



Re-Righting the Education of American Indian/ Alaska Native Children and Youth

Susan C. Faircloth, Ph.D.
Colorado State University

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Acknowledgment of the Land and the People

- Colorado State University
 - Cheyenne, Ute, and Arapaho Nations and Peoples
 - <https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu>



“...it is extremely rare and unusual when **[I]ndigenous accounts [i.e., stories]** are accepted and acknowledged as valid interpretations of what has taken place. And yet, **the need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance.**”

- Linda Tuhiwai Smith

- **Surviving and Thriving as Native peoples is**

“... about the practice of knowing who we are, and where we come from, in every area of our lives. It's about the questions our ... children ask us, and the teachings they carry with them. It's about not running from the difficult emotions. **It's about remembering. It's about our babies [children, youth], our communities and our nations.**” - Landry (2020)

- See: <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/04/08/opinion/message-indigenous-mother-her-three-year-old-during-covid-19>



- There is great danger in teaching/promoting a “**single story**” –
 - “The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”
— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The truth is that there is no single story of Indigenous/Native Peoples, yet there is a tendency to try to craft one...

As educators, we have a moral and ethical responsibility to counter this tendency by honoring and respecting our students' histories, cultures, languages, identities, and stories...

This Requires Confronting Difficult Truths

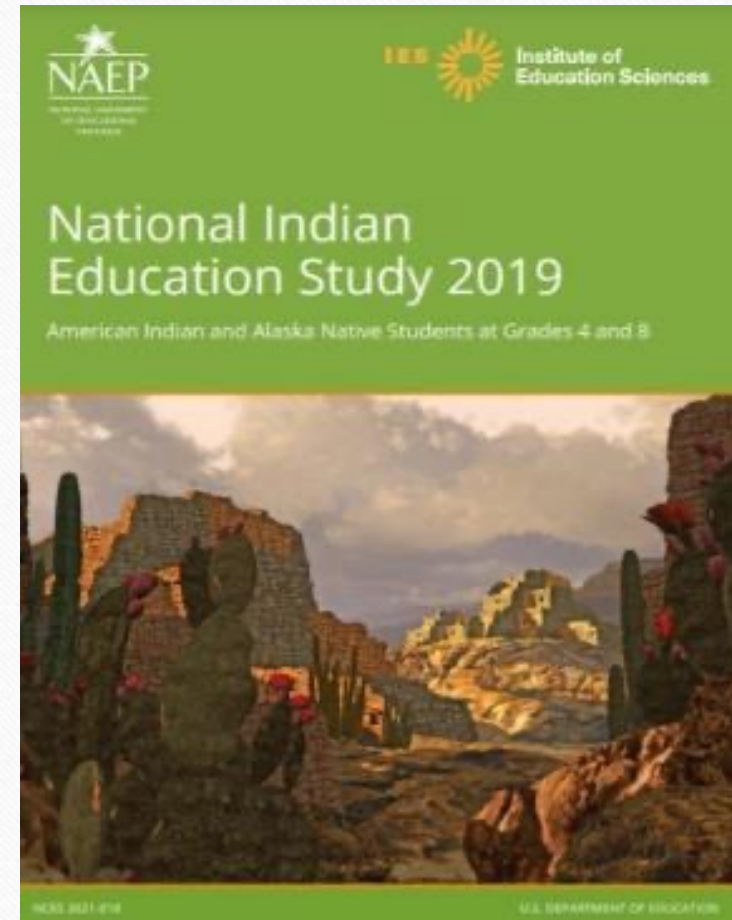


- **Educational Inequities Persist and Require Immediate Action**

- “The problems of [Indigenous] education need resolution, sooner not later. Time is running out. There are things to be accomplished; there are disappearing languages and oral histories and stories to be protected, rights to be protected, and purposeful and hopeful futures for students to be found. Children deserve it and our collected wisdom demands it” (Peacock & Cleary, 1997).

