

# **BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER**

**Community Vision For The Tulalip  
Tribal School(s)**

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**JULY 2024**



**RISE**

Research for Indigenous  
Social Action and Equity

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# PREFACE

The Tulalip Tribes are in the early stages of planning a groundbreaking endeavor – the development of a community- and culture-based school. The school(s) will build upon our tribe’s strengths, values, and rich heritage, providing our future generations with the tools and opportunities needed to develop happy and healthy children who will grow up to be successful, contributing members of our tribal community and of society at large, while preserving who we are as Native people.

As we embark on this journey, an essential first step is to develop a strong foundation for the school(s) that is built on the collective vision (i.e., ideas, expectations, values, and concerns) of our community (Phase 1 in building community consensus). To bring this vision to light, the Tribes, in partnership with researchers from the Research for Indigenous Social Action and Equity (RISE) Center<sup>[1]</sup> conducted a series of focus groups and a community-wide survey.

Before sharing the findings, we want to acknowledge and honor the voices of the community members who shared the historical and ongoing trauma and discrimination experienced by our people in education. To move forward in a good way, we acknowledge that for generations, schools represented spaces of forced assimilation and trauma, including the suppression and attempted eradication of language and culture and extreme forms of abuse.

One particularly painful chapter in our history mentioned numerous times, is the Indian boarding school era. Past generations of our children were forcibly removed from their families and tribal communities and were placed in boarding schools where the stated mission was to eradicate Native language, culture, and identities (i.e., “kill the Indian, save the man”), but the realities our children faced were far worse. They experienced extreme abuse ranging from complete separation from family and community to horrific forms of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse to genocide, which led to profound intergenerational trauma that continues to affect our communities today.

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[1] RISE is an organization founded by Tulalip Tribal member Dr. Stephanie Fryberg. The RISE team has a longstanding history of collaborating with tribes and schools, and it is uniquely positioned to amplify Native voices and perspectives.

As we move into a new era of community- and culture-based school(s) tailored to our children, we acknowledge this past and commit ourselves to creating schools that honor our past, present, and future and that uplift and nurture the full humanity—the mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing—of our children. The development of the Tulalip school(s) is not just about education; it is about healing our people, reclaiming our identity, revitalizing our culture, and ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

**As we navigate this journey together, let us honor the resilience of our ancestors, acknowledge the injustices of the past, and strive for a more just future where our children and youth thrive in a community that celebrates their heritage and supports their dreams.**

Stephanie A. Fryberg, PhD

Tulalip Tribal Member  
Professor of Psychology  
Founding Director, Research for Indigenous Social Action and Equity Center (RISE)  
Northwestern University

# INTRODUCTION

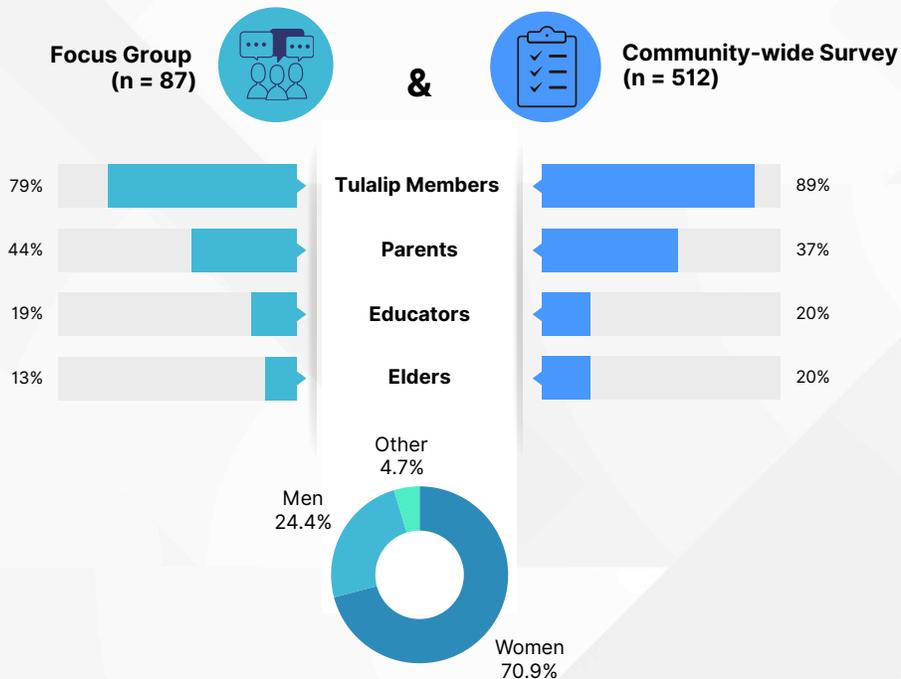
## Collective Aspirations for the Tulalip Tribal School(s)

Between October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the RISE team conducted 24 in-person focus groups (60~90 minutes), which brought together 87 Tulalip community members (e.g., elders, parents, Tulalip employees, and youths) and professionals in the field of education. Building upon the insights gathered from the focus groups, the RISE team created two online surveys, inviting all community members to share their opinions on what motivates Tulalip students and what is crucial for the future of the community. Between December 2023 and March 2024, 512 community members participated in the community-wide survey.

## Participants in the Focus Groups and the Community Surveys

The participants were mainly Tulalip Tribal members, with the majority being parents, educators, and elders. About 71% of the participants were women.

### OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS



# SECTIONS



## Vision for the Future Tulalip School(s)

- Community-recommended effective strategies



## Nurturing Our Next Generations

- What we hope our children will learn



## Accessing Success

- Success indicators of Tulalip students and schools



## Facilities & Staffing

- Building design preferences
- Hire Tulalip/Native teachers
- Teacher certification



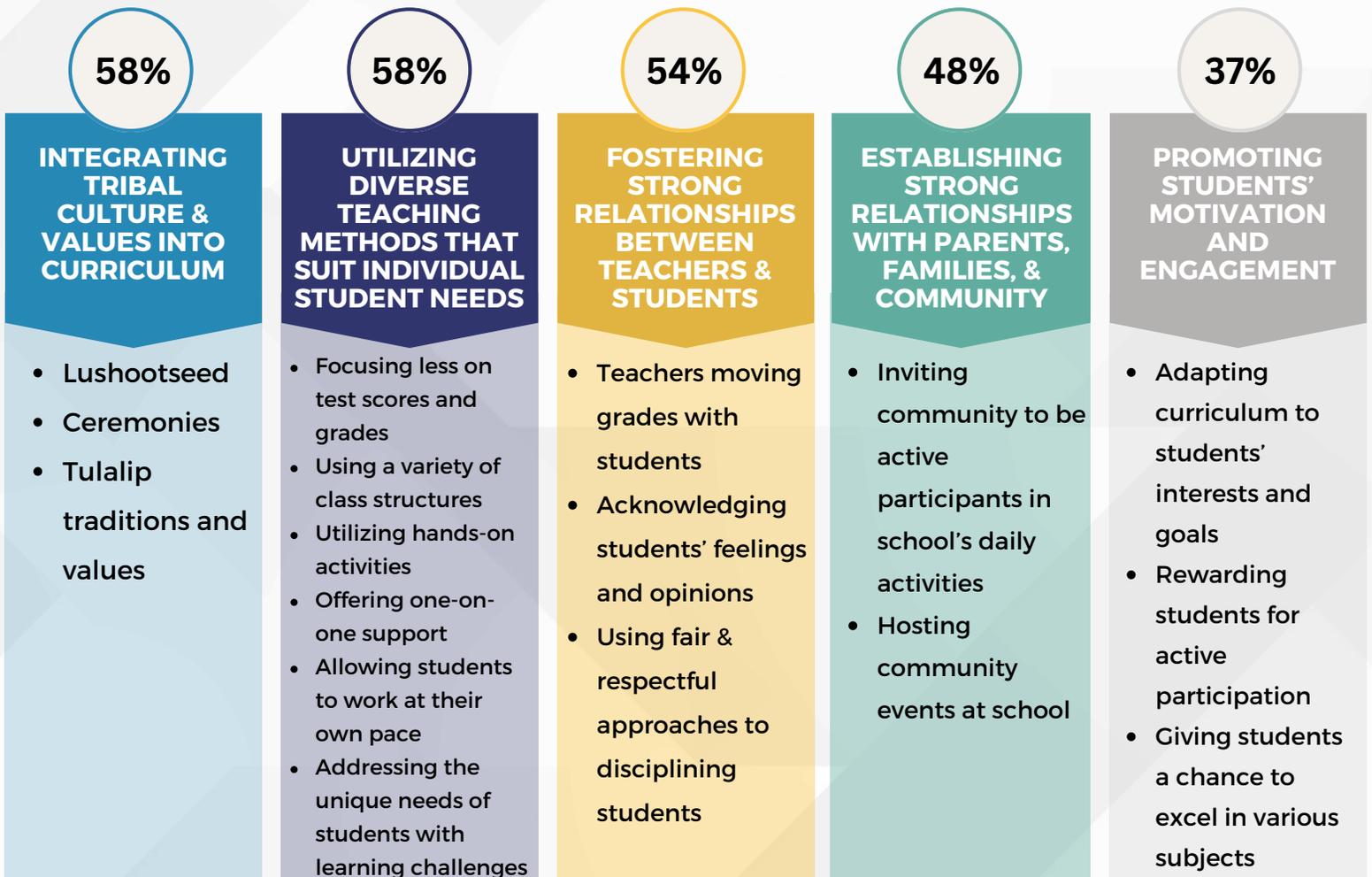
## Examples of Successful Indigenous/non-traditional Schools

# VISION FOR THE FUTURE TULALIP SCHOOL(S)

## Community-Recommended Effective Strategies and Practices

### Focus Group

In the focus groups, out of 206 excerpts, 67 participants mentioned various strategies and practices that are effective for Native children, expressing hopes that future Tulalip school(s) could incorporate them.



Note: The figure shows the strategies and practices recommended by more than 35% of the focus group participants

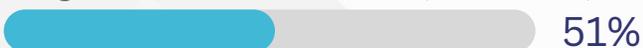


Note: Themes with fewer than 15% of respondents are excluded.

## Survey

In alignment with the insights gathered from the focus groups, a considerable number of survey participants highlighted **the efficacy of integrating Tulalip culture and employing diverse teaching methods tailored to individual student needs.**

Integrate tribal cultural activities, ceremonies, and traditions into the curriculum



Utilize diverse teaching methods focusing on individual student needs



Address the unique needs of students with learning challenges



Meet students' psychosocial and emotional needs



Establish strong relationships between students, teachers, and the community



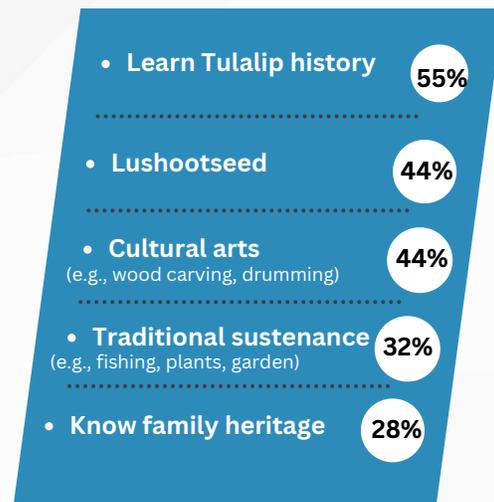
Note: The figure shows the top 5 strategies and practices recommended by the community-wide surveys.

# The Tulalip Values & Practices That Should be Prioritized

## TULALIP VALUES



## TULALIP PRACTICES



Note: The figure shows the top 5 Tulalip values and practices recommended by the community-wide surveys.

## Recommended Teaching Approaches

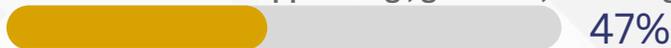
Utilize “learn by doing” teaching practices (e.g., kinesthetic learning)



Encourage students to see challenges and failures as opportunities to learn



Offer one-on-one support (e.g., guidance, encouragement)



Address the unique needs of students with learning challenges (e.g., dyslexia)



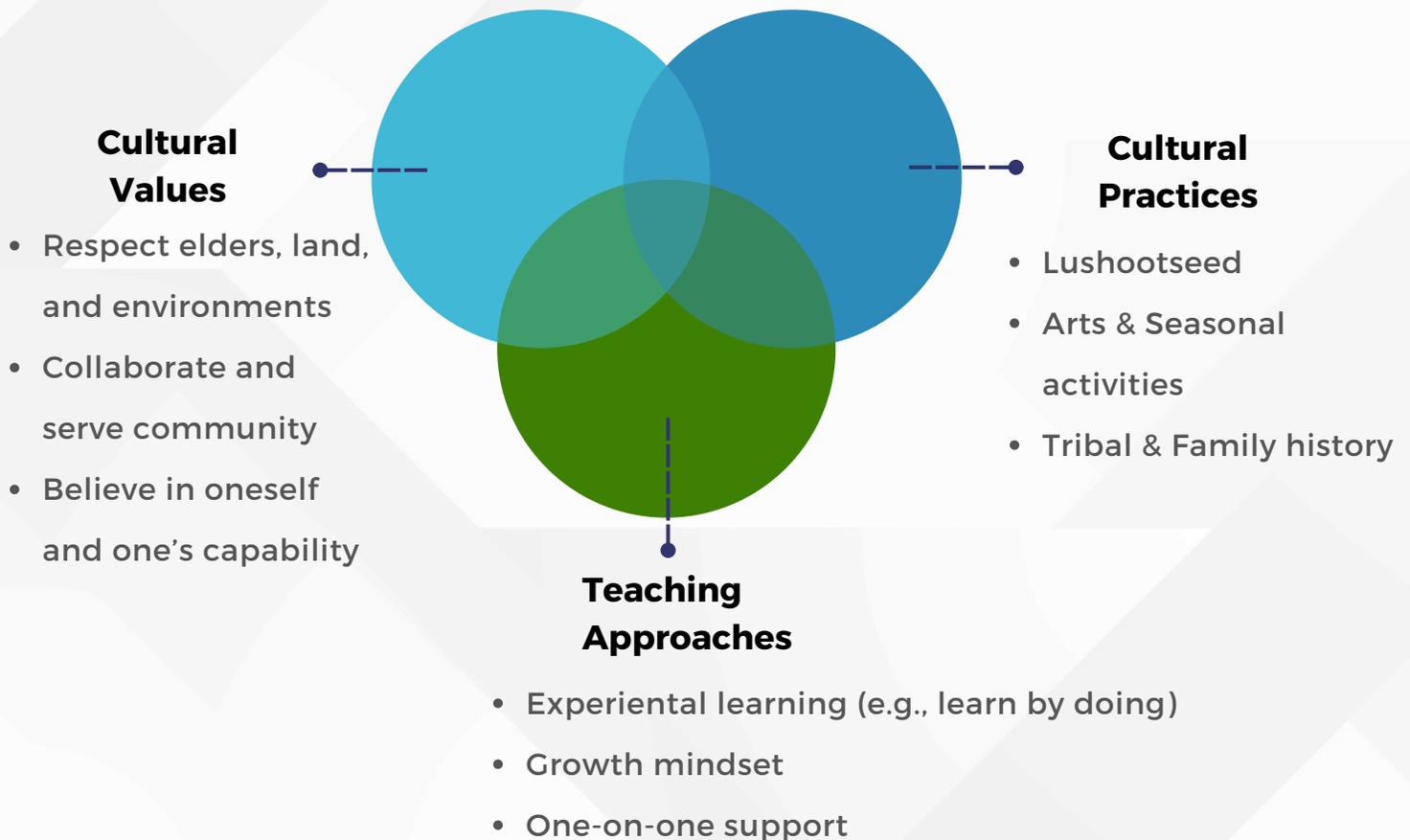
Immerse students in local communities and environments (e.g., engaging science at the beach)



Note: The figure shows the top 5 Tulalip values and practices recommended by the community-wide surveys.

