



## United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

---

**Nashville, TN Office:**

711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100  
Nashville, TN 37214  
Phone: (615) 872-7900  
Fax: (615) 872-7417

**Washington, DC Office:**

400 North Capitol Street, Suite 585  
Washington, D.C., 20001  
Phone: (202) 624-3550  
Fax: (202) 393-5218

### USET Resolution No. 2014:018

#### **SUPPORT TO DEVELOP BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAMS FOR LANGUAGE IMMERSION IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITHIN INDIAN COUNTRY**

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** Native languages are the repository of all the collective wisdom and culture of Tribal Nations, containing ceremony, indigenous knowledge and mechanisms for social governance that have been thousands of years in the making, and can lead to positive reinforcement of traditional values essential not just to Tribal nations but to the United States as a whole and beyond; and
- WHEREAS,** teaching students in their native language has proven in several studies to be an effective way of improving achievement of Native American children, even on standardized tests, in part because such a teaching mechanism raises self-esteem and places value on the culture and traditions of the Native nation whose language is being spoken and used in everyday life; and
- WHEREAS,** because of budget cuts and limitations, the use of language immersion programs, using funds under the Esther Martinez Act and other sources to preserve and promote Native languages, has been severely limited throughout Indian Country; and
- WHEREAS,** within the U.S. Department of Interior, discretion exists to use available funds to assist and enhance both existing language immersion programs and to fashion a pilot program in which additional language immersion programs could be created and developed to further demonstrate the effectiveness of such programs; and
- WHEREAS,** as speakers of many Native languages become older, it is increasingly critical to the preservation and promotion of Native languages to use these older speakers as teachers of the language to impart their knowledge to the next generations, and to continue the use of language immersion programs in educational settings for this purpose; and
- WHEREAS,** the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) passed a similar resolution in October 2013, and the USET Education Committee supports this recommendation and wants to unite with NCAI on this issue; and
- WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors joins with the National Congress of American Indians in requesting that the U.S. Department of Interior identify funds from non-local sources that can be used to promote a pilot project for additional language immersion schools in Indian Country, with the understanding that existing immersion programs will be part of the pilot project using existing funds; and, be it further

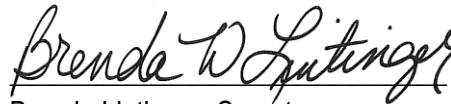
**RESOLVED** the USET Board, along with the National Congress of American Indians, urges the President of the United States to take significant steps to work with Congress, including seeking additional funding, to enhance language immersion programs that can help improve achievement for all Native American children in elementary and secondary schools.

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Cherokee, NC, on Thursday, October 31, 2013.



Brian Patterson, President  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Brenda Lintinger, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

*“Because there is strength in Unity”*