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## **PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES**

Washington, DC – At the conclusion of the 2011 Tribal Nations Conference, President Barack Obama signed an Executive Order that will help expand educational opportunities and improve educational outcomes for all American Indian and Alaska Native students, including opportunities to learn their Native languages, cultures, and histories and receive a complete and competitive education that prepares them for high-quality colleges, productive careers, and satisfying lives.

“This Executive Order is much needed and reflects the Obama Administration’s commitment to the education of our American Indian and Alaska Native youth,” said National Indian Education Association (NIEA) President Quinton Roman Nose. “We are hopeful that the Congress will carry forward these principles in its reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and will provide the appropriations necessary to ensure that the United States government’s trust responsibility to educate Indians is met.”

This Executive Order intends to achieve critical education outcome improvements by striving to reduce the American Indian/Alaska Native student dropout rate while making sure a greater number of Native students meet college- and career-ready standards. It will also identify pathways that enable those who have dropped out to reenter the education training pipeline, acquire industry-recognized credentials, and obtain sustainable jobs. By expanding access to high-quality education programs, especially in the STEM fields, and supporting adult, career and technical education programs, there is tremendous potential for economic and social growth.

“We are thankful for President Obama’s support for the education of our American Indian and Alaska Native youth and for the commitment he has made to their futures,” said Colin Kippen, NIEA Executive Director. “We at NIEA know that an education grounded in the language, culture, and traditions of our Native students is the best way to reach and teach our children.”

This Executive Order is also committed to strengthening the capacity of Tribal Colleges and Universities as institutions that offer a high-quality college education, provide career and technical education, job training, and often serve as anchors in some of our country’s poorest and most remote areas.

“We are working hard to increase the graduation rates of our students and to improve the quality of the education they are able to receive,” said Kippen. “We know that economic opportunity and a better life for American Indians and Alaska Natives starts with a quality education, and we look forward to partnering with President Obama’s team as they carry out this Executive Order.”

For more information, please contact NIEA at 202-544-7290.

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**About the National Indian Education Association:** The mission of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) is to support traditional Native cultures and values; to enable Native learners to become contributing members of their communities; to promote Native control of educational institutions; and to improve educational opportunities and resources for American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians throughout the United States. For more information, please visit [www.niea.org](http://www.niea.org).