



National Indian Education Association

110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Suite 104
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-7290 / (202) 544-7293 fax

NIEA RESOLUTION #05-04

Title: In Support of Graduating Students Wearing Items of Cultural Significance During Graduation Ceremonies

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1969 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 Indians, 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 Native, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, graduation is a time of celebration and honor for many American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students and families, considering the historically low graduation rates of Native students from high school; and

WHEREAS, there has been a significant increase in policies that regulate “appropriate attire” for students participating in graduation ceremonies and the intent of these policies is to instill a dress code that is respectful of the student and to prevent defamation of the cap and gown typically worn by graduating students; and

WHEREAS, many of the graduation dress codes do not recognize the sacred and cultural items (i.e. eagle feathers and parts) many Native students wear in times of ceremonies and honor and as a result, destruction and damage of sacred items has occurred at the hands of school officials zealously enforcing the dress code policies; and

WHEREAS, there have been a number of reported instances where Native students wearing items of cultural significance have been denied participation in graduating ceremonies due to the dress code.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Indian Education Association supports the right of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students to express cultural pride during graduation activities and opposes any efforts

made by school jurisdictions that do not allow for Native students to dress in a manner reflective of Native tradition or culture.

Submitted by: NIEA Board of Directors

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was dully considered and passed by the NIEA Board of Directors at its October 10, 2005 meeting in Denver, Colorado at which a quorum was present.

Ryan Wilson

Ryan Wilson, President (2005-06)
National Indian Education Association