



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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NIEA Resolution 2013-02

TITLE: SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL COMMISSION ON FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL POLICY

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 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 Natives, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, the NIEA is aware of past and ongoing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual suffering among members of Native communities as a direct result of the past federal boarding school policy; and

WHEREAS, the United States enacted the Indian Civilization Act Fund of 1819 and the Indian the Boarding School Policy (also known as the Peace Policy) in 1869 to provide financial support for schools ran by churches in order to facilitate the policies of removal and assimilation of Native children and communities; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of such education was the systematic destruction of indigenous cultures and communities through “civilizing” Native children and breaking apart traditional Native family structures; and

WHEREAS, between 1869 and the 1960’s more than 100,000 Native children were removed from their homes and families, often involuntarily, and placed in boarding schools operated by the federal government and churches; and

WHEREAS, the Native children removed from their homes, families, and communities were often moved far distances and were punished for speaking their Native languages and practicing their traditional cultures, which often resulted in physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse during retribution; and

WHEREAS, the children who attended such institutions have passed their trauma to their progeny where historical and intergenerational suffering continues to undermine and devastate Native families and communities; and

WHEREAS, while the United States Congress passed and President Obama signed a bill in 2010 that included an official apology to all Native peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native peoples by citizens of the United States, the U.S. and Christian denominations involved have yet to recompense Native communities for the generations harmed by past policies that resulted in cultural genocide for Native children and communities as well as tribes; and

WHEREAS, to address the enduring issues caused by boarding schools and assimilation policies of the United States, a comprehensive national commission is needed to study the history that documents the complete fate of the students and traumatic events at each school by gathering and analyzing testimony from victims, communities, and experts to provide recommendations to Congress for creating paradigms focused on healing and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, congressional commissions have analyzed similar issues and events throughout the past in an attempt to provide a means to address longstanding problems directly resulting from federal policy; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NIEA does hereby encourage the federal government and Christian denominations instrumental for running boarding schools and implementing assimilationist policy to acknowledge responsibility for their roles, to formally express their regret for such roles if they have yet to do so, and to provide support in the form of funding for addressing the healing needs of prior boarding school students as well as their subsequent generations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NIEA does hereby support the enactment of a bill by the United States Congress to create a Commission on Federal Indian Boarding School Policy to conduct a study and hold hearings regarding boarding school abuse and intergenerational impacts; to plan, design, and carry out its work in collaboration with impacted Native communities; receive verbal and written testimony from boarding school survivors and other stakeholders with the necessary compassion for those revisiting traumatic events; gather information from experts about intergenerational and historical trauma; take recommendations from affected Native communities and experts regarding necessary steps to provide healing; raise public awareness and

provide public education concerning federal boarding school policies and their lasting effects; and recommend and commit support for culturally-appropriate, community led remedies that include the participation of pertinent survivors, families, Native communities, and tribes.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was dully considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on November 2, 2013 at which a quorum of the membership was present.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Pam Agoyo', with a horizontal line extending from the top left of the first letter.

Pam Agoyo
President