



National Indian Education Association

110 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Suite 104

Washington, DC 20002

Ph: (202) 544-7290 / Fax: (202) 44-7293 / Email: resolutions@niea.org

NIEA RESOLUTION 11-001

TITLE: Support for the BUILD Act (S.1519)

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 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 Indian, Alaska Natives 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, schools should be centers for learning, as well as environments that strengthen the identity of Native students through language, culture, values, and traditions in order to build foundations and connections between students, teachers, families, tribes, and communities; and

WHEREAS, graduation and literacy rates for Natives are lower than all other racial/ethnic groups due primarily to a lack of engagement in curriculum and instruction as well as resource inequities that lead to poor learning environments for Indian children; and

WHEREAS, data has proven that language and culture based education results in improvements in student academic achievement, engagement, attendance, and civic responsibility; and

WHEREAS, Native students value curriculums that are relevant to their lives and require the integration of meaningful lessons about culture, history and place, along with assessments that reflect the goals of what successful education programs are as defined by those who design and implement them; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for increased collaboration between the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Interior (DOI), to better serve the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools in an efficient way to ensure that resources and capacity building between both departments are being coordinated effectively; and

WHEREAS, the development and training of Native and non-Native teachers and administrators that are culturally competent and knowledgeable about Native learning styles increases engagement and student to teacher relations as well as improves the academic achievement of Native learners; and

WHEREAS, schools and classrooms that are populated by Native Americans are routinely underfunded and in a state of disrepair, creating unsafe learning environments and denying Native students an equal chance to succeed; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NIEA does hereby support the BUILD Act, which was introduced by Senator Tom Udall from New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NIEA supports this bill for the following reasons:

- 1) It strengthens language and culture based education and allows assessments to be modified to accommodate the unique learning needs of Native students.
- 2) It formalizes a relationship between the Department of Interior and Department of Education to coordinate technical assistance and resource distribution for Native American students.
- 3) It creates a Native American teacher/administrator pipeline and includes incentives for highly qualified teachers to serve in schools with high Native populations.
- 4) It assures that tribal and BIE schools are eligible to compete for funding through set asides and competitive preferences.
- 5) It creates a national competition for innovative ideas to improve tribal school facilities.

Submitted by: Denny Hurtado

Name: Denny Hurtado

Tribe: Skokomish Indian Tribe

Co/Org/School/Tribe: NIEA Board Member, Legislative Committee Chairman