



**National Indian
Education Association**

“National Indian Education Association advances comprehensive, culture-based educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.”

Our traditional Native cultures and values are the foundations of our learning therefore, NIEA will:

- Promote educational sovereignty;
- Support continuing use of traditional knowledge and language;
- Improve educational opportunities and results in our communities.



NIEA Mission Statement



Protecting Indian Education Funding

- Debt Ceiling
- Appropriations
- Legislative Successes in the 118th Congress
- Current Legislative Landscape
- Looking Ahead





Re-cap

- June 2023 lawmakers enacted the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023.
- Suspends the debt limit through 01/2025
- Implements caps on discretionary funding for FY24 and 25.

Solutions:

- Mandatory Appropriations for the entire Bureau of Indian Education
- Supporting the Indian Programs Advance Appropriations Act



Debt Ceiling

- Introduced last week (07/24) by Sen. Lujan & Sen. Mullin (Rep. McCollum & Rep. Cole)
- Allow accounts within IHS, BIA, & BIE to be funded a year in advance.

Additional Solutions:

- Moving Contract Support Costs & 105(I) to mandatory funding
- Tribal Grant Support Costs



Indian Programs Advance Appropriations Act





Legislative Successes in the 118th

- Native American Language Resource Center Act (S. 989/ H.R. 2271) (Enacted 01/05/23)
 - Authorizes the Department of Education to grant or contract with higher education institutions to create Native American Language Resource Centers to improve the capacity to teach and learn Native Languages.
- Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2022 (S. 1402/ H.R. 2271) (Enacted 01/05/23)
 - Authorizes the Administration for Native Americans to survey the use of Native American languages in the United States.
 - Directs the President to review whether federal agencies follow requirements to promote the use of Native American languages and make recommendations to improve the interagency coordinate to promote the use of Native languages.





Current Legislative Landscape

- The Tribal Nutrition Improvement Act
 - Establishes a two-year pilot program through the USDA to directly administer the School Lunch Program, makes Native children categorically eligible for free school meals, and adjusts USDA reimbursement rates for BIE
- Advancing Towards Full Impact Aid Funding
 - Splits Impact Aid's \$1.1 billion request evenly over five years, and increases Basic Support funding by \$190 million annually, meeting Impact Aid's 2019 funding requests
- Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act
 - This legislation would establish a congressional Truth and Healing Commission and develop recommendations on:
 - Protecting unmarked graves and accompanying land protections.
 - Support repatriation and identify the tribal nations from which children were taken, and
 - Discontinue the removal of Native children from their families and tribal communities by state social service departments, foster care agencies, and adoption agencies.





Current Legislative Landscape

- The Native American Education Opportunity Act
 - Establishes a five-year pilot program to allow Tribes to create an education savings account (ESA) for Tribal enrolled students who currently attend Bureau of Indian (BIE) Schools
- The National Advisory Council on Indian Education Improvement Act
 - Requires at least one of NACIE's members be the president of a TCU and requires ED and Interior to consider NACIE's annual report when preparing their budgets each year.
- The Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals Act
 - Reauthorizes and revises certain grant programs to address shortages of teachers and school leaders in elementary and secondary schools
- The Honoring Promises to Native Nations Act
- Implements the recommendations of the USCCR's Broken Promises Report, including guaranteeing full funding for BIE schools, Native language programs and culturally inclusive education, and public school supports





Current Legislative Landscape

- The Inspiring New STEM Professionals by Investing in Renovation of Education Act
 - Support STEM education in rural areas and Native communities by establishing two competitive grant programs.
- The Respect, Advancement, and Increasing Support for Educators Act
 - Grant a refundable tax credit back to certain teachers that qualify to boost their compensation regardless of their funding the school district possesses.
 - Implement a sliding scale tax credit up to \$15,00 to specific early public elementary and secondary educations which BIE funded elementary or secondary schools and early childhood programs are eligible.





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APPROPRIATIONS

- Provide mandatory funding for the entire Bureau of Indian Education and Native education related Department of Education Accounts
 - Including for JOM
 - A proper fulfilment of the federal trust responsibility to education
 - Mandatory funding will protect from cuts and measures in all future budget agreements related to continuing debt-ceiling crises
- Support educational improvement and reform for Native students in Title VI, Part A (Indian Education Formula grants). Activities included to support educational improvement and reform are:
 - Direct assistance to local school districts and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools;
 - Demonstrations and training for Indian individuals and educators; and
 - Native language, research, evaluation, data collection, technical assistance, and other national activities that promote efforts to meet the unique educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students.
- Provide funding and resources for Native Language Immersion Programs
 - Funding in addition to the 20% set-aside to support the federal commitment to Native Languages and improving the educational outcomes of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students.



- Increased Funding for the Indian Student Equalization Program which provides the core budget for BIE elementary and secondary schools.
 - Tribal schools do not have a tax base like off-reservation public schools to off-set these costs. Tribal schools also do not have access to Impact Aid funding, as they are entirely federally run therefore there is not a tax-based census-tract off which to calculate tax revenue-loss. This makes is especially critical to adequately fund all of the accounts that tribal schools do receive funds from, to ensure there is parity in the education standards and teacher pay for these schools.
- Increased Funding for Student Transportation and Increased funding For BIE Facilities Operations and Maintenance.
 - As ISEP funds are often forced to be reallocated to cover the shortfalls in other areas such as operations, maintenance, and transportation, one of the best ways to ensure Tribal schools have appropriate funding comparative to the resources available state-wide is to ensure the budgets for Transportation, Operations, and Maintenance are adequately funded.
- Invest in construction of schools that serve Native students—including Replacement School Construction, Replacement Facility Construction, Replacement/New Employee Housing, Employee Housing Repair, and Facilities Improvement & Repair.



NIEA Priorities

- Although most states set many of their own policies governing charter schools, all public schools, including charter schools, are governed by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and other relevant federal education policy. With this backdrop, the federal government must:
 - Advocate for funding and authorization of Native Charter schools including establishing Tribal Nations as authorizers;
 - Ensure meaningful tribal consultation is occurring under ESSA, and that tribal input and voices are influencing policy;
 - Create pathways for Tribal Nations to exercise the right to educational sovereignty;
 - Raise the status of tribal language classes, and ensure Native language teachers are paid commensurately with their teaching peers;
 - Engage with Native populations in an equitable way with respect to data—assessment data includes Native American students, but we are still not being equitable in reading, understanding, and disaggregation of the data being compiled;
 - Promote authentic community engagement in creating accountability coupled with stewardship in creating remedies for low-performing and at-risk schools (which are deficit-based terms associated with many Native Local Education Agencies (LEAs), in addition to increasing funding to these schools;
 - Protect Native American Special Education students by creating capacity within school districts to create and implement 504 plans.



NIEA Priorities

- Provide funding and permission for culturally-based assessments in Early Childhood Education. Native-serving Early Childhood and Headstart programs should be utilizing alternative assessments that are more community oriented.
- Ensure a Native educator and leader pipeline is critical to address the current teacher shortages but also ensure representation in the field. As part of this, there must be authorization and an increase in funding for Grow Our Own educator preparation programs that certify Native educators to teach through a cultural and linguistic lens.
- Increase funding for Wrap-around Services and Whole Child Approaches, which are critical to addressing trauma and mental health—conditions that have been exacerbated by COVID. These approaches should encompass Indigenous methods that address suicide and substance use prevention, Social and Emotional Learning supports, and trauma-informed schools training as well as increased support for and representation of 2SLGBTQ+ students and educators in school programming and curriculum





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