

# **Education Policy Statement**

## **2008 Presidential Administration**

American Indian and Alaska Native students are being left behind. The 2007 National Indian Education Study<sup>1</sup> indicated that in reading and math, American Indian and Alaska Native students scored significantly lower than their peers in both fourth and eighth grades. In fact, Native students were the only students to show no significant progress in either subject since 2005. Our students also face some of the highest dropout rates in the country<sup>2</sup>. These trends need to be stopped.

Recent studies have shown that students are more likely to thrive in environments that support their cultural identities<sup>3</sup>. This can be accomplished by Tribes and tribal education departments having a greater role in administering the education of their children. In turn, these children will be better prepared to become active, engaged tribal citizens.

In order to ensure that Native students meet the same challenging academic standards as the majority population, it is imperative that the next Administration make education a priority. To that end, NCAI recommends the following:

1. Accomplish the intent of the charter of the Office of Indian Education in the Department of Education by re-establishing the Director to Assistant Secretary and elevating the office out of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education to be a stand alone.
2. Establishment of an Indian Education Budget Task Force that would consist of representatives of the Department of Education and Department of the Interior as well as tribal experts.
3. Issue an Executive Order on Indian Education that promotes the use of Native language instruction and culture based education in public and federally funded schools.
4. Call for a Whitehouse conference on Native youth issues and support a Native Children's Agenda – elevating the current status and situation facing Native youth to a national priority.
5. Actively utilize the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) to promote policies on Indian Education within the Department of Education.

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<sup>1</sup> Moran, R., Rampey, B.D., Dion, G., Donahue, P. (2008). *National Indian Education Study 2007 Part I: Performance of American Indian and Alaska Native Students at Grades 4 and 8 on NAEP 2007 Reading and Mathematics Assessments* (NCES 2008-457). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> Laird, J., DeBell, M., and Chapman, C. (2006). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2004* ([NCES 2007-024](#)). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> Clarke, "American Indian and Alaska Native Students."

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6. Reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act and reaffirm the original intent of the Title VII program by providing provisions for meaningful tribal involvement in setting education priorities for Indian students and the inclusion of Native language and cultural instruction.
  
7. Advocate for appropriations for Tribal Education Departments.
  
8. Request and advocate for adequate funding for Bureau of Indian Affairs school construction, maintenance, and transportation.
  
9. Authorize Tribes to be Eligible Grantees for Title VIII Impact Aid Grants and disallow the equalization of Impact Aid funding, utilized by states like Alaska and New Mexico that allows for Impact Aid funding to be considered a local revenue source and deducted from state aid.
  
10. Support the ongoing work of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities.