



# IMPACT REPORT:

## EDUCATOR INITIATIVE



In partnership with:  
 **TNP** reimagine teaching



# THE NEED

Throughout the country, Native communities are developing and implementing innovative strategies to recruit teachers for Native students. However, we know that despite success in individual communities, there remains an acute need to train, hire, and retain effective teachers in Native-serving communities. Addressing such a challenge will require a coordinated effort that unites Native-serving communities in a collective strategy to raise awareness of career opportunities and provide resources that are adapted to community context.

Yet, despite the need, teacher education programs are experiencing dramatic declines in enrollment. The high cost of a degree, relatively low career earnings, and limited career pathways have reinforced this decline. And while national data does a poor job of parsing out Native students to determine the direct affects, we do know that schools with the least amount of resources end up suffering disproportionate amounts of teacher vacancies. In fact, in 2013-14, on average, high-minority schools had four times as many uncertified teachers as low-minority schools. These inequities also exist between high-poverty and low-poverty schools. The result? **Native students in high-poverty settings bear the brunt of teacher shortages.**

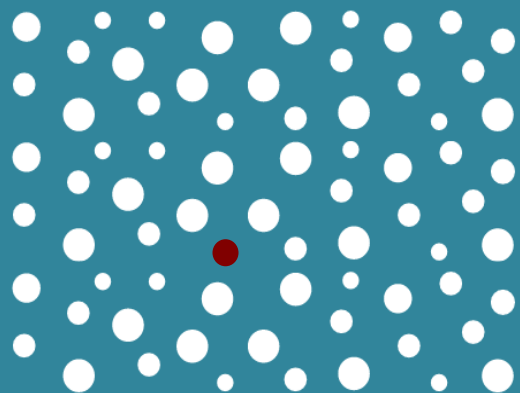
35%

Reduction in Teacher  
Education Program  
Enrollment between 2009-  
2014

# A NEW NARRATIVE

Native-serving schools have long endured the neglect of public institutions to tell their stories, true to their history. The void of these missing stories in the public discourse has been filled by the negative stereotypes and more often, ignored altogether. Yet, we know that our Native-serving schools have incredible stories to tell, both of the educational opportunities that exist within those schools, but also of the communities themselves; their histories, their cultures, and their languages. These opportunity-focused narratives are a critical foundation that must be established in order to recruit talented Native educators back into our schools.

## Hidden Job Opportunities



Current career search models are not designed for these needs. Existing tools are heavily weighted towards large schools with central office staff and financial resources dedicated to posting high volumes of positions online - where most job seekers begin their search for teaching positions. This leaves small schools and those without large recruitment budgets at a disadvantage, ultimately keeping them largely hidden from view to the average job seeker. The NIEA Educator Initiative is an effort to elevate these opportunities out from the shadows and open new doors for Native educators to identify and pursue careers in a Native-serving schools.



## VISION: RECRUIT AND RETAIN EFFECTIVE TEACHERS THAT UNLEASH THE POWER OF THE SEVENTH GENERATION OF NATIVE STUDENTS.

**OVERVIEW.** From big cities to the most remote villages, schools across the country are developing and implementing innovative, community-based strategies for solving their teacher pipeline challenges. Native schools demonstrate great potential for growth, yet rural isolation, small budgets, and low visibility on the job market hamper efforts to find new teachers and educators that will thrive in Native schools. NIEA launched the National Educator Initiative to share best practices and to create a first of its kind national recruitment website and job board designed specifically for Native schools.

**CURRENT PROGRESS.** We partnered with a Native design firm to create [teach.niea.org](http://teach.niea.org), a website that highlights the benefits of working in Native schools and have enrolled public school districts, tribally-controlled schools, and the Bureau of Indian Education to post open teaching positions and search for applicants who are uniquely qualified for those roles.

