



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## NIEA Resolution 2019 - #4

**TITLE: Expanding Service Payback Opportunities for the Indian Education Professional Development Grants Program**

**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**, well-trained Native educators are critical to student achievement and success in Native communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Indian Education Professional Development Grants (Professional Development Grants) provide critical funding to institutions that train and provide professional development for Native educators, administrators, and school personnel in local educational agencies that serve a high proportion of Native students; and

**WHEREAS**, Professional Development Grants promote student success by funding education pathways for Native educators who integrate Native culture, history, and ways of knowing into P-12 education; and

**WHEREAS**, Native educators that attend programs funded by Professional Development Grants are required to teach in a “local educational agency that serves a high proportion of Indian students” under Section 6122(h)(1)(A)(ii) of the Every Student Succeeds Act; and

**WHEREAS**, federal statute and regulation fail to define a “high proportion of Indian students”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Education has proposed, through tribal consultation, to define a local educational agency with a “high proportion of Indian students” as one with at least 50 percent Native student population; and

**WHEREAS**, tribal leaders expressed concerns that defining a “high proportion” as 50 percent or more Native students is an unreasonable expectation, which severely limits the options of Native teachers and precludes many Native students from accessing Native teachers through the Professional Development Grants Program; and

**WHEREAS**, in many communities, Native students attend school in districts where they represent a high proportion of the student population in comparison to neighboring school districts, but fall well below the proposed 50 percent definition; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian and Alaska Native students represent approximately 1 percent of the national student population; and

**WHEREAS**, many more Native students attend schools where they represent a high proportion of the student population, but would not meet eligibility requirements for the overall local educational agency; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to increase the total number of Native teachers and administrators everywhere in all types of schools, even those without Native students, and

**WHEREAS**, during the 2016-2017 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that only 20 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students attended local educational agencies where Native students represented at least 50 percent of the student population, and 35 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students attended local educational agencies where Native students represented at least 25 percent of the student population.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Indian Education Association urges the Department of Education to define “high proportion of Indian students” as 5 percent or higher in regulations under the Every Student Succeeds Act; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NIEA urges Congress to provide clarity and align the definition of a “high proportion of Indian students” with the definition of an eligible local educational agency under Title VI Indian Education Formula Grant Programs in a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 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 duly considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on October 12, 2019 at which a quorum of the membership was present.



Robin Butterfield

President