



# **The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition**

**Meeting with White House Initiative  
on American Indian and Alaska Native Education**

**February 24, 2016**

**Washington, DC**



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Historical Context.....	2
The Work of the Healing Coalition.....	3
Recommendations and Requests .....	4
Attachments.....	
Letter to AS-AI.....	
Sample Resolutions.....	
Joint Statement to U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.....	
NABS Brochure.....	



## Executive Summary

The following pages have been prepared for a meeting between the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) and the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaskan Native Education to discuss the US Boarding School Policy and the lasting effects on our communities today.

We have provided a brief overview of the US Boarding School Policy and church involvement for historical context. The policy resulted in loss of language, culture, familial ties, and emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, and sexual abuse for countless boarding school survivors. These experiences are the root cause of many issues facing Indian Country today including, but not limited to, higher rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, lateral violence, and suicide.

NABS was formed as a result of public outcry about the lasting effects of the boarding school era. We have included information about the work of the NABS Healing Coalition and respectfully request that the Initiative advise and partner with NABS, and assist us with outreach to other appropriate US government agencies and White House advisors to the President to carry out the enclosed requests and recommendations.



## Historical Context

Beginning with the Indian Civilization Act Fund of March 3, 1819 and the Peace Policy of 1869 the United States, in concert with and at the urging of several denominations of the Christian Church, adopted an Indian Boarding School Policy expressly intended to implement cultural genocide through the removal and reprogramming of Native American children to accomplish the systematic destruction of indigenous cultures and communities. The stated purpose of this policy was to “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.”

Between 1869 and the 1960s as many as 100,000 Native American children were removed from their homes and families and placed in Boarding Schools operated by the federal government and the churches. Native children that were voluntarily or forcibly removed from their homes, families, and communities during this time were taken to schools far away where they were punished for speaking their native language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent traditional or cultural practices, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and personal belongings and behaviors reflective of their native culture. They suffered physical, sexual, cultural and spiritual abuse and neglect, and experienced treatment that in many cases constituted torture for speaking their Native languages. Many children never returned home and their fates have yet to be accounted for by the US government.

The legacy of the Boarding Schools is loss of familial ties and structures, loss of language, cultural decimation, and other violations of human rights. The lasting effects are still present in Native American communities in the many forms of lateral violence, substance abuse, high rates of imprisonment, disproportionate removal of Indigenous children from their homes, and mental and physical illnesses.

The 2014 White House Report on Native Youth<sup>1</sup> lists major disparities in health, education, as well as a state of emergency regarding Native youth suicide and PTSD rates three times the general public—the same rate as Iraqi war veterans.

The Boarding School children, their children, and now their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have suffered the legacy of the federal policy that established and sustained those schools, where the trauma the children suffered has gone unrecognized and unresolved, and the trauma is passed on to each subsequent generation where this historical and inter-generational trauma continues to work in, undermine, and devastate Native American individuals, families, and communities.

NABS was formed as a result of public outcry about the lasting effects of the boarding school era and our intention is to tell the truth about the history of the US Boarding School Policy and the involvement of many church denominations. NABS Healing Coalition also seeks action and justice to support community-led healing for boarding school survivors and their descendants, as well as information from the US government regarding the numbers, Tribes and fates of the children who died or disappeared in the boarding schools.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport\\_final.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport_final.pdf)



## The Work of the Healing Coalition

### Who We Are

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) is comprised of individuals and organizations interested in supporting and working for healing from the United States' and various Christian denominations' Indian Boarding School Policy.

With the support of tribes, tribal organizations, and our allies, NABS works to ensure awareness, action, and justice from responsible agencies in order to support lasting and true community-directed healing for those Native American individuals, families, and communities traumatized by the United States' federal policy of forced boarding school attendance.

### Our Strategies

**Awareness:** Promote awareness of the US Indian Boarding School Era, policies, and history through education and outreach emphasizing on truth telling about government and church involvement, the resulting trauma, and the lasting effects of the Boarding School Era and experiences.

**Action:** Take action to facilitate, sponsor, or participate in events, workshops, conferences, and to publish, support, or disseminate research and reports that support awareness, healing, and justice for Indian Boarding School survivors and their descendants.