By housing vacancies in Native schools in one place, we're streamlining the job search for teachers who are interested in working in Native schools, reducing their time to apply, and opening the door to recruiting a new audience of teachers who hadn't previously considered working in Native schools. For schools, we're providing the chance to search for applicants by tribal affiliation, culture and language certification, and culturally-relevant teaching experience. And we conduct basic eligibility screens of teachers to check that they have appropriate certification. **The National Educator Initiative Job Board currently comes at no cost to schools or teachers.**

### HIGHLIGHTS

**184**

Total Job Postings in 2018

**68%**

Growth in Applications Compared to Previous Year

**62**

Schools Represented

**100+**

Tribes Represented by Schools on the Job Board

**25%**

Growth in Job Postings Compared to Previous Year

**89%**

Schools on Job Board serving rural or remote communities



# KEY STORIES

## 1. REACH

Through increased outreach and strategic recruitment, the NIEA job board has experienced growth in both hiring manager and applicant use. Support, however, isn't limited to the website and online resources. Districts and communities have seen additional access to webinars, in-person talent trainings, and will be supported in exploring tribal certification through policy recommendations.

## 2. LEADERSHIP

An important element of ensuring strong talent in Native schools is equip school leaders with the resources they need to make smart decisions about how they cultivate and retain their staff. Through the Educator Initiative, school leaders are receiving in-person trainings, webinars, and resource kits. Long-term, this work will continue to become more deeply embedded into the newly created Field Operations Specialist roles, moving these supports even closer to the ground and designed around local contexts.

## 3. COMMUNITY

The Educator Initiative is built upon the expanding work taking place in targeted states and communities. School leader trainings, school marketing, and future pipeline certification planning will capture ongoing feedback and input from communities being served. These services will increasingly become embedded into the work of NIEA over the coming year.

## 4. OPPORTUNITY

We're proud of the work we've done so far, and we have big ideas for where to go from here. The schools and tribes we work with need big, structural change to address their teacher shortages and we want to help them grow their own community members into strong teachers. And we want to ensure that the Educator Initiative has a financially secure, long-term foothold in our organization.

# 1: REACH

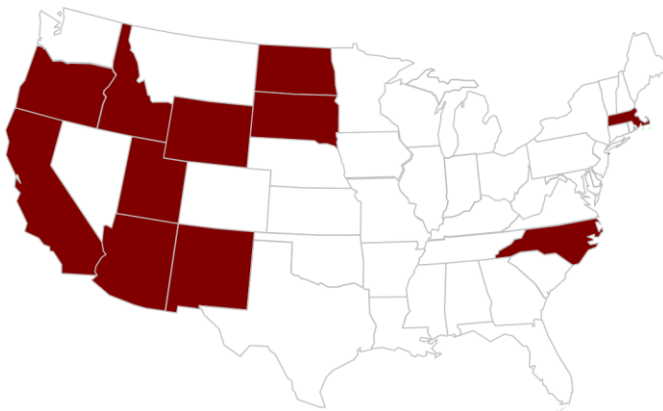
## WE EXPANDED OUR REACH.

Over the last year, NIEA has begun expanding the reach of the Educator Initiative through social media postings and sharing weekly updates about the Educator Initiative on Facebook and Twitter. The job board has also seen increased exposure as the result of a stronger allocation of funds for advertisements on Indeed. More recently, we are in the process of establishing targeted Google ads to drive traffic to the job board, based on user searches.

Along the way, we've conducted 4 webinars and gathered feedback from users to ensure a continuous improvement process for those who engage with the Educator Initiative. The result has been a steady increase in active users, both from schools and prospective teachers. There remains a strong need to continue expanding this work, but we are encouraged to see the initial fruits of the effort.

## MORE STATE IMPACT.

In two years, the NIEA Educator Initiative Job Board has expanded to serve schools in 11 states across the country.



# 11

States with Native serving schools posting positions at [teach.niea.org](https://teach.niea.org)

## NATIVE APPLICANTS FOR NATIVE-SERVING SCHOOLS.

Nationally, we know that representation of Native teachers in Native-serving schools remains a significant obstacle for ensuring Native students have access to culture and language curriculum, as well as the positive effects of having teachers who look like them. The NIEA Educator Initiative has already begun to play a unique role in the recruitment landscape by building a pool of teachers who identify tribal affiliations at much higher rates than other competing job sites.

