County School District to Washington, D.C., it seemed impossible.

"I was at the National Association of Secondary School Principals Advocacy Conference and walked by the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian and thought, that's it – this is the culminating learning experience our students need to have as they end their time in Lincoln County," said Tolan.

Tolan's thoughts were shared by many, including LCSD Business Manager Kim Cusick, whose office went to work submitting a Title VI federal budget revision for cultural experiences and travel, a category that had gone largely unused due to COVID restrictions. Superintendent Dr. Karen Gray also wholeheartedly supported the opportunity.

"I think it is really important for young people to experience history firsthand. I was especially excited to provide kids an opportunity to visit national museums that are thoughtfully dedicated to sharing the different ethnic and cultural histories of our students. They can experience pride and understanding of their culture and have an appreciation of the various people that have been marginalized," said Gray.

Through consultation with **Alissa Lane-Keene**, Programs II manager for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and Gregory Hindsley, Education Program specialist for the U.S. Office of Indian Education, and with support from the LCSD Indian Education Parent Committee, the trip that had been a thought walking past a museum became a reality for any of the graduating Title VI students who wanted to attend.

"On behalf of the Office of Indian Education, I was pleased to approve this trip for the 16 graduating seniors of Lincoln County, Oregon, as it aligns with their stated Title VI (A, 1) Formula Grant goals and objectives, as well as our mission to support Indian education-based cultural and academic development. I was honored to spend some time with the group while they were in D.C. and learn more about the students and their experiences and aspirations. This program affirms that OIE is supporting great Indian Education programs in Oregon and across the country," said Hindsley.

The students themselves appreciated the opportunity.

"The trip to D.C. gave me an opportunity to explore my heritage, stand for Native representation and further understand the history of our country," said Newport High graduate Adrian Mobley.

Having been to Washington, D.C., and on field trips in the past, Indian Education specialist **Felisha Howell** felt something different during this experience.

"This trip was more than visiting the beautiful museums. This trip gave students the chance to find themselves and realize how powerful they are and how important it is for them to empower each other and be proud of who they are and where they come from," said Howell.

Waldport graduate Skyly Postma followed, "I've never felt more comfortable



Courtesy photo from LCSD

Sixteen Lincoln County students visit Washington, D.C., taking in the sights that included the National Museum of the American Indian.

or heard around a group of people I barely knew. This trip was an amazing opportunity not only for me but for other Native Americans who want to learn more about our culture."

Graduates had a walking tour of D.C. from Hindlsey; visited the National Museum of Natural History, National Museum of American History and the National Museum of the American Indian; and met with Simone Auguer, legislative assistant to Congressman Kurt Schrader.

Graduates shared information and concerns about issues such as human trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, lack of water on reservations and affordable housing.

"We enjoyed their visit and were very impressed with their knowledge and insights on issues that concern them. They were wonderful and had great questions! We're so glad we had the opportunity to chat with them," said Auguer.

The intent of the trip was to provide students with learning opportunities beyond this single experience, though.

"We realize that in our educational system, there are gaps in cultural representation," said Tolan. "With the passage of Senate Bill 13 and House Bill 2845, the inclusion of Tribal History Shared History and Ethnic Studies across content areas, we know that we still have work to do when it comes to underrepresented groups who have a history that is not being shared. Student and family voice is important when it comes to representation. Listening can almost always provide the best learning," said Tolan.

NHS graduate Mobley agreed, "I think if there's anything I can take away from D.C. that I hope to have introduced to LCSD is more education on the Native history and the exploration of cultures outside of our

small county. I think the world is filled with so much misinterpretation and misunderstandings that even a simple avenue to explore different cultures would be beneficial for inclusivity, cultural preservation and building compassion and empathy."

LCSD serves Title VI Indian Education students in Lincoln City, Newport,

Siletz, Toledo, Eddyville and Waldport. Federal Title VI is part of the Office of Indian Education, housed in the U.S. Department of Education. LCSD Title VI regularly consults with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to support and enhance learning and cultural opportunities for their youth.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians 477-SSP

Eviction
Are you being evicted or facing homelessness?

Native American
Enrolled Siletz Tribal member or enrolled in a federally recognized Indian Tribe and reside in the CTSI service area.

100% of Federal Poverty Level
Not sure what your poverty level is? Call one of the area offices.

Utility Shut-Off
Have received shut-off notice for utilities (electric, water, sewer)

Exhausted All Resources
You have utilized all other funding resources, i.e., Housing Department, LIHEAP, and other community agencies.

Taking Action

CTSI Area Offices

Siletz Administration Office: Jamie (541) 444-8266
 Salem Area Office: Angelica (503) 390-9494
 Portland Area Office: Anna (503) 238-1512
 Eugene Area Office: Jen (541) 484-4234

Other criteria may apply