**Justice:** Seek justice through pursuit of restitution, reparations, other redress, and public apology and official acknowledgment from all government and religious institutions involved as well as the achievement of public awareness and community healing.

**Healing:** Provide opportunities, training, models, and education for community-led, culturally-relevant, spiritual, emotional, and psychological healing based on facts and research regarding Historical, Generational, and Complex Trauma.



[boardingschoolhealing.org](http://boardingschoolhealing.org)



## Recommendations and Requests

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with the White House Initiative. We respectfully request that the Initiative advise and partner with NABS, and assist us with outreach to other appropriate US government agencies and White House advisors to the President to carry out the following:

### **Establish a National Commission to Address US Boarding School Policy and Effects**

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, along with our tribal allies, calls for the creation of a National Commission on American Indian Boarding School Policy to conduct hearings on boarding school abuses and their continuing impacts. The Commission should plan, design, and carry out its work in collaboration with impacted American Indian and Alaska Native communities; take testimony from boarding school survivors and others with adequate care available for those who need it when they revisit the trauma they have survived; gather information from experts about, among other issues, inter-generational and historical trauma; take recommendations from affected communities and experts about what is needed to effectuate true community and Nation healing; raise public awareness and provide public education about US boarding school policies and their ongoing effects; and recommend and commit support for culturally-appropriate community-led remedies with the full and effective participation of survivors, families, communities, Tribes, Pueblos or Villages.

### **Carry out a Study to Publish a Report with Recommendations**

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, along with our tribal allies, calls for: the commission of a comprehensive national study of the history of the US Boarding School Policy; complete documentation of the fate of the students and the events that took place at each of the schools; gathering of testimony from those that suffered from abuse, neglect or other trauma; and documentation of the effects of the policy on individuals, families and communities. This study is necessary to support recommendations to the White House and Executive Branch Agencies, and the US Congress based on the evidence gathered from them and experts on inter-generational trauma concerning the nature of the harms and potential paradigms for healing and reconciliation.

### **Assist with and Support NABS' Request for Information on Fate of Boarding School Students**

NABS has submitted a request to the US Government requesting information on the fate of Native American Students taken into Federal Custody Pursuant to the Boarding School Policy of 1869 who died in the custody of these schools. See attached letter to Lawrence Roberts, Acting Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs.

### **Statement of Acknowledgment and Recognition from the President**

In recognition of the demonstrated firm commitment of President Obama to building respectful relations with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations, we request a statement from the



President before he leaves office specifically acknowledging the ongoing legacy of inter-generational trauma, cultural destruction, language loss and social and family upheaval caused the US Boarding School Policy, and calling on the US Government to make definitive steps to address and heal these open wounds, working in collaboration with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations, communities, and families.

**Thank you for consideration and any advice and assistance you can provide in this regard.**

***The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition***



**Native American Rights Fund**

1506 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80302  
303.447.8760  
303.443.7776 fax  
www.narf.org



**The National Native American  
Boarding School Healing Coalition**

1522 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80302  
720.408.5585 ext. 101  
www.boardingschoolhealing.org

February 22, 2016

Lawrence Roberts  
Acting Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs  
Indian Affairs  
MS-3642-MIB  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Request for Information Detailing the Schools and Fate of Native American Students  
Taken into Federal Custody Pursuant to the Boarding School Policy of 1869

Dear Assistant Secretary Roberts:

This is a request on behalf of the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), a national organization of Native American groups and individuals whose mission is securing healing for Native American individuals, families and communities from the trauma inflicted by the Boarding School Policy adopted by the United States in 1869 as President Grant's Peace Policy. Any healing from the continuing historical and inter-generational trauma experienced by individuals and in Native American communities requires that the United States acknowledge its role in establishing and implementing the policy at the urging of and in complicity with the major denominations of the Christian Churches of the time. Key to the process of healing is understanding the scope and duration of the implementation of the policy, the exact number of students separated from their families and communities, and the exact fate of each student.

This request is for all information available to your office, or in archives of the United States, related to the Boarding Schools established by the United States pursuant to the Civilization Act of 1819 and the subsequent Peace Policy of 1869 which implemented the Board of Indian Commissioners established in 1869. The result of these federal policies was the



establishment of as many as 500 schools for Native American children the purpose of which was the eradication of Native American culture. This included among other things the eradication of native language, religious ceremonies, cultural activities and traditions, and the forced conversion of these children to the Christian religion.

Other countries that adopted the boarding school model from the United States – e.g. Canada, Australia and New Zealand—have long since acknowledged their role in implementing this devastating policy against their Indigenous residents. The United States has never acknowledged its role, accepted any responsibility for the results of these egregious policies, or provided any information to account for the children that were taken into federal custody – either voluntarily or forcibly – and delivered to these schools. It is time that the United States takes action to provide an accounting.

The information requested is all records, reports and other information available to the United States through its agencies and archival records that identify:

1. the number of schools established for Native American students between 1819 and 1972 supported by federal funding and/or policy;
2. the amount of the funding that was provided by the federal government for the operation of these schools and the identity of each school, church, mission, or other recipient receiving the funds;
3. the location of each school, the number of students for each year of operation, and the identity of each student taken to these schools including their tribal (including Pueblo, Alaskan Village) affiliation; and,
4. the fate of each student including whether they returned home, moved to another setting such as further schooling, or were deceased and interred at the school or at another graveyard.

In addition, please identify the location of any and all burial grounds for each of the schools and the identity of each person in each grave, whether there are any unmarked or unidentified graves and, to the extent possible, how many persons are interred in such graves.

The information sought is essential to the ability to identify the fate of each of the students taken to boarding school whether voluntarily or involuntarily. This information has never been provided to the families, Native American communities, or tribes, Pueblos or Alaskan Villages from which these children were taken.

Please provide a response to this request **by April 30, 2016**.

Response may be sent to Mr. Donald R. Wharton, Senior Attorney, Native American Rights Fund, 1506 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302 —or— Ms. Christine McCleave, Executive Officer, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, 1522 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302.

Respectfully,



Jerilyn DeCoteau, President  
National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition



Christine Diindiisi McCleave, Executive Officer

CC:

Senator John Barasso, Chairman, United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
Congressman Don Young, Chairman, Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs  
Karen R. Diver, Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs  
Vicki Forrest, Deputy Director, Bureau of Indian Education  
William Mendoza, White House Initiative on Native American and Alaskan Native Education  
Brian Cladoosby, President, National Congress of American Indians  
Ahniwake Rose, Executive Director, National Indian Education Association



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #ATL-14-026

### TITLE: Call to Begin Education and Healing From Historical and Intergenerational Trauma

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**PRESIDENT**  
**Brian Cladoosby**  
*Swinomish Indian Tribal Community*

**FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT**  
**Randy Noka**  
*Narragansett Tribe*

**RECORDING SECRETARY**  
**Robert Shepherd**  
*Sisseton Walpiston Oyate*

**TREASURER**  
**Dennis Welsh**  
*Colorado River Indian Tribes*

#### REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

**ALASKA**  
**Jerry Isaac**  
*Tanana Chiefs Conference*

**EASTERN OKLAHOMA**  
**S. Joe Crittenden**  
*Cherokee Nation*

**GREAT PLAINS**  
**Leander McDonald**  
*Spirit Lake Tribe*

**MIDWEST**  
**Aaron Payment**  
*Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians*

**NORTHEAST**  
**Lance Gumbs**  
*Shinnecock Indian Nation*

**NORTHWEST**  
**Fawn Sharp**  
*Quinault Indian Nation*

**PACIFIC**  
**Rosemary Morillo**  
*Soboba Band of Mission Indians*

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN**  
**Ivan Posey**  
*Eastern Shoshone Tribe*

**SOUTHEAST**  
**Ron Richardson**  
*Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe*

**SOUTHERN PLAINS**  
**Stephen Smith**  
*Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma*

**SOUTHWEST**  
**Manuel Heart**  
*Ute Mountain Ute Tribe*

**WESTERN**  
**Arlan Melendez**  
*Reno Sparks Indian Colony*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**Jacqueline Johnson Pata**  
*Tlingit*

**NCAI HEADQUARTERS**  
1516 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.466.7767  
202.466.7797 fax  
[www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org)

