

Tuesday, March 10th  
USET Annual Meeting

# Partnerships Between Tribal Governments & Schools



Mashantucket Pequot  
Tribal Nation





Director of Education

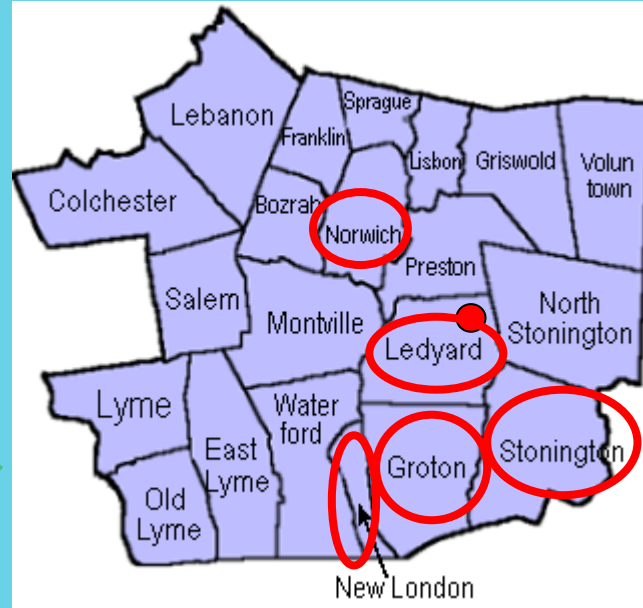
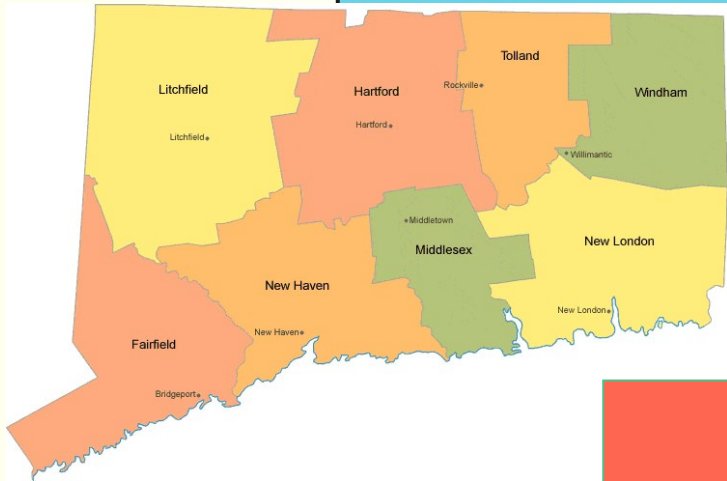
## Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

- Former middle school teacher in NJ & NYC
- Former Academic Dean in NJ
- Former Curriculum Director for Uncommon Schools (NY, MA, NJ)
- In role at MPTN since December 2022
- Oversees 10 Ed Dept Team members & Child Development Center with 27 teachers serving 135 students

**Contact:**

[rgomez@mptn-nsn.gov](mailto:rgomez@mptn-nsn.gov)

# Where We Are Located



# State Dept of Education

## Policy Shaping

- Work with Tribal legal team to push forward necessary policies

## Curriculum

- Demand inclusion in Indigenous studies-related curriculum creation
- Ensure curriculum & training are available to all teachers

## Relevant Memberships

- America 250
- CT Council for the Social Studies
- NAEYC/CTAEYC
- CT Humanities & Science Orgs



# Leveraging State Resources



## Regional Education Service Coordinators

- Provide a variety of resources to all districts in a given region in CT
- LEARN= RESC for SE CT
- Partnering to strengthen Child Development Center & enhance special education services for Tribal children

## Birth To Three

- Provides support for students not meeting benchmarks in ages 0-3
- Provides FREE early intervention services at no cost to Tribes & families
- Providers visit our CDC to provide services on the reservation

## Care 4 Kids

- State program that helps cover childcare costs for low to moderate income families in CT
- Sponsored through the CT Office of Early Childhood
- Saves Tribal dollars and provides school choice at the ECE age

# Indian Policies & Procedures

## Impact Aid

Ledyard Public Schools receive federal funding for students living on Tribal land or whose parents work on Tribal land

## Data Analysis

Annual presentation of data as outlined by the IPP, including: attendance, academic performance, academic & extracurricular participation

## MPTN Input

Superintendent visits reservation annually to present data & gather community input

## Challenges:

- Collaboration & communication between district & Tribal education leader
- Data sharing between district & Tribal education department
- Opportunities for Tribal input on IPP revisions

## Wins:

- SY 25-26 revisions to IPP
- Clarity on revision process moving forward
- Tribal voice at Board of Education meetings

# Board of Education Connections

## Regular Attendance

MPTN Education Director attends at least 75% of Ledyard BOE meetings

## Consistent Correspondence

When written feedback is required, MPTN Education Department writes to the Ledyard BOE & ensures correspondence is reflected in monthly minutes

## Review of Minutes

Monthly review of all notes from meetings to ensure accuracy

## Public Commentary

- Regular participation in public commentary
- Invitation to Tribal family to participate in public commentary

# Superintendent Relationships

8



## Make Presence & Power Known

- At the very least, Tribal education leaders are equivalent to district superintendents
- Begin with the common goal of supporting all students
- Establish open and cordial modes of communication
- Clarify needs & expectations

**CABE/CAPPS:**  
The importance of a larger network

# Working With Schools

## Monthly Principal Meetings

Regular check-ins with school leaders to:

- Build relationships
- Obtain specific student updates
- Be present onsite at highly-populated schools
- Share information about key events & dates
- Advocate for students

## Volunteering

Volunteer for school events to be present for Tribal students and families:

- Book Fairs
- School Dances
- Field Trips
- Math/ Literacy Nights
- Sports Events
- Graduations

## Special Groups

Create and/ or participate in special interest groups:

- Case Study: **More Than Words**



# Expanding School Choice

10

## MOUs

Establish mutually beneficial relationships with high-priority schools

- **Case Study:** St. Thomas More

## Directors of Admissions

Get close to them! These relationships help students enter dream schools!

- **Case Study:** Pine Point School

## Transportation

Don't let transit be a barrier to a great education

- **Case Study:** Norwich Free Academy

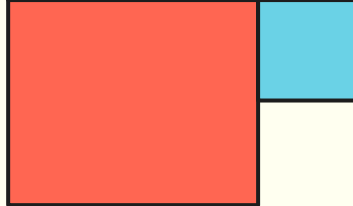


# Special Education Supports



All students deserve a high-quality education!

- Advocacy services to support families through the IEP/ 504 process
- Regular participation in PPTs to ensure accuracy and fairness
- School/ district interventions as needed (remediation process, state complaints, etc.)
- Close work with district Student Services leaders & teachers



# Tribal Policy Revisions

## Chronic Absenteeism Intervention

- Current work to repeal the Tribal Truancy Law & replace it with this policy
- Will encourage communication & collaboration between schools, MPTN Ed Dept & MPTN Child Protective Services to strengthen student attendance and engagement

## Tuition Scholarship

- Revisions on tuition amounts MPTN will pay for schooling, tutoring, etc.
- Allows the MPTN Education Committee to find new ways to partner with schools