# SUMMARY

Future Tulalip School(s) should integrate **Tulalip culture** and utilize **diverse teaching approaches** to promote students' success and well-being

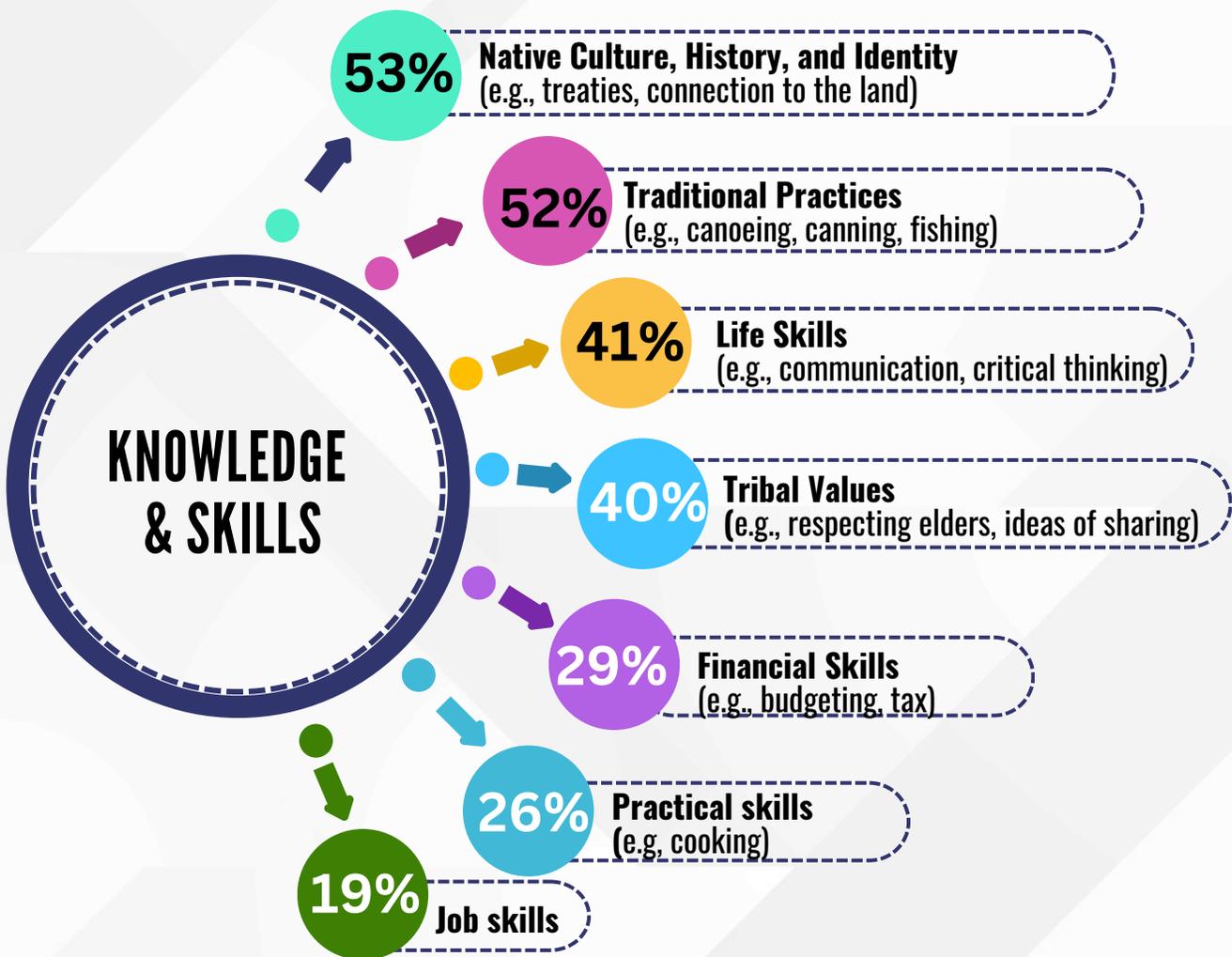


# NURTURING OUR NEXT GENERATIONS

## What We Hope Our Children Will Learn

### Focus Group

In the focus groups, a total of 138 excerpts were collected, with 58 participants sharing their thoughts on what we hope our children will learn beyond traditional academic subjects, such as reading, writing, and math.



Note: Themes with fewer than 15% of respondents are excluded.

## Survey

In the community-wide survey, participants were presented with a list of knowledge and skills suggested by the focus groups and were asked to select the most important ones for younger and older kids separately.

**Across all age groups, there is a strong emphasis on learning Native culture, history, and identity.** For younger children, there is an additional focus on learning Lushootseed and Tulalip values. Older children are also encouraged to acquire financial planning skills, participate in substance abuse prevention programs, and develop trade and vocational skills.

### YOUNGER KIDS (UNDER 12 YEARS OLD)

- **Native culture, history, and identity** 59%  
(e.g., connection to the land, treaties)
- **Social life skills** 52%  
(e.g., communication, critical thinking)
- **Tribal values** 49%  
(e.g., respecting elders, idea of sharing)
- **Lushootseed** 44%
- **Practical life skills** 36%  
(e.g., cooking, cleaning, healthy eating)

VS

### OLDER KIDS (12 YEARS OLD OR ABOVE)

- **Financial skills** 58%  
(e.g., budgeting, tax)
- **Native culture, history, identity** 46%  
(e.g., connection to the land, treaties)
- **Practical life skills** 40%  
(e.g., cooking, cleaning, healthy eating)
- **Social life skills** 37%  
(e.g., communication, critical thinking)
- **Substance abuse prevention** 36%
- **Trade and vocational skills** 34%

# SUMMARY

## What We Hope Our Students Will Learn



Native culture,  
history, and  
identity

### Children

Social life  
skills

Practical  
life skills

### Youth

Lushootseed  
Tribal values

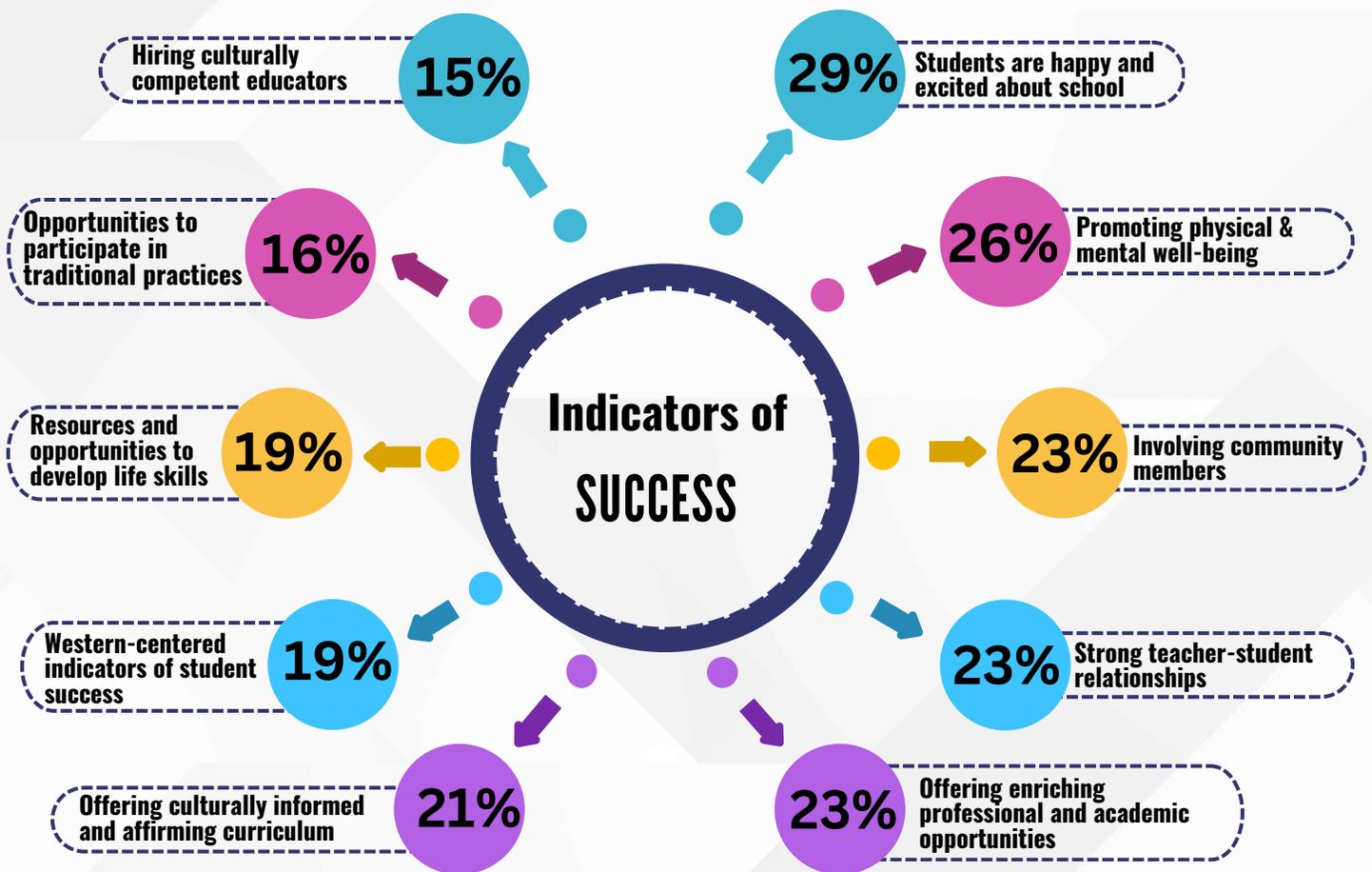
Financial Planning  
Substance Abuse Prevention  
Trade and vocational skills

# ASSESSING SUCCESS

## Defining Success for Future Tulalip Schools

### Focus Group

In the focus groups, a total of 271 excerpts were gathered, with 70 participants discussing essential factors for determining the success of future Tulalip school(s). The figure below highlights indicators valued by more than 10% of the focus group participants.