**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries the United States and various Churches implemented a federal Indian Boarding School policy, the purpose of which was to eradicate Native cultures, traditions, and languages, in an attempt to “civilize” and Christianize Native children through methods that included physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse; and

**WHEREAS**, between 1869 and the 1960s at least 100,000 Native American children were removed from their homes and families, often forcibly, and placed in distant Boarding Schools funded and operated by the federal government and the churches; and

**WHEREAS**, at these Boarding Schools children were punished for speaking their native language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent traditional or cultural practices, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and all things and behaviors reflective of their native culture, shamed for being Native American, and commonly abused and neglected by inadequate and hostile staff; and

**WHEREAS**, while some survivors of Boarding Schools report having a positive experience, most of these children and the generations that followed bear the detrimental effects of the Boarding School Policy where they have suffered and continue to suffer broken tribal families and communities, as well as the loss of culture, language, and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, while the Canadian Government, together with the Canadian Churches, have formally acknowledged and taken actions to document the residential and boarding school legacy, and to promote healing and reconciliation from the residential and boarding school era, the historical trauma afflicting American Indians and Alaskan Natives as a result of the U.S. Boarding School Policy has gone largely unrecognized and unresolved, and the Country remains largely ignorant of the burdens created by the policy and its consequences; and

**WHEREAS**, healing from the harms currently experienced by Native people, families, communities and Nations is hampered by the lack of awareness of the Boarding School policy and consequences of its implementation; and

**WHEREAS**, it is of vital importance to begin the healing process from historical trauma the boarding schools have caused our people and Nations, and the first step in this healing will be development of greater knowledge and education about what happened during that era, its continuing impacts on our people, families, communities, and Nations, and the United States and responsible Churches.

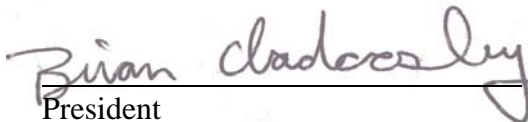
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that NCAI hereby calls for a beginning to the process of healing from the historical and intergenerational traumas brought by the Boarding School policies and the harms it caused our people, families, communities, Nations, the United States, and the various Churches; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that in pursuit of the healing, NCAI hereby supports development of more knowledge and education about what happened during the boarding school era, how it continues to create impacts for the descendants of survivors, and how meaningful healing paradigms can work to turn back the ongoing effects of historical and intergenerational trauma that currently continue to plague our communities; and

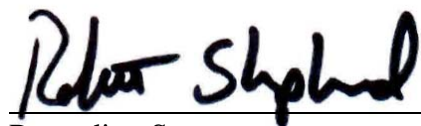
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

#### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2014 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, October 26-31, 2014 in Atlanta, Georgia, with a quorum present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 13 – 01

### **Support for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition’s Proposal for the Establishment of a National Commission to Investigate and Report to the United States Congress on the Effects of the Forcible Removal of Children and Subsequent Abuse and Neglect Resulting from the Boarding School Policy Adopted and Implemented During the 19<sup>TH</sup> and 20<sup>TH</sup> Centuries**

**WHEREAS**, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to AI/ANs, as well as upholding the Federal government’s trust responsibility to AI/AN Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the NIHB serves all federally-recognized Tribes, constituting an immensely diverse service population with wide-ranging perspectives, opinions, and values; and

**WHEREAS**, the governing body of the NIHB is its Board of Directors, comprised of a representative elected from the Tribes in each Indian Health Service Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the NIHB is intimately aware of the harms suffered to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harms suffered among members of AI/AN communities, in the past and ongoing, as a direct result of the past federal boarding school policy, and the role those harms continue to play in the health of AI/AN people; and

**WHEREAS**, the NIHB has performed and documented significant work, in the past and continuing in the present, related to addressing the harms suffered as a result of the boarding school policy, especially as such harms are directly related to the health of AI/AN people; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States, at the urging of and in support of the Christian churches of that time adopted the Indian Civilization Act Fund of 1819 to provide financial support for church run schools to “civilize” AI/AN children through education; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1869 the United States, in concert with and at the urging of several denominations of the Christian church, adopted the Indian the Boarding School



Policy (also known as the Peace Policy) which was a deliberate policy of the removal and reprogramming of AI/AN children, the purpose of which was the systematic destruction of indigenous cultures and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, between 1869 and the 1960s more than 100,000 AI/AN children were removed from their homes and families, often involuntarily, and placed in Boarding Schools operated by the federal government and the churches; and

**WHEREAS**, Native children that were voluntarily or forcibly removed from their homes, families and communities were taken to schools far away where they were punished for speaking their native language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent traditional or cultural practices, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and all things and behaviors reflective of their native culture, and commonly abused and neglected by inadequate staff who were hostile to native culture; and

**WHEREAS**, the prevailing attitudes of the time allowed neglect and abuse of children who were overseen but not parented, who were bullied and assaulted not only by the adults but also by older children under the modeling and instruction of the caretakers and staff, and who were neglected *en masse*. These children observed and suffered physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, punishment by physical restraints, beatings and isolation in inhospitable surroundings, such as unlighted cellars, and unlighted and unventilated outbuildings designed as “jails”; and

**WHEREAS**, these children, their children and now their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have become the legacy of the boarding schools and the federal policy that established and sustained those schools, where the trauma the children suffered has gone unrecognized and unresolved, and the trauma is passed onto each subsequent generation where this historical and intergenerational trauma continues to work in, undermine and devastate Native American individuals, families, and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, neither the United States nor any national denomination of the Christian churches in the United States has offered a meaningful apology or offered to provide any redress for the generations of harm caused by the deliberate imposition of the policy of cultural genocide on the AI/AN children, families, communities, Tribes, Pueblos or Villages; and

**WHEREAS**, the facts and history about the pervasive harm caused and continuing to be caused by the trauma and continuing intergenerational trauma attributable to the Boarding School Policy are poorly understood by the American public, the Congress or the Executive Branch of the federal government; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to begin a healing process to address the harms suffered and enduring as a result of the boarding school policy, a comprehensive national study is needed of the history of the policy, including complete documentation of the fate of each of the students and the events that took place at each of the schools, gathering of testimony from those that suffered from abuse, neglect or other trauma, and recommendations to Congress based on the information gathered from individual victims, communities and

experts concerning the nature of the harms and potential paradigms for healing and reconciliation; and

**WHEREAS**, similar events in the past have been successfully addressed through Congressional authorization of a Commission to study and report on the issue.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors of the National Indian Health Board does hereby encourage the United States government to accept responsibility for the boarding school policy and its continuing inter-generational trauma and impacts, and to take meaningful steps to provide redress for these harms; and

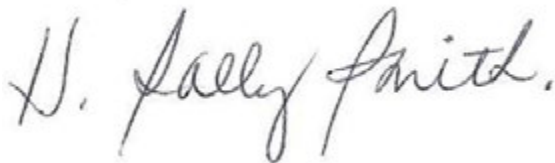
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Indian Health Board does hereby encourage the churches involved in the establishment of the boarding school policy and its implementation to accept responsibility for their roles, to formally apologize for those roles, and to provide support, including funding, for the work of the Coalition and for direct healing work carried out in communities; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the National Indian Health Board does hereby support the enactment by the United States Congress of a bill to create a Commission on American Indian Boarding School Policy to conduct hearings on boarding school abuses and their continuing impacts. The Commission should plan, design and carry out its work in collaboration with impacted AI/AN communities; take testimony from boarding school survivors and others with adequate care available for those who need it when they revisit the trauma they have survived; gather information from experts about, among other issues, intergenerational/historical trauma; take recommendations from affected communities and experts about what is needed to effectuate true community and Nation healing; raise public awareness and provide public education about US boarding school policies and their ongoing effects; and recommend and commit support for culturally-appropriate community-led remedies with the full and effective participation of survivors, families, communities, Tribes, Pueblos or Villages.

#### **CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with a quorum present, on the 16 day of June, 2013.

**ATTEST:**



---

Secretary, H. Sally Smith



---

Chairperson, Cathy Abramson



**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages  
January 19 – 21, 2016, UN Headquarters in New York**

**Joint statement by the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)  
and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (N-NABS-HC)  
Presented by Andrea Carmen, IITC and N-NABS-HC**

Thank you Madame/Mr. Chair.

