

**THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF
AMERICAN INDIANS**

RESOLUTION #SPO-01-052

**Title: Increase High School Graduation Rates of American Indian and
Alaska Native Students**

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, a quality high school education should be expected as a basic part of the educational level for all America's students including American Indian students, and is a necessity for entry level employment opportunities that provide an adequate wage as well as entry level into post-secondary training; and

WHEREAS, a quality education system, which should include as a minimum a high school diploma, must be provided in our Indian communities to not only support the development of a well-trained labor force but to strengthen families and reduce the dependency on social services programs, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes that many of the Indians students who are entering high school as freshmen are not graduating from high school and as a result are faced with many barriers that limit their opportunities in continuing their education in post secondary training, seeking gainful employment, and creates barriers for future success; and

WHEREAS, NCAI recognizes that a wide disparity in educational achievement exists between the American Indian students and their non-Indian peers in our nation's public schools as

evidenced by the extremely high rates of between 40 – 60% of American Indian students who are leaving high school between their freshmen and senior year and not graduating as evidenced by the example of 50% graduation rate in the state of Montana between the years 1995-1996 and 1998-1999; and

WHEREAS, NCAI finds this an unacceptable achievement level for American Indian students in our nation’s public schools.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby in cooperation with the National Indian Education Association, the U.S. Department of Education and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Indian Education Programs, will develop a data base from at least 10 other states that have this data available (similar to the state of Montana that shows enrollments and graduation data by ethnic background) to document the disparity in graduation rates of American Indian students based on enrollment, baseline of entering 9th grade students, and graduation rates over a four-year period (Freshmen level through Senior); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI and the National Indian Education Association will share the data with educational leadership, its membership, and advocate for strategies to increase the graduation rates of American Indian students; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 58th Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001 with a quorum present.

Tex Hall, President

ATTEST:

Colleen Cawston, Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 58th Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Spokane Convention Center, in Spokane, Washington on November 25-30, 2001.