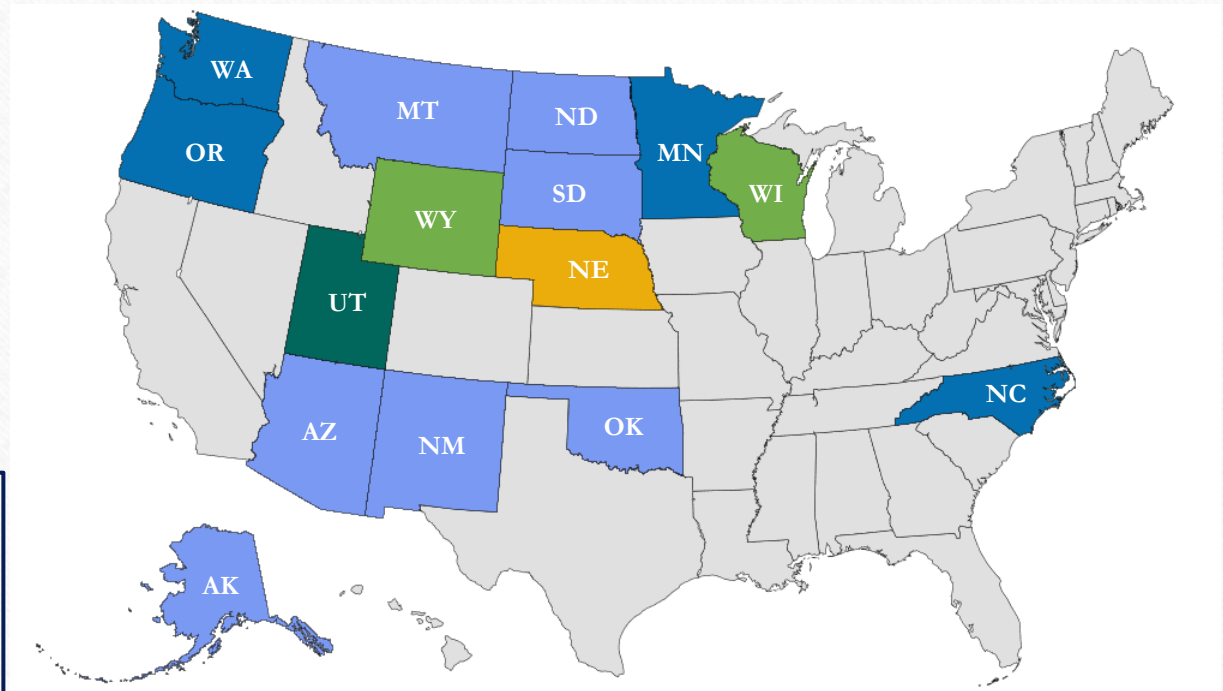
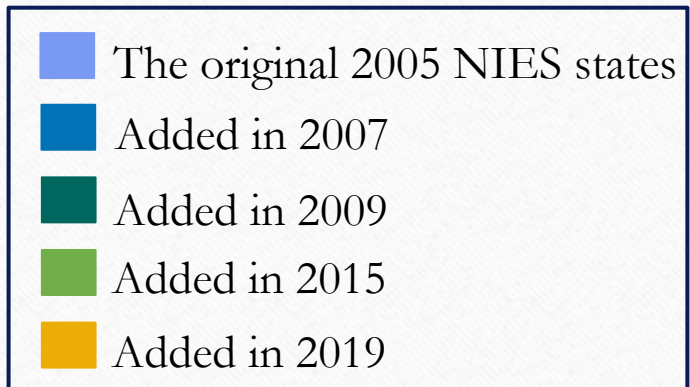
National Indian Education Study (NIES)

- NIES describes the condition of education for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students
 - Largest nationally representative study of AI/AN students
 - Highlights diversity within the AI/AN student group
 - Emphasis on academic achievement in Reading and Math
 - Emphasis on the role of the Native languages and cultures in the education of AI/AN students
- Administered as part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
- Funded by the Office of Indian Education (OIE)
- <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/studies/pdf/2021018.pdf>



Participation in NIES 2019

- More than 13,000 participating students
 - 7,000 4th-graders
 - 6,300 8th-graders
- State-level data for 15 states



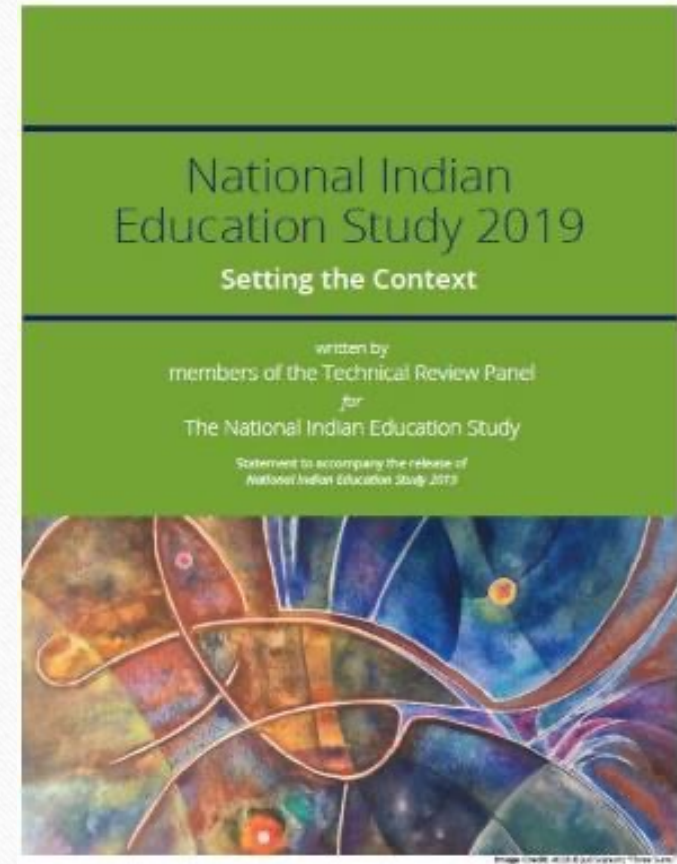
School Types within the NIES

- Low density public schools (less than 25% of students were AI/AN)
- High density public schools (25% or more of students were AI/AN)
- Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded/operated schools

Grade	School type/density		
	Low density public schools	High density public schools	BIE schools
Fourth-graders	60%	31%	9%
Eighth-graders	60%	32%	8%

Companion Document to the NIES: “Setting the Context”

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/NIES_setting_the_context_508.pdf



Foci of “Setting the Context”

- Historical factors:
 - Trust responsibility for Indian education
 - Relationship between AI/AN parents/families/communities and schools
 - Role of schooling in assimilation and acculturation of Native peoples
- Diversity of Native languages and cultures
- Recruitment, hiring, and retention of Native teachers and school leaders
- Quality of instruction
- Need for real and meaningful tribal consultation
- Limitations of available data to suggest causation

**Changing
this
Narrative
and Related
Practice
Requires
Asking
Difficult
Questions**

Whose stories are missing from our schools?

Whose stories need to be told?

Whose stories will we tell? Will these stories be accurate?

How will we use these stories to make our schools safer and more inclusive spaces for all??

**and Taking
Real and
Meaningful
Action**

**Being present
(showing up) for
our students, their
families, and
communities...**

**Offering our
students
opportunities to
share about
themselves and
their cultures**

**Respecting our
students, their
families, their
communities,
their cultures,
their identities**

**Recognizing that
school can be be
both a place of
learning, fun, and
joy, AND a place
of pain, conflict,
and harm**

**Sharing our own
stories/cultures
with students and
families**



**Challenging
teaching and
leadership
practices that don't
honor and respect
students and their
cultures/
backgrounds**



**Listening &
Learning**

**Being Vulnerable
& Willing to Fail**

**Being Bold &
Courageous**

**Recruiting,
Preparing, and
Retaining more
Native Teachers
and Leaders**



**Rethinking the
ways in which we
are preparing
non-Native
teachers and
Leaders to Engage
with Native
Students, Families,
and Communities**



**Investing money
and resources into
the collection,
analysis and
dissemination of
findings from both
local and large-
scale studies of
Indian education
AND act on these
findings**

The Promising News is...

**Indigenous Peoples Have Persisted, Resisted, Survived,
and in Many Cases, We Have Thrived.**

We are strong, resilient, and culturally rich Peoples.



Thank You!

Susan C. Faircloth, Ph.D.
susan.faircloth@colostate.edu