



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NIEA welcomes a familiar face in Indian Country: Diana Cournoyer who becomes the new Executive Director

Tremendous staff support and years of Native education experience lay a solid foundation for Diana Cournoyer as the new NIEA Executive Director

*Washington, D.C.-* The National Indian Education Association's (NIEA) Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Diana Cournoyer (Oglala Sioux Tribe) as the organization's new Executive Director. After a nationwide search, the Board overwhelmingly supported Cournoyer, who has been serving as the Interim Executive Director for the past six months. In the ascension to her new role, she will lead the Nation's most influential non-profit dedicated to advancing comprehensive, culture-based educational opportunities for Native students.

It was not only because of Cournoyer's excellent leadership as Interim Executive Director but also because of her creativity, thoroughness, and dedication to the service of Native students that the NIEA Board was committed to having her continue as Executive Director. *"We are so thankful Diana Cournoyer accepted this new role with NIEA,"* said Robin Butterfield, NIEA Board President.

Although this is a new position for Cournoyer, addressing the needs of Native students is what she has done throughout her entire career. Cournoyer first joined NIEA as a Program Manager nearly six years ago and, through her passion and enthusiasm for supporting Native students, has been a key driver in expanding NIEA's work beyond the halls of the U.S. Capitol to communities across Indian Country. As Program Director, Cournoyer helped shape broader teacher hiring initiatives, created more opportunities for visits to tribal communities, acquired millions in grant funding for NIEA, testified before the US Congress in support of Native education, and inspired professional trust and collaboration among staff, colleagues,



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organizations and Native nations across the country. Indeed, her work has ensured that Native students have the best possible outcomes and educators have the best possible resources to support their efforts.

*"I am deeply honored to be chosen for this important role and am looking forward to continuing to strengthen Native education and reach students, tribal leaders, educators, administrators, and advocates through NIEA's resources, trainings, events, and support."* said Cournoyer about her new role.

As Executive Director, Cournoyer will direct a 10-person staff in carrying out the organization's 7-Pillar Strategic Plan which includes: Advocacy; Building Tribal Education Capacity; Culture-Based Education; Skilled Teachers and Leaders; Establishing Educational Standards, Assessments, and Accountability; and Post-Secondary Success.

Prior to joining NIEA, Diana worked with the Oglala Lakota College Graduate Studies Department, managing the Education Administration Professional Development Grant and Educational Leadership master's degree program. Her work realigned the Education Administration curriculum and objectives with national and South Dakota State educational standards. Cournoyer received her master's degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Oklahoma and is currently a doctoral candidate with the University of South Dakota.

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***About The National Indian Education Association (NIEA)***

*NIEA is the Nation's largest Native advocacy organization advancing comprehensive culture-based educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Formed by Native educators in 1969 to encourage a national discourse on education, NIEA adheres to the organization's founding principles: to convene educators to explore ways to improve schools and the educational systems serving Native children; to promote the maintenance and continued development of language and cultural programs; and to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and decision makers. For more information visit [www.niea.org](http://www.niea.org).*