We begin by affirming the core importance of the Right to Language for Indigenous Peoples. The concept note for this Expert Group Meeting recognizes this right as expressed in Articles 13, 14 and 16 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, the full exercise of rights affirmed in other articles are also integrally linked to the continuity and vitality of our languages which, as many have expressed, are gravely threatened today. These include, inter-alia, the ability to exercise and transmit traditional knowledge and practices related to cultural traditions (Article 11), spiritual and religious traditions, ceremonies and sites (Article 12), subsistence (Article 20), traditional health practices (Article 24), spiritual relationship to and continued use of traditional lands and resources (Articles 25 and 26), Environment (Article 29), Cultural Heritage including knowledge of flora and fauna (Article 31), and Treaties and Agreements (Article 37). We request that the fundamental importance of Indigenous languages in relation to a wide range of Indigenous Peoples' rights be emphasized in the report of this EGM.

The International Indian Treaty Council and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition express our appreciation for the presentations made by the Indigenous experts and other participants from all regions at this meeting addressing this critical theme. We express in particular our strong support for the calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada presented by EMRIP member and former Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild. These calls to action are the product of 5 years of information and testimonies from over 7000 survivors of the Canadian Residential Schools policy of forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous children. The Canadian Residential Schools were intended to destroy the identity of these children, including their cultures and languages. As a result, this policy has been referred to as cultural genocide.

Although the United States government has never accepted responsibility and has barely even acknowledged this policy and its historical and continuing legacies, Indigenous Peoples whose lands were annexed by the US suffered an almost identical assimilation and cultural destruction policy.. The stated purpose of the US Indian Boarding School policy, which forcibly removed tens of thousands of Indigenous children from their families and communities to place them in



government and church-run schools, was to “Kill the Indian, Save the Man”. The United States version of this policy is documented to have served as the model for Canadian policy, and understand that similar government-mandated assimilation programs targeting Indigenous children were also carried out in other countries including New Zealand and Australia.

Rations, annuities, and other goods were withheld from parents and guardians who refused to send children to these schools after a compulsory attendance law for American Indians was passed by the US Congress in 1891. In the 1890s through the 1930s, the attendance of Indigenous children in off-reservation boarding schools reached its peak. In 1931, 29% of Indian children who were in school were in boarding schools away from their families and communities. In addition, many Indigenous children were involuntarily leased out to white homes as menial labor during the summers rather than sent back to their homes, furthering their long-term isolation and separation from their languages and cultures.

By the late 1920s, nearly half of school enrollments were in off-reservation schools. An estimated 100,000 children passed through these schools between 1879 and the 1960s. Punishments constituted torture of small children if they were caught speaking their Indigenous Mother tongues. The heartbreak and brutality was so extreme that, as in Canada, many children did not survive the treatment they suffered in these Boarding Schools.

As in Canada and other countries with similar policies, the ongoing impacts on Indigenous languages was devastating, just as intended. Indigenous languages along with other aspects of Indigenous culture and identity were a focal point of brutal abuse. Professor Denise Lajimodiere, former Chair of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, testified to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights October 29th, 2010, that “[M]y mother was locked in a closet because she didn’t speak English.” Based on interviews with survivors she added that “[P]eople told me about having pins stuck in their tongues and getting their mouths washed out with lye soap if they spoke Indigenous languages.” Andrea Smith testified at the same hearing that as direct result of these policies, of the approximately 155 Indigenous languages still spoken in the US, it is estimated that 90% will be extinct in 10 years. By 2050, there will be only 20 languages left, of which 90 percent will be facing extinction by 2060.

To date, no Truth and Reconciliation process or any real access to justice has been afforded to Indigenous Peoples in the US who continue to suffer inter-generational trauma and ongoing impacts including loss of their languages. No comprehensive federal programs have been put in place to provide adequate, sustained support to Indigenous Nations and communities seeking to reverse language loss and other devastating effects that persist from one generation to the next.

