



# NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## Education Sovereignty

### NATIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

*The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) is the nation's largest and most inclusive organization advocating for comprehensive culture-based educational opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.*

#### **Native Education For All (NEFA)**

Ninety-three percent of the 650,000 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students in schools across the United States attend public schools.

Many Native students do not have access to high-quality culture-based education options that provide opportunities to thrive. Safe and healthy classrooms that center language and culture are essential to equity in education for Native students across the nation. From early childhood through postsecondary education, Native students must have access to programs and resources that provide the best chance at success.

Native Education for All (NEFA) is an educational movement led by Tribal Nations and State partners to provide all K-12 students with instruction on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian peoples. NEFA is expressed through state legislation and state board policies that implement, require, or mandate students be taught Native subjects and standards. Native history, culture, and Tribal government are subjects that are commonly covered in NEFA legislation and policy. Montana, Oregon, and Washington are three states who have passed legislation and are currently implementing NEFA. NIEA is actively working with partners in Arizona, North Dakota, and Minnesota to advance NEFA through collaborations with Tribal Nations, state education offices, educators, and Native education advocates to support the passage and implementation of NEFA legislation and policy.

#### **NEFA Priorities**

- Support and advocate for the passage of NEFA legislation and policy at the state and local level;
- Support the implementation of NEFA legislation and policy through technical assistance and programing;
- Support legislation and policy that improves Native education and complements NEFA objectives;
- Build Tribal capacity to implement NEFA and support education sovereignty;
- Develop training and professional development opportunities for educators who are required to teach Native content and have Native students; and
- Develop tools and resources that can be shared with Tribal Nations, States, and Native education advocates to pass and support the implementation of NEFA legislation and policy.

#### **Arizona**

NIEA is working with the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA) to develop Tribally approved content and a "white paper" on state and regional Native education legislation and policy that can be used to advocate to improve and strengthen NEFA policy and legislation in Arizona. NIEA is also



engaging with Native education leaders to strategize on parent committee advocacy. This work will support Native education in the state and NIEA has also engaged the Arizona Office of Indian Education on the proposed legislation Arizona House Bill 2513. The bill would require the state Board of Education to incorporate Native history into existing K-12 curriculum statewide and make changes to teacher development programs to include instruction in Native curriculum instruction.

### **North Dakota**

In 2022 The North Dakota state legislature passed North Dakota Senate Bill 2304 which requires Native history and social studies curriculum be taught to students as a requirement for high school graduation beginning in 2025. The SB 2304 Working Group, comprised of former Tribal leaders, educators, Native education advocates, and the North Dakota Historical Society, have partnered with NIEA to ensure implementation of the bill. NIEA produced a digital ad campaign targeting teachers and school leaders to raise awareness of the passage and requirements of SB 2304. In conjunction with this campaign a website was launched to provide resources and guidance to teachers. In July 2022, NIEA conducted the first in a series of two-day “train the trainer” events in Bismarck, ND. NIEA continues to support SB 2304 by updating the website and curating content and resources on Native history instruction.

### **Minnesota**

NIEA is working with Tribal Nations Education Committee, Minnesota Indian Education Association, We Are Still Here Minnesota, the State Office of American Indian Education and Native educators and advocates to plan for advocacy actions to pass what the state has termed “Indigenous Education for All” (IEFA) and provide technical assistance for implementation. Despite challenges to pass IEFA in the state legislature the Governor’s office has secured funding to implement IEFA projects. Proponents of IEFA are optimistic that several IEFA legislation, policy, and budget priorities will be achieved over the next two years. NIEA continues to engage Native education stakeholders and respond to the political advocacy needs and planning for IEFA implementation. NIEA has held two in person strategic planning meetings with Native Education advocates, organizations, and Tribal education directors.

### **Other States**

NIEA is actively working to expand NEFA projects in additional states through partnerships with Tribal Nations and Native education advocates that request support. NIEA is using the experience and lessons learned from the challenges and successes of working in current priority states to develop tools to evaluate state readiness for NEFA projects and provide resources for Tribal Nations, Native education advocates, and state education offices to support the passage and implementation of NEFA legislation and policies. NIEA also strives to provide support to educators through professional development and train-the-trainer programs designed around meeting the requirements of respective state NEFA legislation and policy.

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