November is Native American Heritage Month, also referred to as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. This month is a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate Native culture, history, and traditions which deeply enrich the quality and character of our Nation. The first inhabitants of these lands contributed to modern day society through foods, medicine, literature, arts, common names of states and counties, and our modern day governmental structure.

NIEA stands in support of our Native nations and students to celebrate the vibrant diversity of our cultures, languages, and traditions today, and in the future, through Native American Heritage Month. We look forward to joining our members and stakeholders over the coming month through our advocacy and programming.

Visit NIEA at www.niea.org for more about where NIEA will be and what we are doing to celebrate Native peoples this month.
House Committee Advances Higher Education Reauthorization

On October 30, the House Committee on Education and Labor passed a comprehensive proposal to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA). Known as the College Affordability Act (H.R.4674), this bill seeks to strengthen pathways to college for all students through a number of provisions, including:

- Increasing the maximum award for Pell Grants by $625, which will include an annual adjustment based on inflation;
- Reauthorizing Perkins loans;
- Streamlining and allows all student loan borrowers access to income driven repayment (IDR) plans;
- Expanding access to dual enrollment programs;
- Increasing funding for on-campus childcare and programs to support parenting students;
- Reinstating gainful employment rules;
- Reinforcing protections for students experience sexual assault on campus through Title IX; and
- Establishing a student data system for higher education.

In addition, the bill includes provisions that directly impact Native students and programs across the nation by:

- Increasing mandatory funding for Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Native-serving institutions.
- Clarifying tribal access to FAFSA data for the purpose of administering scholarships;
- Eliminating bureaucratic preapproval requirements for TCU's; and
- Establishing a Native American Language Revitalization and Training program.

As we head into the busy holiday season, Congress will
NIEA and NCAI Urge Action on Esther Martinez

Native languages are in crisis. Language loss threatens the academic achievement of Native students, who thrive when Native languages, histories, and traditions are included and valued in the classroom.

This year, congressional leaders have taken steps to reverse this trend by reauthorizing the Esther Martinez program, which supports Native language immersion and preservation programs.

The reauthorization of this Act would provide additional flexibility for Native nations support Native language revitalization by:

- Increasing the minimum number of students required for a program; and
- Increasing the number of years funded for an eligible grant.

On June 27, 2019, S. 256 passed the Senate and was referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor. Given Senate passage, we ask Native nations, leaders, and educators to write letters to House leadership urging the prompt passage of S. 256, the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act. Please share a copy of your letters with NCAI and NIEA so that we can document support from Native nations and communities.
Stay Up to Date on Key Native Education Legislation!

Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act  
*S.1279 / H.R.2486*

Due to ongoing negotiations regarding the Higher Education Act, $50 million in mandatory funding for Native-serving institutions has lapsed. The FUTURE Act extends this funding for TCUs, Native-serving institutions, and other minority serving institutions for an additional two years while congressional leaders negotiate a more extensive Higher Education Act.

**What Can I Do?**

Call Your Senator

**Additional Resources**

NIEA, NCAI, & AIHEC Joint Letter

Mandatory funding under this Act is essential to providing much-needed student support, academic, and infrastructure funding for TCUs, and other Native-serving institutions, as well as HBCUs and HSIs. This program has been in existence for a decade. However, **without Congressional action, there will be no new funding after September 30, 2019.**

The time to act is now!

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**What Can I Do?**

Tribal School Federal Insurance Parity Act  
*S.279/H.R.895*

NIEA has worked in close coordination with tribal schools and leaders to support the Tribal School Federal Insurance Parity Act. This bill provides parity in access to health insurance benefits at all tribal schools by closing a loophole in the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act, which allowed employees at 638 schools to access federal health insurance, but denied access to employees at 297 schools.

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**Honoring Promises to Native Nations Act Proposal**

Early this fall, Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) released a legislative proposal to address chronic underfunding in Native communities, including in Native education programs.

**What Can I Do?**

Contact Us
Today!

Legislative Proposal

Congressional Fact Sheet

For more information about NIEA's work on the Hill, contact Adrianne Elliott, Senior Legislative Associate, at 202-847-0040 or at aelliott@niea.org

In the Administration

ED Releases New Rules for Indian Education Professional Development Grants

The Department of Education released proposed regulations regarding the Indian Education Professional Development Grants program. Authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act, this grant supports programs that increase the number of qualified individuals in professions that serve Native students through educator training and professional development.

Comments Due November 12, 2019

Submit Comments!

Read NIEA Resolution

Johnson O'Malley Preliminary Count Report

The BIE released a preliminary report regarding the updated eligible student count for the historic Johnson-O'Malley program. Required under the Johnson-O'Malley Supplemental Indian Education Program Modernization Act, this report provides an updated...
NIEA urges tribal leaders, educators, and stakeholders to ensure that our students are represented by make your voice heard.

Comments due December 20, 2019

Submit Comments!

For more information about NIEA's work with the Administration, contact Adrianne Elliott, Senior Legislative Associate, at 202-847-0040 or at aelliott@niea.org

NIEA in Action

NIEA President Marita Hinds, Board Member Bernadine Atchison, Executive Director Diana Courmoyer and staff represented Native students and educators at the NCAI Annual Convention and Marketplace.

NIEA Executive Director Diana Courmoyer, Former President Heather Shotton, and Student Board Member Savannah Romero speak with Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM) and Representative Sharice Davids (D-KS) backstage before the NIEA General Assembly during our 50th Annual Convention and Tradeshow.

Native Education Meetings and Events
Tribal Interior Budget Council

November 12-14, 2019
Washington, DC
Government-to-government forum and process for tribal leaders to develop federal budget recommendations for Department of Interior programs.

New Mexico Government to Government (G2G) Meeting

November 20-22, 2019
Albuquerque, NM
Semi-Annual meeting between New Mexico tribes and state leaders to discuss the education of tribal students.

Oklahoma Council of Indian Education (OCIE) Annual Conference

December 8-10, 2019
Shawnee, OK
Convening of educators, tribal leaders, and advocates to support best practices for Native education in Oklahoma.

National Indian Impacted Schools Association Conference

December 9-10 2019
Las Vegas, NV
Annual meeting of stakeholders for public schools located on or near tribal lands that receive funding through the Impact Aid program.

Student Opportunities

Udall Foundation Native American Congressional Internship
Applications Due January 31, 2020

The Native American Congressional Internship Program provides American Indian and Alaska Native students with the opportunity to gain practical experience with the federal legislative
process in order to understand first-hand the government-to-government relationship between Tribes and the federal government.

Apply Now!

Contact Us

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National Indian Education Association