



Indigenous Education

A Statement of Policy and Proposed Action

New York State Education Department, Office of Indigenous Education
October Board of Regents Meeting
October 6, 2025



Land Acknowledgement

- We honor the ancestral homelands of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy—Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Tuscarora—and the Shinnecock and Unkechaug Nations.
- We affirm sovereignty, resilience, and continuing presence; we share responsibility to advance equity and mutual respect.

Why This Policy Now?

- 1975 Regents Policy ↔ 2025 renewal: from assimilation to sovereignty and culturally responsive, sustaining practice.
- Acknowledges harms (e.g., residential schools) and recommits to partnership and self-determination.
- Polishing the Silver Covenant Chain: durable, accountable relationships with all nine Nations.



1975 Recommendations: Status

- Advisory body realized (2023); regional engagement expanding.
- Indigenous Culture and Language Studies certification advancing educator capacity.
- Curricular resources in development; local control respected.
- Grant-in-aid, continuing education, and PD: expansion in progress.
- Intergovernmental collaboration strengthened.

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education (CR-SE)

- Welcoming, affirming environments that honor identity and belonging.
- High expectations with rigorous, relevant learning.
- Inclusive curriculum and assessment embedding Indigenous perspectives.
- Ongoing professional learning grounded in reflection and partnership.

Advisory Council & Key Actions

- Commissioner's Indigenous Education Advisory Council established in 2023; consultative, co-constructive.
- First NYS Indigenous Culture and Language Studies teaching certificate created.
- Prohibited school mascots/imagery appropriating Indigenous peoples; advancing dignity and inclusion.
- Year long engagement and consultation to frame an updated *Indigenous Education: A Statement of Policy and Proposed Action* document.
- Perspective of Sub-Chief Agnes Jacobs, St. Regis Mohawk Nation



Educational Priorities

- Uplift Advisory Council to guide policy, resources, and professional learning.
- Expand regional Indigenous education committees with Nations, youth, and districts.
- Advance equity through shared goals, data transparency, and targeted supports.
- Graduation Measures & Portrait of a Graduate: co-design pathways that honor Indigenous strengths.
- Inclusive learning standards and curricular resource briefs across disciplines.
- College, career, and workforce pathways: counseling, bridges, internships, mentorships.
- Indigenous language & culture programs across P-20; revitalization and capacity building
- Early learning & parent engagement through culturally grounded supports
- Expand postsecondary grant-in-aid and non-traditional pathways.
- Strengthen tuition contracts and Nation consultation aligned to CR-SE.

Graduation Measures & Portrait of a Graduate

- Lift Indigenous ways of knowing—relational learning, leadership, stewardship.
- Professional learning for educators, counselors, and leaders.
- Resources to help students demonstrate competencies inside and outside school.



Standards & Curricular Resources

- Embed accurate, inclusive Indigenous content in future standards.
- Develop briefs with Indigenous leaders, educators, and knowledge holders.
- Turnkey instructional supports and assessment exemplars.

Language & Culture Programs



Monitor district offerings; support bilingual and bicultural materials.
Invest in early childhood through adult language learning.
Sustain Nation-led language instruction with consultation committees.

Early Learning & Parent Engagement

Parent training to navigate systems and advocate for student needs.
Programs that affirm language, identity, and relational learning from the start.



College, Career, and Workforce

- Strengthen guidance from middle school; culturally responsive planning.
- Expand access to advanced coursework, internships, CTE, apprenticeships.
- Recruit, prepare, and retain Indigenous educators and student support staff.



Postsecondary Support

- Increase grant-in-aid awards; include graduate and professional study.
- Align State/Federal aid; broaden outreach and TA.
- Honor treaty-based obligations while removing barriers to access.



Implementation, Measurement, and Call to Action

- Co-design regional plans; work at the speed of community.
- Share data with transparency; combine quantitative and qualitative insights.
- Continuous improvement with Nations, families, and districts.
- Polish the Silver Covenant Chain—renew trust and shared accountability.
- Affirm sovereignty, language, and culture as foundations for learning.
- Partner to deliver equitable, high-quality opportunities for Indigenous students.



Questions?