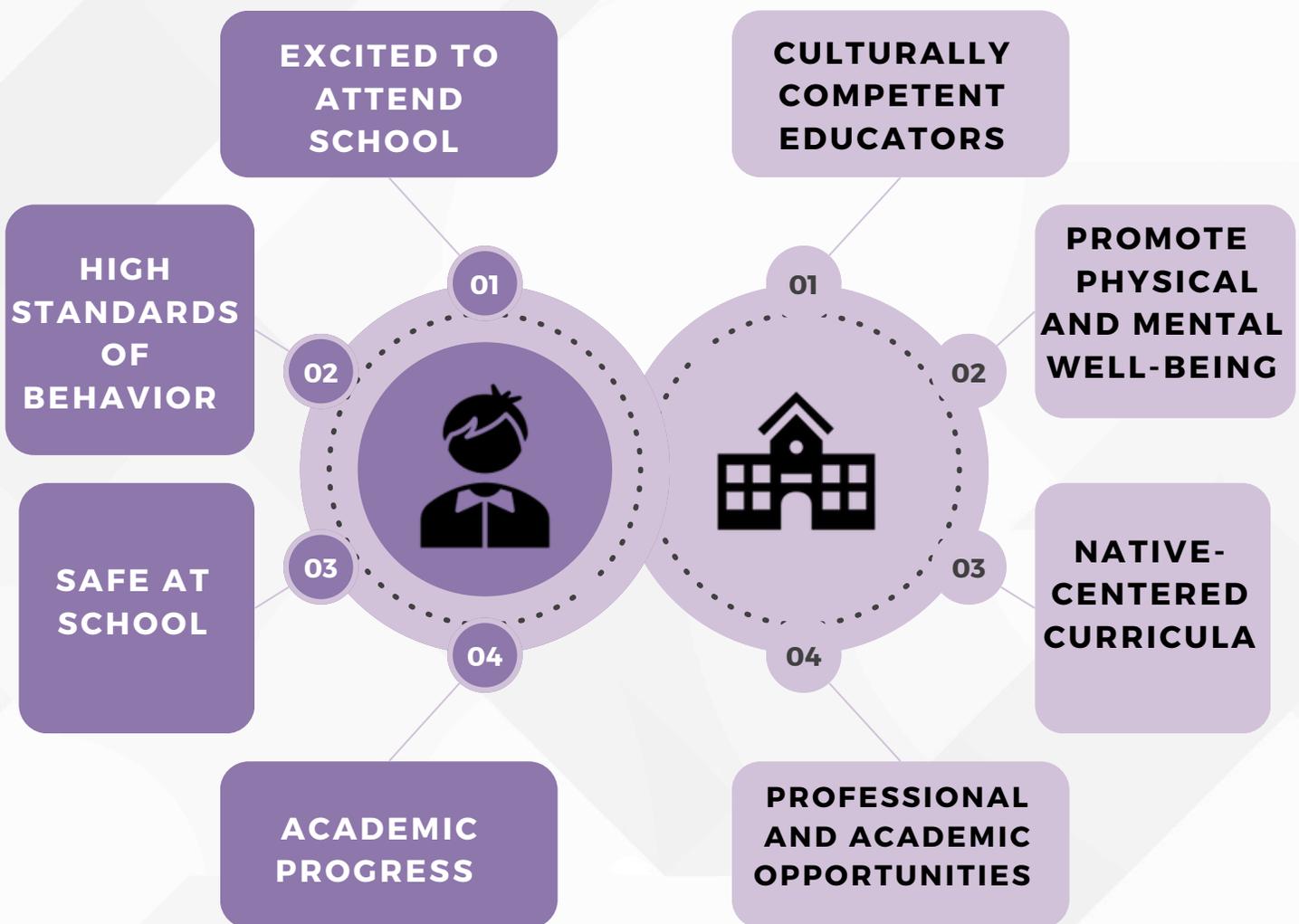
## Survey

In the community-wide surveys, participants were presented with a list of indicators suggested by the focus groups and were asked to select the most important success indicators for students and schools. Below are highly regarded success indicators for future Tulalip school(s).



