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NIEA RESOLUTION 08-09

TITLE: PREPARING NATIVE STUDENTS TO ENTER COLLEGE AND THE WORKFORCE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1969 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians, and

WHEREAS, NIEA as the largest national Indian organization of American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Indian nations and tribes, the federal government has established programs and resources to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, Every school year, about 1.2 million students drop out of our nation's high schools, leaving almost one of every three freshmen without a high school diploma four years later (Swanson 2004).

WHEREAS, The national graduation rate for American Indian high school students was 49.3 percent in the 2003–04 school year, compared to 76.2 percent for white students (EPE Research Center 2007) and 61.8 percent in the 2005-06 school year, compared to 80.6 percent for white students (NCES 2008).

WHEREAS, While roughly 70% of high school students graduate on time, American Indian and Alaska Native students have only a 55% chance or less of graduating high school with a regular diploma (Greene and Winter, 2006).

WHEREAS, Only 44.6 percent of American Indian males and 50 percent of American Indian females graduated with a regular diploma in the 2003–04 school year (EPE Research Center 2007).

WHEREAS, Dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to experience poverty, poor health, and incarceration during their adult lives.

WHEREAS, NIEA as the largest national Indian organization of American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, NIEA has joined the Campaign for High School Equity and developed an initiative to focus on the dropout crisis in Indian Country.

WHEREAS, NIEA believes that in order for a student to be prepared for college and the workforce, that the student must first be engaged in school through a rigorous curriculum that incorporates culturally relevant components such as native languages, native traditions, and native histories.

WHEREAS, NIEA is advocating on both the national and state level for the redesign of the American high school and the promotion of instructional practices designed to meet the needs of Native students and prepare them for college and work including:

- Increased attention on the national, state, and district levels for Native students needs in states and school districts with high Native populations to increase retention and graduation rates of Native students.
- Supportive federal and state policies to increase Native student access to rigorous curriculum and inclusion of native languages, cultures and histories to improve student achievement and attainment.
- Quality schools that better serve Native students through access to rigorous curriculum, and adequate support to ensure they can meet higher expectations including culturally relevant curriculum.

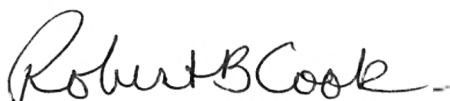
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, NIEA supports defining graduation rates according to a common standard and the use of longitudinal data systems and individual student identifiers to follow every child's path to graduation. NIEA also supports an NCLB accountability system that requires schools to increase their disaggregated data on graduation rates over time and to consider graduation rates on an equal footing with high quality assessments aligned to college and work readiness in determining school quality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIEA supports the integration of culturally based education methods as part of a high quality rigorous curriculum, will result in higher academic achievement among Native students and increased graduation rates, ultimately resulting in students better prepared to enter college and the workforce.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIEA supports the NCLB focus on parent and community involvement through improving their knowledge, skills and understanding of standards based education and school accountability. NIEA supports federal and state policy in the promotion of standards based education as a family responsibility that helps children to achieve.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was dully considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on October 26, 2008 at which a quorum of the membership was present.



Robert B. Cook (2008-2009)
President
National Indian Education Association