



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

April 10, 2019

Latta School District
ATTN: Latta School Board Members
13925 Co Rd 1560
Ada, OK 74820

Dear Latta School Board Members,

On behalf of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), ***the only national organization advocating for improved educational opportunities for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students***, NIEA offers this letter of support for the Oklahoma tribes awarding honor cords, and your district's more than 250 American Indian students and their families, who are requesting that your District adopt a traditional tribal regalia or objects of cultural significance policy and procedures for students participating in your district's graduation ceremonies. The wearing of such regalia at graduation empowers students to be productive, confident, and successful citizens when they are valued; and promotes values of integrity and honor, as reflected in the values of Latta Public Schools.

NIEA promotes ensuring our Native students can develop and learn in communities steeped in their cultural identity. As such, the organization, our membership, and our Native communities fully support our Native graduates wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of cultural significance.

We encourage you to consider the meaning of traditional tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance to Native people, as these items accentuate, honor, and celebrate Indigenous culture, heritage, and traditions. When Native students adorn regalia and objects of culture significance during graduation they serve as a positive role model for younger Native students, as these younger students witness their older peers' academic success and the great accomplishment of completing high school and moving towards the next path in the graduates' lives.

Thank you for opening the dialogue and providing our communities the opportunity to share our culture with the school and district. If you need any additional assistance, please contact Geneva Horsechief-Hamilton at 202.544.7290 or geneva@niea.org. Please CC Superintendent, Cliff Johnson, supt@latta.k12.ok.us, in all communications.

Sincerely,

Diana Cournoyer
Interim Executive Director
National Indian Education Association