# .5%

Percent of Native teachers in the U.S. public school system

# 10%

Percent of Native teachers in the NIEA Job Board

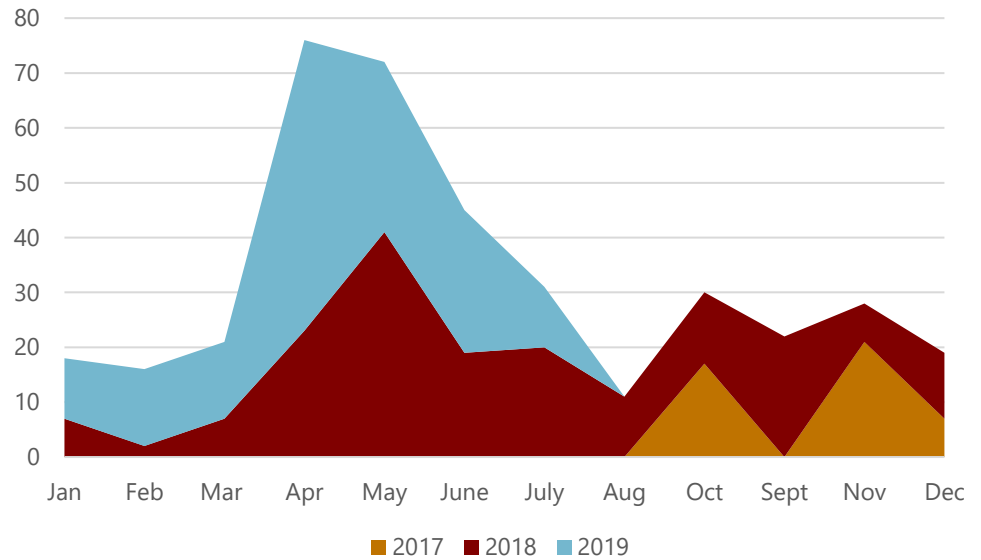
## MORE JOBS. MORE APPLICANTS.

As more schools have been added to the Job Board, more applicants have also discovered the site during their job search, exposing more prospective teachers to Native-serving schools.

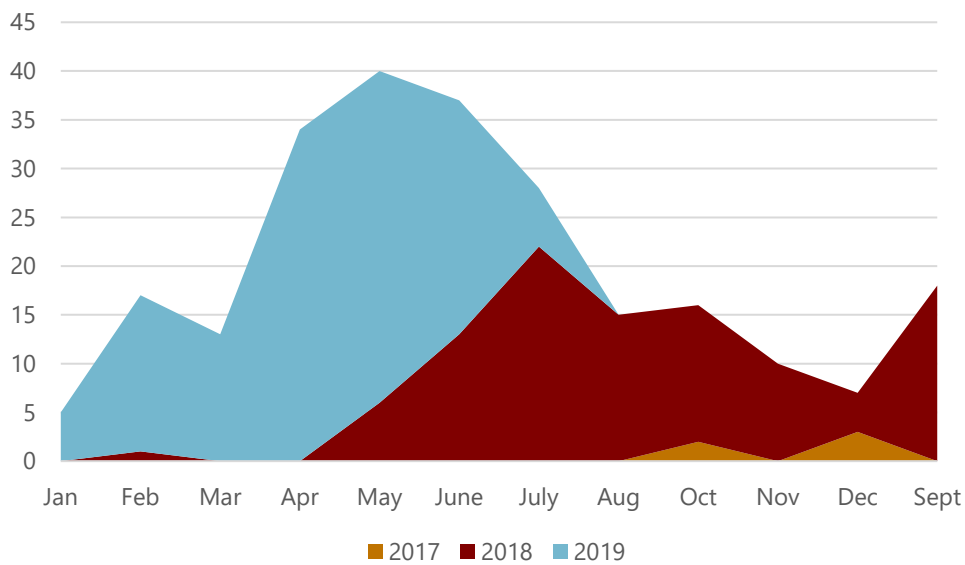
# Growth

In its second full year, [teach.niea.org](http://teach.niea.org) is on pace for continued growth in the number of positions posted to the Job Board.

Positions Posted by Month



Applications by Month



# Users

Mid-way through 2019, [teach.niea.org](http://teach.niea.org) has already surpassed the total applicants from the previous hiring season cycle.

