



The STAR School

Service To All Relations

Youth Engagement The S.T.A.R. School Style

A cultural and place-based method to engaging students using K'e (Diné Kinship) and Sustainability

But first!

About The S.T.A.R. School

- › Founded in 2001 by the Sorensen's
- › Completely Off-Grid, solar & wind turbine powered
- › Located near the Southwest corner of the Navajo Nation with 95% Navajo enrollment.
- › Focuses on self-reliance, sustainable energy sources, service-learning and the Four R's





A CONSTANT RENEWAL

DAILY PLEDGE

Shizaad Shit Nili
Shizaad bee Yásh'tí'
Shizaad bóhoosh'aah
Shizaad ayóó
anoolnin
Shizaad I'li

Three main values

- › Self Identity through K'e'
 - Tribal
 - Embrace Ethnicity
- › Sense of Place
 - Interrelatedness
 - A part in Nature
- › Sustainability
 - Cultural
 - Tribal Continuity
 - Deeper relationships
 - Community awareness





Engagement and/or Involvement

› ENGAGEMENT

- *A mutually beneficial interaction that results in participants feeling valued for their unique contribution*
- Ideas Matter

› INVOLVEMENT

- *The fact or condition of being involved with or participating in something; being included in activities or conversation.*
- Participation Matters

“One cannot work without the other”

~PB's musing #46328



Following the “standard” guidelines

- › A student is given a chance to explain (teach) in class or small study group
- › Spending time in partner/group activities
- › Students use their sense of “place” to enhance their learning
- › Students are called on randomly instead of voluntarily throughout the class
- › As the educator, LOL’ing at something out loud in class (being human)
- › Time for self-reflection is a must, recording your “feels”
- › Movement throughout the classroom is allowed and encouraged
- › Access to internet “research” with guidelines about using electronics
- › Given an opportunity to state opinions, because it matters



The Four R's

› RESPECT

- Supporting others with positive comments to help self-identify and follow directions.

› RELATIONSHIP

- Establishing K'e or Navajo Kinship through introduction of self and claiming a relative

› RESPONSIBILITY

- Identifying and performing tasks willingly in a self-directed way that aligns with community needs

› REASONING

- Actively helping others think through problems leading to a mutual solution.

Rule of PB's thumb

“If students don't have fun, they aren't going to repeat it.”

- Make it place-based to help them realize the context of where they live.
- Help them identify in a culturally appropriate way
- Help them realize the importance of sustainability by setting a hands-on example
- Know what you are talking about



Using Indigenous Food to promote Health and Community engagement



FARM TO SCHOOL

The STAR School has been successful in keeping and establishing a working relationship with North Leupp Family Farms where interaction with elders is a must, and with Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture in exchange for indigenous and local produce to be processed and served in our school cafeteria. Food Corps of Arizona is also a valuable asset as they provide additional education on farming methods.





EMBRACE INDIGENOUS VALUES

- › Speak one's indigenous language all the time if you are fluent
- › Participate in traditional and cultural activities, including the preparation and provision of food
- › Have a discussion about using traditional healing and prevention practices
- › Identify with or participating in Indigenous practices of spirituality
- › Encourage spending time at “home” or tribal land
- › Non-Native students are taught to be grounded to a place
- › Respond always as a relative

THESE CAN REVEAL THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF OUR NATIVE CHILDRENS INFLUENCE
ON OUR SURROUNDINGS

~PB's musings #9876

Final words.....

Be human because kids can spot an alien at any moment. At the end, we are doing this for our community. We will always be a part of Nature, that's our belief. ~PB's final musings #273684006



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