



## Name

**Dr. Reza Namin, Ph.D., Superintendent**

## Current School District and Location

Maine Indian Education

Serving Indian Island School (Penobscot Nation), Indian Township School, and Sipayik Elementary School (Passamaquoddy Tribe), Maine

## INTRODUCTION

Meet Dr. Reza Namin, Superintendent of Maine Indian Education, where he provides unified educational leadership for three Wabanaki tribal schools serving approximately 500 students in grades PK–8. His schools — Indian Island School on the Penobscot Nation, Indian Township School, and Sipayik Elementary School of the Passamaquoddy Tribe — are nestled within some of Maine's most historically and culturally rich communities. These schools are known for their deep Indigenous heritage, their commitment to culturally responsive education, and their growing academic achievement.

Dr. Namin's distinguished academic preparation and broad leadership experience have positioned him as a nationally recognized figure in public education. Nominated for the 2026 Maine Superintendent of the Year, he brings a rare combination of intellectual depth, cultural sensitivity, and systems-level expertise that continues to benefit the students and communities he serves.

## Education

---

Dr. Namin holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Mathematics, a Master of Education in Applied Mathematics Education, and a Ph.D. in Math and Science Education, complemented by post-doctoral studies at Harvard University. He also completed advanced graduate work in 3D Geometric Modeling and Scientific Visualization at Brown University. He holds superintendent certification in six states across New England.

## Experience

---

Dr. Namin's career in education spans more than 25 years, beginning as a chemistry teacher and a coach at Ayer Public Schools in Massachusetts. His superintendent career includes leadership of the Westbrook School Department in Westbrook, Maine, where he oversaw budgets exceeding \$32 million and directed major capital projects. He also served as Chief Academic Officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and as a Dean of Curriculum and Programs at the Cambridge Public Schools, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Before his current role, Dr. Namin was recognized as New England Coach of the Year in Division I Soccer while coaching at Holy Cross College and was later inducted into the Worcester State University Athletic Hall of Fame, and recipient of the Outstanding Achievements in the Field of Education Alumni Award — a testament to his lifelong commitment to excellence both inside and outside the classroom. He is a featured member of the National Superintendents Association.

Since joining Maine Indian Education, Dr. Namin has navigated a uniquely complex governance structure, reporting to three separate Tribal School Committees and one Joint School Committee, while collaborating with the Bureau of Indian Education and the Maine Department of Education. He has led his schools to measurable gains in academic achievement — most notably, 63.6% of 8th graders at Indian Township School meeting state reading expectations — a result recognized by Maine Commissioner of Education Pender Makin.

## **Selected Areas of Expertise**

---

Dr. Namin's areas of expertise include culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, mathematics and science education, federal and tribal grant administration, special education compliance and IEP coordination, emergency operations planning for multi-site districts, and multilingual/multicultural communication and community engagement.

## **Outstanding Achievements**

---

Among Dr. Namin's most notable achievements is the administration of over \$1 million in Implementation Grants, a transformative initiative aimed at expanding educational and social support for Wabanaki families. He has developed culturally responsive mathematics curricula that authentically integrate both Wabanaki and Persian cultural traditions and has presented this work at regional and national educational conferences.

Dr. Namin has managed complex special education systems across multiple schools and statewide placement sites, ensuring IEP compliance for diverse student populations while building internal capacity among staff. He has led comprehensive emergency operations planning across three geographically distinct schools and established professional development frameworks centered on Indigenous pedagogical practices.

His approach to leadership reflects a core conviction: that closing opportunity gaps for historically underserved students requires not only technical expertise, but deep cultural humility, relational trust, and an unwavering belief in every child's potential.

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. REZA NAMIN**

### ***How do you see today's superintendent?***

Today's superintendent must be simultaneously a visionary leader, a systems thinker, a cultural bridge-builder, and a tireless advocate — often all in the same meeting. What strikes me most about this moment in education is the extraordinary complexity of the role. Superintendents are expected to manage tight budgets, navigate federal and state mandates, respond to the evolving mental health needs of students, and do all of this while maintaining the trust of governing boards, families, and communities who may hold very different expectations.

In tribal education specifically, the stakes are even higher. We are not simply responsible for academic outcomes — we are stewards of cultural continuity. The languages, traditions, and identities of the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy peoples are carried in part through our schools. That is a profound responsibility, and it demands a superintendent who leads not just with data and strategy, but with deep respect and relational integrity.

I also believe today's superintendent must model intellectual curiosity and a growth mindset. Our students are watching how we respond to challenges and change. If we want them to embrace learning, we must be visible learners ourselves.

***What new understandings or insights had you acquired after three years on the job?***

The most transformative insight I gained was that sustainable school improvement is fundamentally a relational endeavor. Early in my career, I believed that the right data, the right curriculum, and the right professional development would drive results. And while those tools matter enormously, they only work when they are embedded in a culture of trust.

In tribal communities especially, I came to understand that historical trauma is real, that institutions — including schools — have not always been places of safety for Indigenous families, and that earning genuine trust takes time, consistency, and humility. I learned to listen more deeply, to slow down before acting, and to ask communities what they need rather than arriving with predetermined solutions.

I also came to appreciate the critical importance of celebrating progress. In schools that have faced chronic under-resourcing, small wins matter enormously. When 63.6% of our 8th graders met state reading expectations, we made sure the entire community knew — because that kind of recognition changes the story students tell about themselves and their school.

***Share an idea or strategy that would be important and useful for a new superintendent.***

My strongest advice for any new superintendent is this: before you change anything, understand everything. Spend your first months deeply listening to teachers, to students, to families, to board members, to custodians. Read the history of the district. Visit every classroom. Ask questions without judgment. Build your map of the culture before you draw your roadmap for improvement.

Practically speaking, I developed a communication strategy early on that was tailored to each stakeholder. Some board members preferred a weekly call; others needed detailed written briefings; still others valued an informal breakfast conversation. The medium matters as much as the message. People trust leaders who communicate in ways that make them feel seen and respected.

Finally, never underestimate the power of cultural competency. Whether you lead a tribal school, an urban district, or a rural community, the students and families you serve have histories, identities, and strengths that deserve to be reflected in your schools. When students see their culture honored in the curriculum, in the hallways, and in the values of their leaders, they show up differently — and so do their families.

---

Submitted by:



Date: 2/27/2026

---

**Dr. Reza Namin, Ph.D.**

Superintendent, Maine Indian Education