



2014 Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) Directors Meeting

Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)

JUNE 19, 2014 • ARLINGTON, VA

Featured Speakers

Libia S. Gil is the Assistant Deputy Secretary, Director of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) in the U.S. Department of Education. In that role, she is the principal adviser to Secretary Arne Duncan on all matters related to the education of English learners. Dr. Gil is committed to ensuring improvement in English language education through the Department's educational initiatives, among them Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation and the Teacher Quality Partnership. Prior to joining the Department, she served as vice president for practice at the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning in Chicago. She was also a senior fellow and managing director at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), where she developed and co-led the AIR Center for English learners. She began her career as a teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and later was a bilingual resource specialist in the ABC Unified School District in California. In that same district, she served as a bilingual-ESL coordinator, as a desegregation officer designing bilingual (Spanish, Korean and Chinese) magnet programs for voluntary desegregation efforts and finally as an elementary school principal implementing a Portuguese bilingual maintenance program. Dr. Gil served as an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in the Seattle Public Schools, where she was responsible for bilingual education services and programs in addition to a multitude of other programs and services. Later she became superintendent of the Chula Vista Elementary School District in California and institutionalized dual language programs in Spanish.

Carlos Martinez is an OELA Supervisory Education Program Specialist. Mr. Martinez brings a wide range of experiences from multiple levels of education systems including elementary EL teaching; administration in different districts; university instruction; as well as adult ESL teaching. Prior to joining OELA, he provided technical assistance to state departments of education on evaluation policy including standards-based assessment and accountability for language minority students. He was the Assistant Secretary of Education in the New Mexico Public Education Department. His other positions included Supervisor of Testing in Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools; the administrator of the Gulf Coast Educational Consortium, which provided technical assistance to Title I schools in southwest Florida; and Title I evaluator in Hillsborough County (Tampa, Florida). He also worked with the Connecticut Department of Education where he served as evaluator of state and federal compensatory education programs. Mr. Martinez is committed to biliteracy/multiliteracy skills development and has a degree in Bilingual-Multicultural Education. He also is a Title VII Scholar.

Zoë Higheagle Strong is a Nez Perce tribal member and the Vice President of Strong Alliance, LLC. Strong Alliance provides customized curriculum and training for corporations, tribal communities and youth development programs throughout the United States. Her passion for Native youth also motivated her to collaborate with her husband Mack Strong, a sports analyst and former Seattle Seahawk, to establish The Mack Strong TEAM-WORKS Foundation (a 501c3 nonprofit organization). TEAM-WORKS provides mentoring programs that assist Native and urban youth from at-risk communities to develop strong minds, strong bodies and strong character in order to succeed academically and in life. Their programs serve students throughout the Northwest with in-school and after-school academies and summer youth development camps. Her research focuses on examining culturally supportive mentoring and youth intervention programs for American Indian/Alaska Native students that address both cognitive and social emotional learning and development.