

**National Indian Education Association**  
**2023 NIEA Classroom Teacher of the Year Winner**  
**Cholakocee “Cho” Werito**

Cho Werito is a Kindergarten Teacher at Eugene Field Elementary in the OKCPS district. She is a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation and is also Navajo. She has been a teacher with OKCPS for 13 years. Most importantly, she is one of the few Native American teachers in our district and is a great resource for students, parents and other teachers. Our Native American students especially look up to Miss Werito as a role model and champion for their education. Cho has *given* a voice to areas that are often forgotten - early childhood, urban Native students and Indian Education. As a PK, Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, she often reminds those in education of the necessary and highly important role that these early grades provide. *I have* heard Miss Werito speak in several public forums advocating and reminding audiences that establishing the basic fundamentals of learning in the early years of education *will* make a difference in the upper grades. Miss Werito has given testimony to the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaskan Native students advocating for our urban Native students. She reminds tribal education departments that not all our Native students live in their tribal communities, but they are still tribal members. Lastly, Miss Werito has been a constant volunteer, supporter, advocate and resource for our OKCPS Indian Education program. She teaches every year at our Summer Day Camp, volunteers at our cultural nights and is one of our Trainers for our Native Knowledge Educator Training Academy. During our academy, she teaches her peers and fellow teachers about how to incorporate Native American books, lessons, and projects in their everyday work.