



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## NIEA Resolution 2019 - #3

**TITLE: In Support of State Laws and Tribal Compacts that Allow Native Students to Wear Items of Cultural or Religious Significance**

**WHEREAS**, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

**WHEREAS**, NIEA as the largest national Native organization of American Indian, Alaska Native, 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 Native people; and

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

**WHEREAS**, NIEA membership passed a resolution in support of allowing Native students to wear items of cultural significance during graduation (NIEA Resolution #05-04); and

**WHEREAS**, despite steps forward in recent years, many schools continue to bar Native students from wearing items of cultural and religious significance at graduation and school events, resulting in damage to sacred items and trauma for Native students; and

**WHEREAS**, some states, such as California, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington, have taken steps to address these ongoing concerns by passing laws and guidance that allow Native students to wear tribal regalia and items of cultural and religious significance at graduations and school events; and

**WHEREAS**, Article XIV of the United States Constitution and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 protect the rights of Native students to wear items of cultural and religious significance; and

**WHEREAS**, some schools and tribes have developed innovative compacts for tribes to approve requests to wear regalia and cultural and religious items at graduation and school events as part of a larger partnership to improve Native representation and education services in public schools.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Indian Education Association will work with TEDNA and other partners to support the development of state laws and codes that allow Native students to wear regalia and items of cultural and religious significance at celebrations and school events, including graduation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NIEA, in partnership with TEDNA, will work with tribes and schools across the nation as they ask their state legislatures to pass applicable laws and codes, as well as develop innovative partnerships and compacts to support items of cultural and religious significance at graduation and school events; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NIEA, in partnership with TEDNA, encourages national, state and regional Native organizations to pass similar resolutions in support of our Native students; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NIEA until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

#### CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was dully considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on October 12, 2019 at which a quorum of the membership was present.



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Robin Butterfield  
President