

NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS

RESOLUTION ON COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (NCNASL) is made up of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian State Legislators from 18 states and is organized to provide a forum for discussion, education and increased communication. Additionally, the NCNASL identifies and proposes legislation and administrative actions to eliminate barriers to achievement of a better quality of life for Native people.

WHEREAS the Common Core Standards (CCS) Initiative was launched by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in partnership with Achieve, Inc., ACT and the College Board in 2009 in an effort to

- address concerns regarding the wide variability in state standards which have resulted in uneven and unequal education opportunities across states and lowered expectations for student achievement; and
- meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements of NCLB with the goal of graduating students from high school ready for college, work and success in the global economy; and

WHEREAS these first standards being addressed are English-language arts and mathematics in grades K-12; and

- are a set of commonly agreed upon standards for K-12 learning, grounded in research and practice, reflecting the type of skills and knowledge students need to have in order to successfully transition from high school into college and the world of work while remaining competitive in the world economy; and
- States have the opportunity to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), developed by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), agreeing to engage in the CCS development process and then commit to adopt them or align existing content standards once the CCS have been developed, vetted, and approved; and
- CCS development will be internationally benchmarked, focused on developing key 21st century skills, “fewer, clearer, and deeper”, and rigorous and specific; and

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators recognizes that 90 percent of the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Students in grades K-12 attend public schools in America and that their education will be significantly impacted by these Common Core Standards, and

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators recognizes the educational disparities that already exist as evidenced by both the achievement gap and the unacceptable high school graduation rates of Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators agrees there may be potential benefits of CCS that are aligned across states and public schools including:

- Limiting or mitigating interruptions or disconnects in learning for Native American students who are mobile between schools and states, or even between public, BIE, and tribal schools.
- Requiring that all students receive the same curriculum and relevant program of instruction, thus allowing resource poor or understaffed schools serving Native Americans, as well as other traditionally under-served minority or rurally isolated students, to offer higher level academic courses such as calculus or advanced placement programs.
- Requiring all teachers to master the same curriculum in each content area, replacing curricula that vary from state-to-state, thus allowing states and school districts to focus more on helping teachers be proficient and effective in teaching all students; and

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators is gravely concerned that the current CCS omitted recognition of any or all cultures, specifically the cultural heritage of Native Americans, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators believes the skills and knowledge identified as necessary in the CCS must include the skills and knowledge identified by Native nations and communities as being critical to their continued development and well-being as communities, as well as for success in college, work, and life; and

WHEREAS for Native students, studies have indicated that cultural context may be necessary for success, and the CCS offer an opportunity to expand instructional competencies to include these critical Native histories, languages, and cultures, along with the dedicated time for professional development in these areas.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS that the inherent sovereignty of Tribes as recognized through historical treaties and legal relationships that exist between Tribal Nations and the United States of America is undeniable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators strongly urges:

- the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to include a process in the development of these Common Core Standards that will insure that the history, culture and languages of America's first people are included; and
- that states which have already integrated standards in Native American history, culture and languages be assured that these standards will be retained and integrated with the CCS; and
- that states that have adopted CCS ensure these K-12 standards incorporate culturally appropriate histories, cultures and languages of the Native nations; and
- that the CCS facilitate the initiation of concurrent or dual enrollment to encourage native students to graduate with credits toward associates or technology degrees.
- the NGA and CSSCO encourage and support states to develop additional tribal specific standards through cooperative partnerships with include Tribes, tribal education departments and other appropriate Native American education organizations such as existing state Indian Education Organizations, Tribal Education Departments, the National Indian Education Association, and the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators.
- that the CCS do not translate into additional graduation requirements for students above the minimum currently required as Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students already experience a 50 percent graduation rate and additional requirements would likely further erode this already unacceptable rate.
- That the NGA, CSSCO and States work to insure that the evaluation and assessment process created for these common core standards are appropriate and relevant and will serve to narrow the existing achievement gap and increase high school graduation rates for Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators reaffirms that tribal governments have the right to exercise tribal sovereignty with respect to the education of their students and while Tribes and Bureau of Indian Education schools develop their own standards and cannot be mandated to adopt CCS, they shall have access to support if they chose to adopt the CCS.

Sponsored by: Sen. Carol Juneau (MT) Education Committee Chair

Approved date is: September 25, 2009

Committee of Jurisdiction: Education

Certified by Committee Chair: Sen. Carol Juneau (MT)

Certified by Caucus Chair: Rep. John McCoy (WA)

Ratified certified by: The NCNASL, September 25, 2009

Distribution List: **National Congress of American Indians**
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