



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution # PDX-20-031

TITLE: Supporting a Transformative Plan of Action to Address the Pre-K through 20 Education Crisis Confronting Native Students

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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, the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility to American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) which includes the provision of education, health, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, 25 U.S.C. § 450a provides that *“Congress declares that a major national goal of the United States is to provide the quantity and quality of educational services and opportunities which will permit Indian children to compete and excel in the life areas of their choice.....; and*

WHEREAS, tribal nations, families, and communities share responsibility for protecting the youth, teaching and guiding these next generations, providing services to families, and creating supportive environments where children can live and flourish; and

WHEREAS, the impact of the coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) has highlighted persistent education gaps and schools have been forced to create solutions without sufficient fiscal resources, proper professional development, training, or tools for educators, students, and families; and

WHEREAS, technology and the internet have transformed the way students can learn when they have access to high quality distance and virtual education options; and

WHEREAS, technology can assist in building culturally relevant curriculum, connect Native language learners with fluent instructors, and expand educational environments where Native students can participate and thrive in education pathways to achieve their full potential; and

WHEREAS, 34 percent of Native students nationwide do not have access to the internet in their homes, compared to 24 percent of students nationwide; and

WHEREAS, the First Kids 1st initiative was founded by the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Education Association, the National Indian Child Welfare Association, and the National Indian Health Board to cultivate and nurture strategies and policies that build and strengthen tribal sovereignty and local supports for AI/AN children and service providers, and to improve the social, emotional, mental, physical and economic health of Native students.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI urges federal, state, local and tribal governments to assess Pre-K through 20 educational needs and opportunities for Native students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI urges federal, state, local, and tribal governments to promote the vision of the First kids 1st initiative to improve the lives and outcomes of Native students to ensure they have access to technology, supportive environments, safe communities, and healthy lifestyles; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NCAI urges federal, state, local, and tribal governments, alongside multi-sector partners to collaborate in the transformation of tribal -centered approaches and principles in developing a collaborative Pre-K through 20 plan of action to address the current education crisis; 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 by the General Assembly at the 2020 Virtual Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held on November 8-13, 2020, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary