

PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Education Association Applauds the Signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015



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niea@niea.org

CONTACT

Washington, D.C.: The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) applauds President Obama who signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law this morning. This bipartisan, bicameral law provides much needed and long sought relief from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB). "Today, the President and Congress have joined together to resoundingly state that the education of Native students is a priority," said Ahniwake Rose, NIEA Executive Director. "The provisions included in the ESSA establish a strong and supportive framework for tribes to be active partners in the education of their citizens."

Over the last decade, tribal nations have been seeking opportunities to be critical players in the education systems residing on their lands. Key provisions on behalf of Native students in the ESSA include:

- **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 ESSA.

- **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.

Although NIEA applauds these provisions, we remain concerned about the diminished role of the Federal government and the significant discretion given to states and districts. NIEA will continue to be vigilant and hold both states and Federal agencies accountable to Native students and ensure that meaningful tribal input is incorporated during the implementation process. "On behalf of our members, I want to thank President Obama and Congressional leadership for acknowledging the trust relationship the federal government has with Native people," said NIEA President, Patricia Whitefoot. She continued to say, "We stand ready to work with federal agencies, states, districts, and Tribes to ensure Native students receive the best access and opportunities."

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.