# SUMMARY

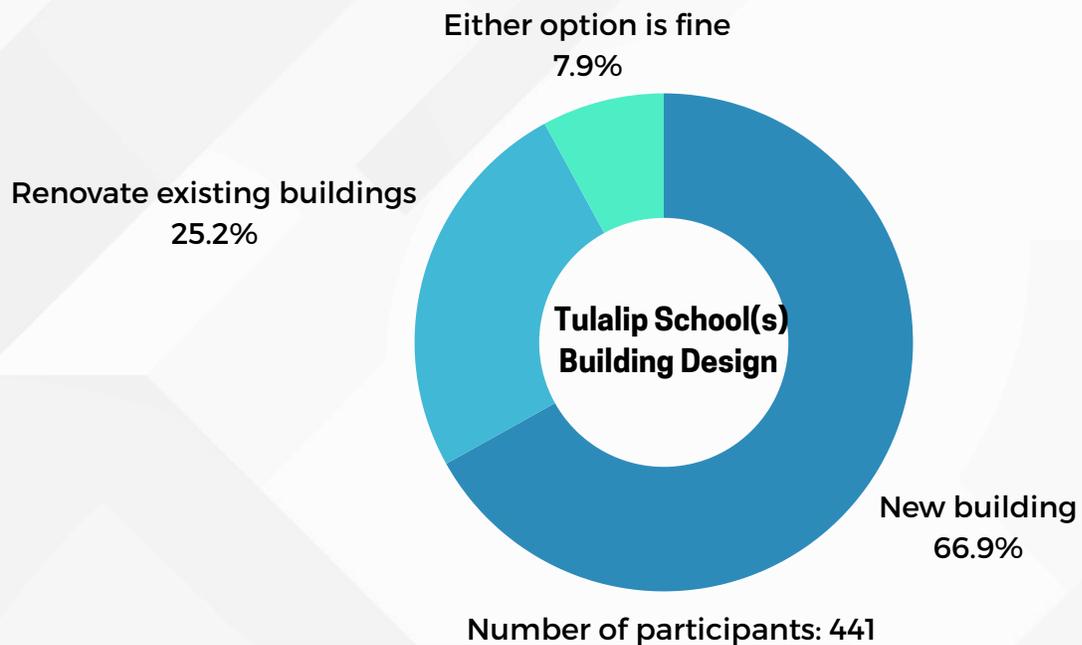
Both the focus groups and surveys highlight that **the community's top priority is ensuring that our children feel safe and happy at school**. This suggests an understanding that safety and happiness are precursors to academic success. Regarding school features, the integration of Tulalip/Native culture will be a key highlight. To achieve this, it's crucial to have the right curricula and personnel in place.



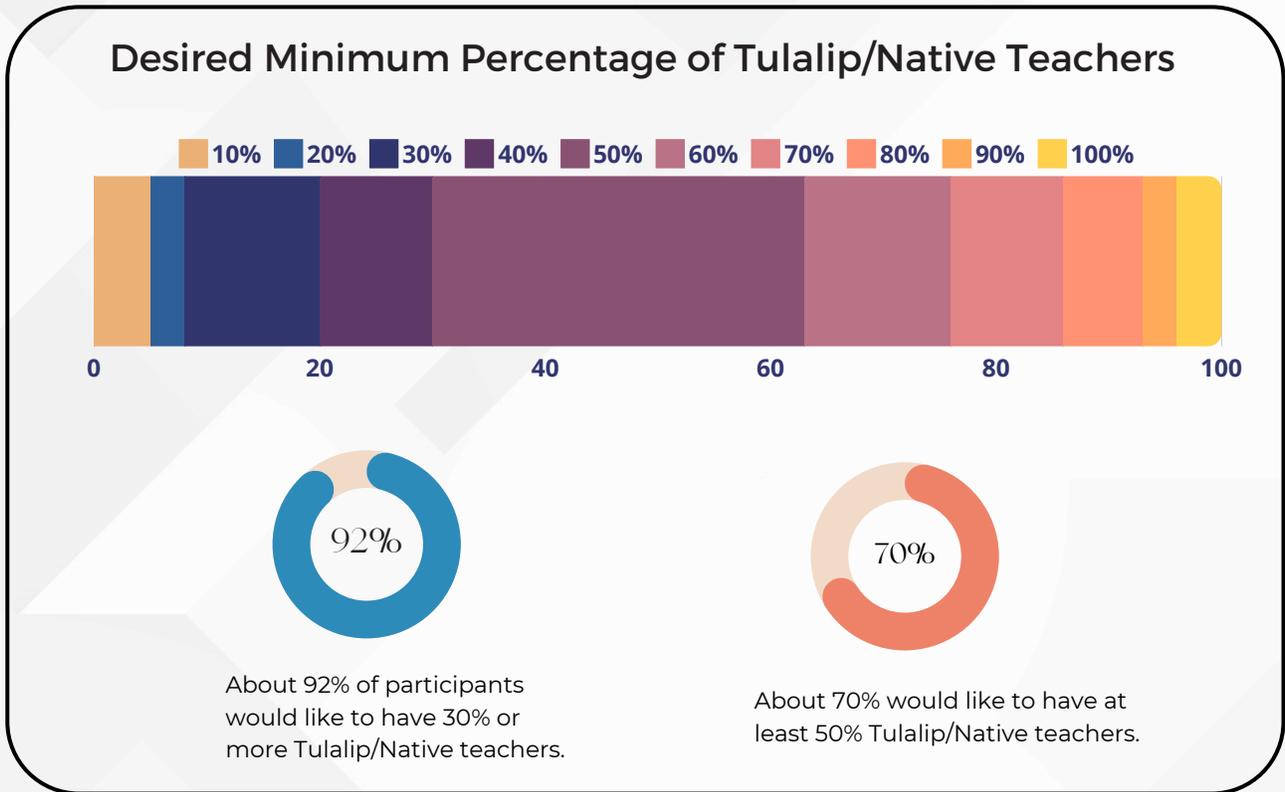
# FACILITIES & STAFFING

## Build or Refurbish

In the community-wide survey, respondents were asked about their preferences regarding the infrastructure for the new school(s). About 67% prefer a newly designed building, 25% prefer renovating existing buildings, and 8% think either option is fine.



# Hire Tulalip/Native Teachers



## Teacher Certification

The Grow Your Own Teacher Committee held a teacher recruitment meeting in December, 2023. More than 30 adults showed up to learn more about becoming a teacher or to learn more about roles/positions they could work towards for the school in the future.