# 2: LEADERSHIP

## DIRECT SUPPORT FOR PRINCIPALS.

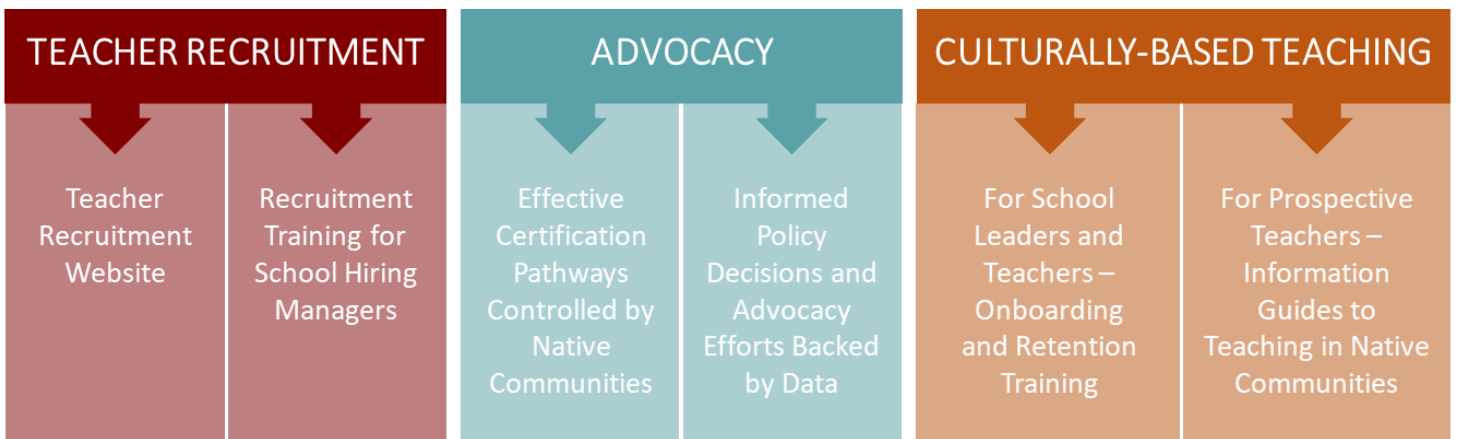
One of the most effective ways to manage teacher shortages is to increase the focus on school leader talent strategies – the things a principal can control in making strong hires and retaining top talent in their buildings.

In partnership with TNTP, NIEA will be offering multiple virtual and in-person trainings, centered on best practices for recruitment and retention in Native schools. These training workshops are designed to give principals a thorough roadmap for executing a strong talent strategy. Trainings will cover the following topics:

- **Recruitment.** Review best practices for recruitment, including developing a strong recruitment plan, effectively marketing your school, and utilizing the NIEA job board.
- **Selection and On-boarding.** Workshop selection processes that give hiring managers tools to select and on-board top new teacher talent.
- **Retention.** Tools and resources to help schools retain top teachers.
- **Long-Term Sustainability.** Begin exploring and workshopping models for building school-based para-professional pipeline programs

## OUR MODEL.

Recruitment does not happen in isolation of location and school context. In particular, school leaders and the needs of their individual schools play a critical role building talent strategies that fit the context of a particular place and culture. Therefore, the Educator Initiative places a heavy focus on multiple strategies to effect outcomes at the school level. Our model intends to leverage advocacy and culturally-based teaching strategies alongside recruitment, to build a comprehensive set of supports for school leaders that are reflective of their needs.



# 3: COMMUNITY

**“I BELIEVE NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS ARE INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED AND THAT OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS HAVEN’T YET MAXIMIZED THEIR POTENTIAL.”**

- DR. NADINE EASTMAN-- WICAHPI DUTA WIŋ (REDSTAR WOMAN)

## **NATIVE EDUCATORS BELIEVING IN NATIVE STUDENTS.**

Dr. Nadine Eastman (Superintendent of Enemy Swim Day School) exemplifies the effect of Native teachers and leaders in our Native serving schools. As she puts it, “I want to open doors for Native American students. I want them to know they can be a doctor or a lawyer or get a PhD like me. I want them to know they can choose where they live and how to live. I want to help them want more for themselves and I’m not talking about material things. I’m talking about the quality of life.”



## **TEACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIVE COMMUNITIES.**

**89%**

Schools served by Job Board are in **rural or remote** locations.

Teacher recruitment in Native-serving schools is about more than finding candidates willing to fill a job. Committing to a Native-serving school is also about committing to the communities in which the schools reside. The majority of schools served by the NIEA Job Board are located in rural or remote communities. These communities and their schools are deeply tied to the tribal culture and language. Teaching in these schools requires an understanding and passion for the broader communities.

