

Promoting Solidarity for Social Justice and Indigenous Educational Sovereignty in the Cuba Independent School District

Leola Tsinnajinnie Paquin, Vincent Werito, Shiv Desai, and Nancy Lopez

In this panel, the presenters will use storytelling of partnership efforts with Cuba Independent School District to weave together approaches to solidarity for Indigenous educational sovereignty and community well being amidst the backdrop of the COVID 19 and racial injustice pandemics.

Leola Tsinnajinnie Paquin is an Assistant Professor of Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico. She is a member of the Institute for American Indian Education and a former President of the American Indian Studies Association. She grew up in Torreon, a community within the Cuba Independent School District (CISD). In addition to her recent work with CISD, she has been actively engaged with the Bernalillo Public School District since 2017.

Vincent Werito is an Associate Professor of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies at the University of New Mexico. He is a member of the Institute for American Indian Education. He has served as the lead in various community based research grant-funded projects. He has roots in both Torreon and Ojo Encino, two communities within the Cuba Independent School District.

Shiv Desai is an Associate Professor of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership at the University of New Mexico. He is the Co-Chair of the Diversity Council Curriculum Subcommittee amongst various race and social justice activities. He has extensive experience in working with community youth and school districts in multiple states.

Nancy Lopez is a Professor of Sociology and Associate Vice-President for Equity and Inclusion at the University of New Mexico. She is also the founder and Director of the Institute on the Study of "Race" and Social Justice. She served as one of the key investigators in the "Indian Education in New Mexico, 2025 Study."