The committee has identified two pathways tribal members can engage to become certified teachers. One is a partnership, spearheaded by tribal member Chelsea Craig, with an internationally certified university in New Zealand. The other is a partnership with the University of Washington College of education. This program was initially created for the Betty Taylor Early Learning Academy and is focused specifically on early childhood (pre-K to 8 year olds). We will continue to grow the partnership and to extend the teacher education certificate to older grade levels in the future.

# SUCCESSFUL INDIGENOUS K-12 SCHOOLS

To develop community-based models of success beyond the traditional Western framework, we conducted a comprehensive search to identify schools that are successfully educating children differently. The figures below present a list of successful Indigenous and/or non-traditional K-12 schools inside and outside the US context, as well as the indicators that define their success.



- 01: Native American Community Academy, Albuquerque, NM
- 02: Navajo Preparatory School, Farmington, NM
- 03: Indian Community School, Franklin, WI
- 04: Uintah River High School, Fort Duchesne, UT
- 05: Puente de Hozho, Flagstaff, AZ
- 06: Akwesasne Freedom School, Akwesasne, NY

- 07: Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 08: Arowhenua Māori School, Temuka, New Zealand
- 09: Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Hoani Waititi Marae, Aotearoa, New Zealand
- 10: Worawa Aboriginal College, Healesville, VIC, Australia
- 11: Sami Upper Secondary School, Karasjok, Norway
- 12: Yue-Kong Pao School, Shanghai, China

[1] Indigenous schools in the US: 01-06; Indigenous schools outside the US: 07-09, 11; non-traditional schools: 10, 12

# 10 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

## Preparation for College

- Dual College Degree Programs
- IB Diploma Programs
- AP Classes

## Numeric Indicators of Student Success

- High Graduation and Attendance Rates
- Strong Performance on Standardized Tests

## Language Revitalization

- Language Immersion Programs
- Dual Language Programs

## Culturally Informed and Affirming Curriculum

- Indigenous Literature & History
- Decolonial Education

## Teaching Life Skills

- Communication
- Decision-Making
- Conflict Resolution

## Cultural Arts and Sports Programming

- Singing
- Dancing
- Drumming

## School Recognition Awards

- District School Proficiency Award
- Prime Minister's Education Excellence Award

## Community Involvement and Collaboration

- Guest Speakers
- Community Field Trips
- Elder(s) in Residence

## Psychological and Physical Wellbeing Resources

- Hotlines + Mental Health Services
- Socio-Emotional Courses

## Place-Based Education

- Learning From the Land
- Traditional Outdoor Education

The figure below highlights three exemplary schools that offer education from K to 12, featuring one successful Indigenous school in the US , another in New Zealand , and a non-traditional bilingual international school in China.

## Showcases of successful Indigenous/non-traditional K-12 schools

### DESCRIPTIONS

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ACADEMY, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

- K-12
- Founded in 2006
- # of students: 480
- Student-teacher ratio: 10 : 1

- Culturally informed curriculum
- Programs that affirm Native identity
- Diverse student body representing 60 different tribes

#### TE KURA KAUPAPA MĀOARI O HOANI WAITITI MARAE - AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

- 1-13 school(s) (ages 5-18)
- Founded in 1985
- # of students: 170
- Student-teacher ratio: ~10 : 1

- Māori language immersion school(s)
- Emphasizing Māori cultural and spiritual beliefs, values, and practices
- Supported by strong community partnerships

#### YUE-KONG PAO SCHOOL, SHANGHAI, CHINA

- K-12
- Founded in 2007
- # of students: 1,600
- Bilingual international school

- Chinese-English immersion program
- Integrating traditional Chinese culture
- Incorporates outdoor education

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our immense gratitude to the dedicated research team who worked tirelessly on this project: Dr. Stephanie A. Fryberg (Tulalip), Dr. Cong Wang (Asian), Priscilla Diaz-Gonzalez (Latinx/e), Kelly House (Oneida), and John-Solomon Milner (LTBB Odawa).

We would also like to thank the Tulalip Administrative Office and Tulalip's Media & Marketing team for their invaluable support throughout the process. Their assistance in organizing focus groups, facilitating participant recruitment and compensation, and contributing to the design of recruitment materials and reports have been crucial to our endeavor.

Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to all the participants of the focus groups and surveys. Special thanks go to Tulalip Elders Commission, Tulalip Education Division, Natural Resources, Lushootseed, Bedachelh, Family Haven, Tulalip Early Learning Academy, and Quil Ceda Tulalip Elementary for their active engagement in the focus groups.

# CLOSING

This report marks the successful completion of Phase 1 data collection in our journey of building a community-and culture-based school for Tulalip's children. The data collected through focus groups and surveys has provided invaluable insights into the collective vision for the school. We are incredibly grateful to all the participants who shared their voices and aspirations for our future generations.

Looking ahead, Phase 2 of the data collection process will delve deeper into specific aspects of the school's design. We will be seeking community feedback on various learning systems, behavioral management approaches, and extracurricular activities. Your continued participation is essential in shaping a school environment that fosters academic excellence, cultural connection, and holistic well-being for our children.

We will keep the community informed about upcoming opportunities to provide input in Phase 2. Thank you for your dedication to building a brighter future for the Tulalip Tribes.

***To be continued!***