



## THE NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

### HEAD TO THE HILL PREPARING FOR CONGRESSIONAL VISITS

*February 13-14, 2018*

#### **OVERVIEW**

NIEA Hill Day provides tribal members, Native educators, and allies the opportunity to engage with members of Congress in support of NIEA's legislative agenda for Native education. Through these conversations, attendees can showcase the work that they are doing for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students and highlight the impact of federal legislation on Native education within their local communities.

#### **PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT**

During your meeting, you will not only advocate on behalf of NIEA's legislative priorities, but speak about your work with Native students in your own local community. Legislators look forward to hearing how tribal leaders and Native educators are working to solve the challenges facing Native students in schools across the country. Your personal stories are critical to illustrating the issues that affect Native students.

#### **Before your Visit**

- Research your Congressional representative's responsibilities, legislative priorities, and professional background. Most of this information can be found on the legislator's website at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).
- You will likely meet with a staff person in the office of your Congressional representative who works directly with Native education policy issues. Because their busy schedules often prevent them from joining such meetings, your representatives rely on their staffers for policy advice throughout the legislative process.
- Prepare a one-page document describing how your work impacts on Native students and their local communities to leave with the legislator or their staff.
- Please wear business attire and comfortable shoes.

#### **During your Visit**

- Arrive on time, but don't be surprised if your meetings start late due to unpredictable Congressional schedules. Many offices may be in a temporary location with limited space or in the process of hiring new staff since Hill Day occurs weeks after the new Congress begins.
- Stick to your talking points. Most meetings last only 10-20 minutes, so you must be ready speak and answer questions concisely and accurately.
- Tell your story. Highlight your points with stories of the work you have done with Native students and how legislation affects Native communities students, and teachers within the legislator's district. Speak from the heart about why Native education is important for you and your community.
- Ask the legislator or staffer how they will respond or when you can follow up for a response to your policy requests.
- Thank the legislator and staff and give them your business card as you leave.

#### **After your Visit**

- Write or call your legislator to thank them for taking their time to meet with you and remind them of any commitments made during your conversation.
- Follow up with materials requested and answers to questions that arose during the meeting.

*For additional information or questions, please contact Matt de Ferranti the National Indian Education Association Legislative Director at [mdeferranti@niea.org](mailto:mdeferranti@niea.org) or 202-847-0039.*