



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

1514 P Street, NW, Suite B, Washington, DC 20005
(202) 544-7290 (Phone) NIEA@niea.org (E-mail) www.NIEA.org

NIEA Resolution 2018- #3

TITLE: IN SUPPORT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES AND AGAINST THE WITHDRAWAL OF GUIDANCE ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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 Indian 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 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 Natives, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's boarding school policy was designed to assimilate Native students, punish students for speaking their languages, and discourage Native spiritual beliefs – in short, designed to eliminate diversity; and

WHEREAS, by encouraging Native students to repress their culture and assimilate to Western ways of knowing, the Federal government's educational policy fostered a spirit of alienation amongst Native youth that has carried across generations and stifled academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, fewer American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students matriculate to postsecondary institutions, where 21 percent of American Indian and Alaskan Native students and 26 percent of Native Hawaiian students are enrolled; and

WHEREAS, Native students experience lower rates of completion at postsecondary degree programs, where 39 percent of Native students who enrolled in a four-year public institution in 2004 completed a Bachelor's degree by 2010 compared to 60 percent in the general population; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of higher education enrollment, retention and graduation are directly related to the systemic policies of discrimination; and

WHEREAS, culture and diversity should be celebrated and not destroyed; and

WHEREAS, affirmative action policies at institutions of higher education celebrate the racial demographic diversity of America; and

WHEREAS, from 2009-2016, the Department of Education (Department) issued affirmative action guidance to universities, based on legal opinions from the federal courts, in recognition of the critical importance of supporting diversity in higher education; and

WHEREAS, in July 2018, the Department withdrew critical affirmative action guidance to postsecondary institutions; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of the affirmative action guidance did not change any law, but signaled to Native students, and other historically underrepresented groups, that diversity in higher education is not a priority; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of affirmative action guidance could allow universities to not recognize the importance of Native student enrollment, or exclude Native students altogether; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of affirmative action guidance to universities can hinder the academic success of Native students, impeding access to high wage/high demand jobs and inhibiting economic development in Native communities; and

WHEREAS, affirmative action policies have proven to be one of them most effective ways to create diverse, inclusive learning environments; and

WHEREAS, diverse and inclusive environments reduce prejudice and promote relationship building – creating more engaging learning environments for all students; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Indian Education Association urges the reinstatement of affirmative action guidelines.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NIEA urges higher education institutions to continue to abide by the affirmative action guidelines and celebrates universities that have publicly declared continued support for affirmative action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIEA supports equity and diversity as a framework for state and national legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIEA will advocate for the development and implementation of programs that intentionally help identify, recruit, develop, and retain diverse student populations.

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 13, 2018 at which a quorum of the membership was present.

Dr. Jolene Bowman
President