

Element 1 - NACA Vision for Teachers and Administrators

NACA Mission: *To engage students, educators, families, and community in creating a school that will prepare our students to grow from adolescence to adulthood and begin strengthening communities by developing **strong leaders** who are **academically prepared, secure in their identity and healthy.***

A NACA graduate is a strong leader.

Vision for Graduates: NACA graduates are versed in the complex issues that Native



communities face in the 21st century and understand themselves in the broader context of sovereignty, self-determination, the connection between all indigenous peoples, and the preservation of sacred land. In such, graduates are **responsible** to their People, possessing a profound **respect** for past, present and future, as well as the environment and other living things. Graduates anchor their actions in inherent sovereignty while using their knowledge and skills to effectively navigate systems of colonization toward the ends of community transformation.

NACA Teachers: In preparation for leadership, NACA curriculum places the onus on students to use their minds well, listen carefully to peers, teachers and other leaders, and use meta-cognitive techniques to learn content through inquiry, self-reflection and individual improvement. NACA teachers design learning around summative performance assessments, requiring students to apply, use and transfer their learned knowledge and skills toward the ends of **service to community**, thereby using the classroom and community resources as a laboratory to acquire soft and hard skills of a leader.

The apex of leadership development at NACA occurs in the 12th grade Capstone Seminar during which all students take on the role of digital strategists and entrepreneurial innovators and use complex reading, writing and process skills to problem solve issues pertinent to Indigenous communities through in-class workshops and independent fellowships with local businesses and organizations.

All NACA disciplines play a pivotal role in developing leaders, and the *Indigenous History, Culture and Thought, Indigenous Language, Native Literature* and *Personal Wellness* programs are the lifeblood of a graduate's educational background to these ends of leadership development as a young Native person. These four disciplines act as the school's barometer for the extent to which our curriculum, assessments and instruction are truly *indigenized*, placing these programs and their teacher-designers at the center of the task to achieve the school's mission.

School Leaders¹: In addition to holding responsibility for quality planning and instruction at NACA (see Academic Preparedness role below), school leaders are ultimately accountable to communities, indigenous leaders, parents and students to create, promote, and continuously reevaluate the extent to which the educational preparation at NACA aligns to the leadership needs of the next generation of Native leaders. This requires NACA leadership to create and maintain relationships with Native governments and communities, indigenous leaders, and other schools dedicated to comparable goals regionally, continentally and internationally.

A NACA graduate is academically prepared for college.

Vision for Graduates: While the choice to attend college after high school is her own, a NACA graduate does not want for the discipline-specific knowledge and skills or complex reasoning abilities required in postsecondary coursework.² Nor is she limited by any learning constraints as concerns the processes of her own learning because she possesses the frame of mind and means to advocate for herself and the support she needs in higher education.

Teachers: NACA values the expertise of its teacher-designers, and creates autonomous space for them to create coursework that is rigorous, meaning it is conceptually demanding, based on higher-order questioning and holding students responsible for doing the intellectual heavy lifting in all studies. NACA curriculum is vertically aligned across grade-levels and disciplines to ensure a continuum of complexity in all content areas. NACA teachers design summative assessments aligned to yearlong and unit objectives, and evaluate student work against those objectives to improve their curriculum, assessments and instruction.

¹ "School Leaders" is a descriptor for both administrative personnel, facilitators and all other school leaders who may not hold official title but are dynamic school leaders all the same.

² Common Core State Standards for College and Career Readiness provide the measureable objectives to evaluate NACA effectiveness toward academic preparedness. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/>

Instruction at NACA places student inquiry at the core of learning. NACA teachers use structured and continuous formative assessments to evaluate student understanding, and maneuver flexibly with their planning to address student needs.

NACA's teachers make their work transparent, available and vulnerable for the sake of improvement, and provide formal and informal critiques to one-another based on kindness, specificity and helpfulness in improving the individual and collective craft of teaching at the school.

NACA's College Engagement team is designed to demystify college processes and expectations, and support students in high school to navigate the simple and complex barriers to postsecondary educational success for our graduates.

We value academic preparedness, and part and parcel in that is student-driven academic advocacy based in relevant curriculum and instruction. NACA teachers design curriculum to promote student understanding of strengths and areas for growth, engage parents and students in the process of setting individualized education goals, and are supported in the classroom by the Special Education team in refining classroom practices to meet the learning needs of all students.

School Leaders: School leaders, while responsible for school-level planning and systems, are ultimately accountable for high-level planning and instruction in the classroom, and therefore are present in classrooms and provide consistent and constructive feedback for the improvement of teaching and learning. In addition to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction's presence in the classroom, all Instructional Team members are tied to a content and grade-level team and provide transparent expectations for weekly observations and give immediate, concrete feedback.

A NACA graduate is secure in her identity.

Vision for Graduates: NACA is a Native American school and we do not apologize for our objectives, assessments and instructional practices guided by our sovereign communities. NACA students acquire the **cultural**, linguistic and artistic knowledge and skills to ground them in their cultural, racial and ethnic identity, but also the *understanding* - the heart - of what it means to exist as a young native person tied to traditional ways of thinking and living.

Teachers: NACA recognizes the development of identity from Kindergarten to 12th grade as multifaceted, encompassing aspects of self such as childhood, adolescence, gender and

sexual identity, in addition to other demographic identifiers. Our teacher-designers are charged with building curriculum that actively engages student identity in all respects, while requiring students to actively challenge self in the context of surroundings.

Culture and language are essential in identity. In such, both native and non-native educators model and support students in actively seeking knowledge and understandings specific to their students' identities by embodying their own cultures and valuing the cultural identities of all.

School Leaders: NACA leaders and teachers are models for students. They explicitly use the Core Values in communication with one-another as a stalwart against lateral oppression³ and other forms of disharmony amongst teachers and school leaders who share common cause. They reevaluate their work according to values and original teachings, regardless of cultural background, as a source to realign oneself with the intent to work at NACA, for our students and the larger aims of decolonization and self-determination.

School leaders are accountable for engaging themselves, teachers and staff in purposeful professional development in the philosophical, epistemological and ideological underpinnings that push us all to reevaluate the vision of the school and its fruition of the mission.

A NACA graduate is healthy.

Vision for Graduates: NACA graduates are prepared to *persevere* as they advocate for personal and communal health, and possess the cultural knowledge to begin a pathway in Native health given their Science, Math, Personal Wellness and Indigenous History, Culture and Thought coursework.

In preparation, NACA's Personal Wellness coursework is designed around Indigenous physical wellness, land and plant medicines, body autonomy, and expression.

The Personal Wellness program is an essential component of student outcomes in health, though its effectiveness requires its teachers to provide professional development to all NACA staff in empowering mind, body and spirit.

School Leaders: School leaders are charged with the complex task of prioritizing its decisions against the four principle concepts that anchor the mission: leadership, academic preparedness, identity and health. In the political environment of public education, wellness is more often an afterthought for children. At NACA, it is the responsibility of school leaders to

³ <http://www.kweykway.ca/blog/what-is-lateral-violence>

maintain wellness as a central objective through programming for students, professional development for staff and engagement with community.