



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

NATIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

Native Education for All (NEFA) is an educational movement led by Native Nations and state partners to provide all K-12 students with instruction on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples. NEFA is expressed through state legislation and state board policies that implement, requires, or mandates students be taught Native subjects and related content standards. Native history, culture, and tribal government are subjects that are commonly covered in NEFA legislation and policy.

Native Education for All

Ninety-three percent of the 650,000 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students in schools across the United States attend public schools. Many Native students do not have access to high-quality culture-based education options that provide opportunities to thrive. Safe and healthy classrooms that center language and culture are essential to equity in education for Native students across the nation. From early childhood through postsecondary education, Native students must have access to programs and resources that provide them the best chance at success.

Montana, Oregon, and Washington are three states who have passed legislation and are currently implementing NEFA. The National Indian Education Association is actively working with partners in Arizona, North Dakota, and Minnesota to advance NEFA through collaborations with Tribal Nations, state education offices, educators, and Native education advocates to support the passage and/or implementation of NEFA legislation and policy. NIEA continues to work with other states on expanding these initiatives in collaboration with local Native communities

The National Indian Education Association's NEFA initiatives focus on two primary activities:

- Advocacy for Native Education for All (NEFA) Policy; and
- Implementation of requirements and mandates of NEFA legislation and efforts that support NEFA.

Promising NEFA Model

The National Indian Education Association does not prescribe a specific model or process for the passage and implementation of NEFA policies but has seen the below model used effectively in several states:

1. Development of statewide tribally representative NEFA workgroup. Often comprised of tribal leaders, tribal education officials, parents, educators, students, state officials, and Native education advocates;
2. Identify state/local challenges through a strategic process and regular meetings;
3. Develop policy positions, language, and strategic partnerships with legislative offices;
4. Advocate for policy positions and work with state legislative offices to introduce NEFA policies; and

5. Develop professional development training, classroom resources, informational documents, technical assistance program, awareness raising media campaigns, and partnerships with content providers to assist schools with implementation.



The promising NEFA model is not a strictly linear process. Some states have NEFA policies that may not be implemented or could be strengthened, implementation of existing policy may be a higher priority than developing a policy agenda or both objectives may be simultaneously addressed.

NEFA Priorities

- Support and advocate for the passage of NEFA legislation and policy at the state and local level;
- Support state offices of Native education, school districts, schools, and teachers to implement NEFA legislation and policy through technical assistance and programing;
- Support legislation and policy that improves Native education outcomes and complements NEFA objectives;
- Support State Offices of Native Education and related agencies to implement NEFA policies;
- Elevate local and state NEFA policies to the national stage;
- Raise awareness of the advantages and importance of NEFA legislation;
- Build tribal capacity to implement NEFA and support education sovereignty;
- Build robust networks of Tribal Nations, tribal organizations, Native advocates, parents, and students to advocate and implement NEFA policies;
- Build relationships between state legislators and officials with tribal leaders and Native education advocates;
- Build cross state relationships between Tribal Nations, tribal organizations, Native education advocates, to support local NEFA efforts;
- Strategically plan and develop activities to address the specific state and local challenges to NEFA policy;
- Develop clearinghouse for sharing NEFA best practices, experiences, and lessons learned;
- Develop training for tribal leaders and community members to build advocacy skills and policy strategy;
- Develop training and professional development opportunities for educators who are required to teach Native content and instruct Native students; and
- Develop tools and resources that can be shared with Tribal Nations, States, and Native education advocates to pass and support the implementation of NEFA legislation and policy.