



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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NIEA Resolution 2014-17

TITLE: SUPPORT CREATION OF A BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION TRIBAL BUDGET TASK FORCE

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 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) directly oversees a total of 183 elementary, secondary, residential and peripheral dormitories across 23 states that serve roughly 41,000 Indian students living on or near reservations; and

WHEREAS, BIE's mission is to provide Indian students quality educational opportunities starting in early childhood in accordance with a tribe's need for cultural and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, the high school graduation rate for BIE students in 2011 was 61 percent, placing BIE in the bottom half among graduation rates for Indian students attending public schools in states where BIE schools are located; and

WHEREAS, BIE schools are primarily funded through the Department of the Interior, however, it also receives annual formula grants from the Department of Education, similar to public schools; and

WHEREAS, the structure of funding and administrative bureaucracy for the BIE is causing significant challenges for the BIE and Indian schools to improve student academic performance; and

WHEREAS, while the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which oversees funding for the BIE, has undertaken another realignment of its administrative functions, it is unclear to what extent, if at all, the changes will result in improved services for BIE and its schools; and

WHEREAS, the BIA implemented its most recent realignment without seeking input from a broad range of education and BIE stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the BIA failed to develop a strategic plan with specific goals and measures for itself or BIE or strategies to achieve goals; and

WHEREAS, the BIA has not updated its workforce plan or assessed Indian Affairs' realignment and its impact on BIE to ensure the agency has the right staff in place with the appropriate skills to effectively meet the needs of BIE schools and their ability to serve Native students; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report to Congress in September 2013 highlighting issues reducing the effectiveness of the BIE and proposed possible methods to increase effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the GAO stated in that same report that it intends to issue a second report that will compare funding and expenditures for BIE schools to those of nearby public schools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NIEA does hereby call for the establishment of a Tribal/Federal Task Force (Task Force) comprised of tribal leaders and federal agency representatives to study the funding constraints BIE schools face as well as investigate appropriate measures to be taken in order to address such concerns culminated into a final report; and

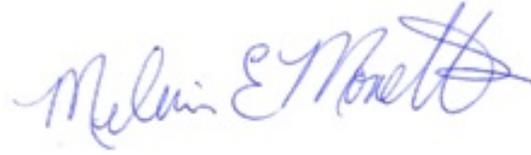
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NIEA supports that this Task Force be comprised of representation from NIEA, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA), the BIA, and the Department of Education (ED) to complete the study and provide recommendations for next steps to be taken and potential solutions, such as the impacts of shifting funding streams from the BIA to the BIE so that administrative functions and funding allocations are held strictly within the BIE; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any potential solutions considered, such as the one aforementioned, must take into account all benefits and consequences arising from each; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the NIEA does hereby request that the findings from the Task Force report be disseminated to tribes and their education agencies, the Secretaries of the Interior and Education, the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, and Congress.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was dully considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on October 18, 2014 at which a quorum of the membership was present.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Melvin E. Monette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Melvin Monette
President