

# PRESS RELEASE

## The National Indian Education Association Statement on the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2015

[niea@niea.org](mailto:niea@niea.org)

### CONTACT

*Washington, DC* -This week Congress will vote on passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a House/Senate conference report updating the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) has worked over the past year with our partners to preserve the trust responsibility to Native students and to strengthen the civil rights foundations upon which the ESEA was written. As a result, NIEA supports the final bill as a marked improvement for Native education.

NIEA President, Patsy Whitefoot said of the bill, "We are grateful for the bipartisan, bicameral collaboration of Chairman Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member Patty Murray, Chairman John Kline, and Ranking Member Bobby Scott and their staffs for recognizing the importance of supporting the unique needs of our students. We are also thankful for the support of our tribes, for making the needs of our youth a priority across all our Nations."

Key provisions on the ESSA in support of Native students include the following:

- **State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) Authorization:** Grants are permanently authorized to promote tribal self-determination, improve Indian academic achievement, and promote coordination and collaboration between tribal education agencies and state and local education agencies.

- **Consultation:** States must engage in meaningful consultation with tribes in the development of state plans for Title I grants. LEAs must consult with tribes in the design and development of programs under the Act, and they must consult with tribes prior to making any decision affecting the opportunities of Indian children in programs, services, or activities funded by ESEA.
- **Outreach:** The Secretary of Education is tasked with reaching out to LEAs and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools that are eligible for Title VII grants in order to encourage and assist eligible entities to submit applications.
- **Technical Assistance:** The Secretary of Education is directed to provide technical assistance to LEAs, including technical assistance to develop applications, improve implementation, and integrate Title VII activities with other educational activities.
- **Language Immersion Programs:** Funds the creation and expansion of Native language immersion programs in public schools.

While the final legislation is a marked improvement for Native students, NIEA remains concerned about the diminished federal role and the significant discretion given to states and districts. NIEA will be vigilant in holding all accountable to Native students and ensure that meaningful tribal input is incorporated during the implementation process.

***About The National Indian Education Association (NIEA)***

*The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) advances comprehensive educational opportunities for all Native students. Serving as the critical link between Native communities and the diverse array of institutions that serve our students, NIEA holds all accountable for improving achievement. Through advocacy, capacity-building, and education, NIEA supports Native students, and their communities to succeed. Learn more at [NIEA.org](https://www.niea.org).*

