



## UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

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USET Resolution No. 2008:040

### PREPARING AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE STUDENTS TO ENTER COLLEGE AND THE WORKFORCE

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-five (25) 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,** every school year, about 1.2 million students drop out of our nation's high schools, leaving almost one of every three freshmen without a high school diploma four years later (Swanson 2004); and
- WHEREAS,** while roughly 70% of high school students graduate on time, American Indian and Alaska Native students have only a 55% chance or less of graduating high school with a regular diploma (Greene and Winter 2006); and
- WHEREAS,** dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to experience poverty, poor health, and incarceration during their adult lives; and
- WHEREAS,** National Indian Education Association (NIEA), as the largest national Indian organization of American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, has joined the Campaign for High School Equity and developed an initiative to focus on the drop out crisis in Indian Country; and
- WHEREAS,** NIEA and USET believe that in order for a student to be prepared for college and the workforce, the student must first be engaged in school through a rigorous curriculum that incorporates culturally relevant components such as native languages, native traditions, and native histories; and
- WHEREAS,** NIEA will assist USET in advocating on both the national and state level for the redesign of the American high school and the promotion of instructional practices designed to meet the needs of American Indian/Alaska Native students and prepare them for college and work including:

- Increased attention on the national, state, and district levels for American Indian/Alaska Native students' needs in states and school districts with high American Indian/Alaska Native populations to increase retention and graduation rates of American Indian/Alaska Native students.
- Supportive federal and state policies to increase American Indian/Alaska Native student access to rigorous curriculum and inclusion of native languages, cultures and histories to improve student achievement and attainment.
- Quality schools that better serve American Indian/Alaska Native students through access to rigorous curriculum, and adequate support to ensure they can meet higher expectations including culturally relevant curriculum.
- federal and state policy in the promotion of standards based education as a family responsibility that helps children to achieve; therefore, be it

- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors supports defining graduation rates according to a common standard and the use of longitudinal data systems and individual student identifiers to follow every child's path to graduation; and, be it further,

*"Because there is strength in Unity"*

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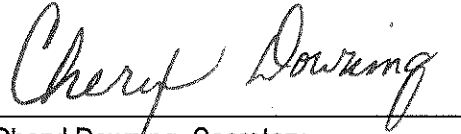
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors supports an accountability system that requires schools to increase their disaggregated data on graduation rates over time and to consider graduation rates on an equal footing with high quality assessments aligned to college and work readiness in determining school quality; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors supports the integration of culturally based education methods as a part of a high quality rigorous curriculum, producing higher academic achievement among American Indian/Alaska Native students and increased graduation rates, ultimately resulting in students better prepared to enter college and the workforce; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors supports legislation that focuses on parent and community involvement through improving knowledge, skills and understanding of standards based in education and school accountability; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors, having reviewed the recommendations proposed by NIEA regarding high school and college preparedness, adopt these recommendations and lend support for their implementation by the adoption of this resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Cherokee, NC, on Thursday, May 8, 2008.



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



Cheryl Downing, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.