Schools from the Tohono O’odham tribe are active users of the Job Board and serve as a good example of the types of communities served by the NIEA Educator Initiative. Occupying tribal lands in Southwestern Arizona, tribal members reside in many small and remote communities across the large geographic area. Tohono O’odham High School, located in Sells, AZ, has a population of 2,799. This rural community, and the school itself, have limited resources to commit to teacher recruitment. When competing against large schools in Tucson or Phoenix, Tohono O’odham High School is at a significant disadvantage. Yet, schools like Tohono O’odham High School and their communities need their stories told and need talented teachers to fill open positions. The NIEA Educator Initiative has become a platform for schools like these to share their stories and promote their career opportunities.





# 4: OPPORTUNITY



## WHAT'S NEXT?

### **Internal Integration.**

The Educator Initiative launched as a standalone pilot to other NIEA priorities. We're now working to integrate the initiative into other aspects of our work and across team members. We're working with our Field Operations staff, who consult with state and tribal leaders on ESSA implementation, to include elements of talent management training into their presentations and one-on-one supports. We've also launched an internal research agenda with our policy team on conditions for teacher certification in our priority states so that we can offer clear guidance and recommendations to leaders at the school, school system, tribal, and state level for increasing the number of high-quality Native teachers working in Native-serving schools.

### **Tribal Certification.**

Our work to date has been focused on teachers who are already certified. We have highlighted the benefits of working in Native-serving schools and streamlined the job search. But we know our work must go beyond improving the competitiveness of Native-serving schools relative to other schools; we have to increase the supply of teachers who are interested in and suited to teaching Native students. We are currently seeking philanthropic funding to pilot tribally-controlled teacher certification. We are exploring models for certification within existing state licensure frameworks, as well as those that would be run by a tribe exercising full sovereignty in education.

### **Financial Models.**

The Educator Initiative Job Board does not currently charge schools or teachers for its use in order to minimize any barriers to participation. However, as we scale the project up, depending on our operational expenses over time, we may determine a need to charge a fee for schools/districts who wish to continue to use the job boards full recruitment and retention functionality, while maintaining the site as a free service for teachers as a job search tool. If we move forward on this approach, we will develop scaled pricing scenarios that factor both resource-rich schools as well as those with limited resources in order to maintain equity of access and allow us to maintain the critical supports and infrastructure we have established thus far.

# LEADERSHIP



**DIANA  
COURNOYER**

Oglala Sioux Tribe  
Executive Director

Recently promoted to the role of Executive Director, Diana joined NIEA six years ago as a Program Manager and, through her passion and enthusiasm for supporting Native students, has been a key driver in expanding NIEA's work beyond the halls of the U.S. Capitol to communities across Indian Country. It was in her role as Program Director, that Diana helped shaped broader teacher hiring initiatives, created more opportunities providing programmatic support for tribal communities, testified before the US Congress in support of Native education, and inspired professional trust and collaboration among staff, colleagues, organizations and Native nations across the country. Her work has ensured that Native students have the best possible outcomes and educators have the best possible resources to support their efforts. Cournoyer holds a B.A in Native American studies from the University of Oklahoma, a Masters in Educational Leadership from the University of Oklahoma, and is currently a doctoral candidate with the University of South Dakota.



**DR. CASIE WISE,  
ED.D**

Senior Program Director

As the Senior Program Director, Dr. Casie Wise brings 20 years of classroom, leadership, and consulting experience to NIEA. Casie specializes in culture-based curriculum and pedagogy, professional development for educators, best practices in assessment, and educational research. Including twelve years of teaching middle and high school ELA in the United States and abroad, Casie has also served as a K-12 school support director, instructional coach, core advocate for Tennessee, literacy advisor, and education consultant. In her role at NIEA, Casie manages multiple for developing curriculum and instructional resources, cultivates partnerships with other education organizations, and provides professional development and oversight for our Educator Initiative.

Dr. Wise resides in her hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, with her husband, who is a retired Navy veteran, and her son and daughter. Casie has a BSE in Secondary English Education from John Brown University in Arkansas, an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language, and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instructional Leadership both from the University of Memphis.