

# Spotlight on States: Elevating Community Relationships



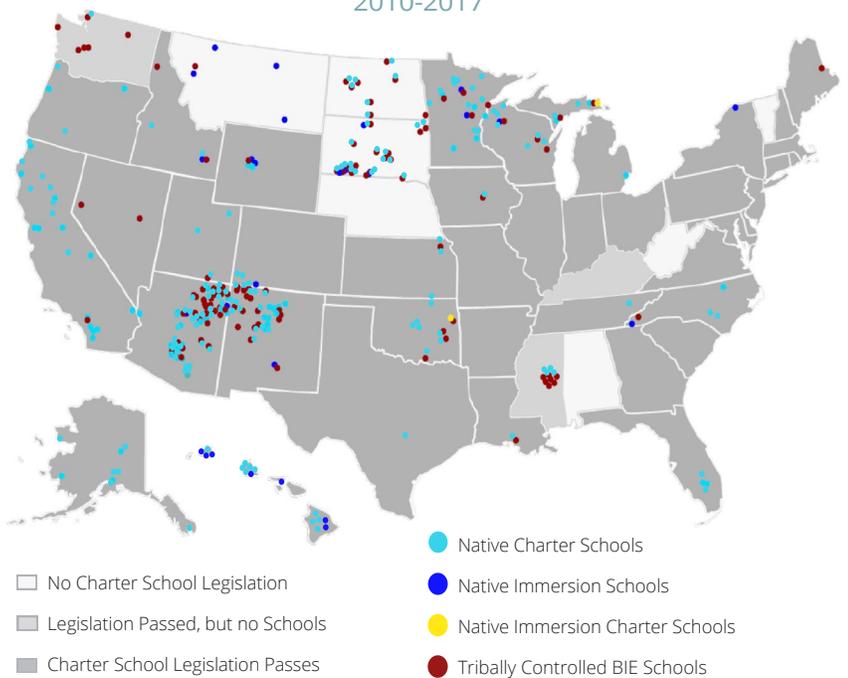
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has provided an opportunity for tribes and states to support tribal sovereignty in education and create positive and inclusive learning environments for Native students. The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) is supporting Native communities by providing technical support and resources as they build and strengthen relationships among Native education leaders, states, and allied stakeholders. Our collective efforts serve one goal- *provide opportunities for Native students to thrive in the classroom and beyond.*

## NIEA's State Strategy

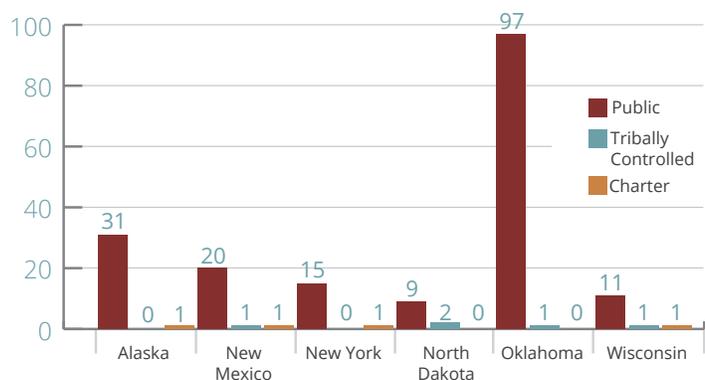
ESSA shifted education authority to the state and local levels. NIEA has responded to this change by expanding our efforts to support tribes and local communities as they collaborate with state governments to establish education systems aligned with Native student's unique cultural and educational needs. While NIEA will continue to advocate at the federal level to improve educational opportunities so all Native students can thrive, we are committed to providing community members with knowledge and tools critical to support Native students in reaching their full potential.

NIEA's state strategies include: (1) focused attention and monitoring of education issues to engage states with high Native populations and (2) providing resources, technical assistance, and training to Native education advocates to build successful partnerships between communities and state governments.

Types of School Choice in Native Communities  
2010-2017



NIEA has identified five priority states for this work: Alaska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. These states were chosen on several criteria including; existing engagement and relationships with tribes, population of Native students, and where NIEA's presence has the potential elevate the concerns of the community and create lasting change



## Strategy for State Engagement

- 1. Building a Network of Native Education Advocates**  
Identify “culture brokers” – individuals within the Native community who have knowledge of the issues and strong relationships within the community.
- 2. Develop Shared Vision and Goals Driven by Community Input**  
Identify 2-6 state, regional, or local priorities to focus state and local engagement.
- 3. Conduct Community Assessment Mapping**  
Develop a community profile to inform baseline data analysis.
- 4. Conduct an Analysis of Data Collected to Share Out**  
Develop an updated and inclusive long range vision of Native success.
- 5. Regroup to Complete the Circle and Sustain Progress**  
Reconvene stakeholders to re-identify 2-6 priorities for the year to come.



This five-part strategy will be repeated each year, building on the lessons learned in individual states. NIEA will serve as a convener, bringing together tribal leaders and Native education advocates to meet the priorities identified in each state. Native and allied stakeholders share a responsibility to work together to create positive learning environments where Native students can be inspired, engaged, and thrive.

## Resources and Technical Assistance

In addition to our engagement strategy in priority states, NIEA will continue to provide a wide range of resources to educate and equip members with relevant tools to improve Native education in their communities. As we support state and local communities, NIEA will continue to ensure states and districts engage in tribal consultation, as required by ESSA.

The three foundational resources on consultation have been made available on our website at [www.niea.org](http://www.niea.org) free

of charge. NIEA is developing additional resources that provide information, data, and tools to support Native education advocates as they advocate on behalf of their students.

*“ESSA has provided an opportunity for tribal governments to find innovative, culture-based solutions to the problems our students face. By being engaged and informed, our communities can support Native students so they thrive in the classroom and beyond.”*

- AHNIWAKE ROSE, NIEA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NIEA remains committed to advocating for improved educational opportunities to support Native students in reaching their full potential in the classroom and beyond.

If you have any questions, or need special assistance, please contact NIEA.