We therefor call upon both this EGM and the report of the UNPFII’s 15<sup>th</sup> session in May of this year, to include the following recommendations:

1. The EGM on Indigenous Languages and the UNPFII supports and endorses the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the Residential Schools in Canada, and requests that Canada report on the progress in their implementation, including the provisions on Indigenous languages and implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as a model for good practices that can and should be duplicated in other States.

2. The UNPFII calls on other countries including the United States that had policies of forced removal and assimilation of Indigenous Children with the intent or result of undermining the viability or jeopardizing the inter-generational survival of Indigenous languages, to implement the Canada TRC calls to Action in their own countries, in collaboration and coordination with the impacted Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you.

## Cultural Genocide— A Matter of US State Policy

The truth about the US Indian boarding school policy has largely been written out of the history books. There were almost 500 government-funded, church-run Indian Boarding schools across the US in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Indian children were forcibly abducted by government agents, sent to schools hundreds of miles away, and beaten, starved, or otherwise abused when they spoke their native languages.

It was a brutal violation of human rights. The policy constituted cultural genocide based on the idea that Indigenous cultures must be eradicated. The stated intention of the policy was to...

*“Kill the Indian,  
Save the Man.”*



The graduating class of 1898 at Carlisle was told to...

*“Let All That Is  
Indian In You Die.”*

**Support** the call for US accountability and healing for survivors and descendants through a Truth and Reconciliation process in the US.

### Here's how you can help:

1. Join the Coalition
  2. Make a donation
  3. Sign up for e-news
  4. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram
  5. Join the Tribal Leaders Advisory Committee
- boardingschoolhealing.org**

#### OUR SUPPORTERS

##### Resolutions

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians  
Cahuilla Band of Indians  
California Nation Indian Gaming Association  
Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council Inc.  
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Inc.  
Indian Health Council  
International Indian Treaty Council  
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Inc.  
Montana & Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council  
National Congress of American Indians  
National Indian Education Association  
National Indian Health Board  
Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians  
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians  
Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, Inc.  
State of Minnesota Indian Affairs Council  
United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) Inc.  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council

##### Letters of Support

National Indian Child Welfare Association

#### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

American Indian Services  
Bay and Paul Foundations  
Cante Sica Foundation  
Christ Church Cathedral  
Corporate Members  
Lakota People's Law Project  
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
National Indian Youth Council  
NoVo Foundation

#### PARTNERSHIPS

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
Klamath Tribes  
Native American Rights Fund  
Tribal Tech, LLC/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada  
White Bison, Inc.



## The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

Educating those responsible for  
Native American Boarding School  
abuse and seeking justice  
and action to support true  
community-directed healing

### National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

P.O. Box 17247, Boulder, CO 80308  
info@nabshc.org | boardingschoolhealing.org  
720.408.5585 x101

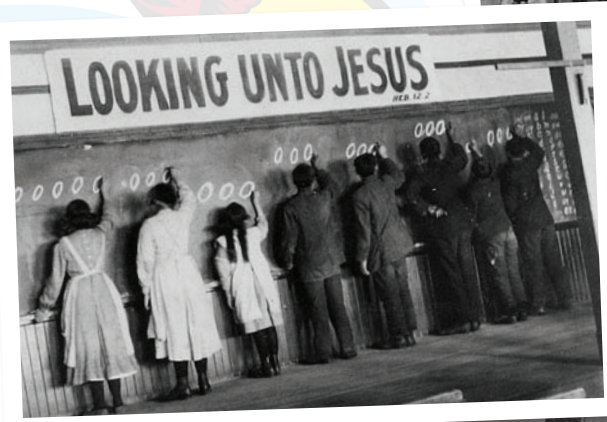
*NABS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.*

**boardingschoolhealing.org**

## Who We Are

**The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS)** is comprised of individuals and organizations interested in supporting and working for healing from the United States' and various Christian denominations' Indian Boarding School Policy.

With the support of tribes, tribal organizations, and our allies, NABS works to ensure **awareness, action, and justice** from responsible agencies in order to support lasting and true community-directed **healing** for those Native American individuals, families, and communities traumatized by the United States' federal policy of forced boarding school attendance.



## The Need For Healing

The social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural devastation from boarding school experiences are passed down for Native American individuals, families, communities and Tribal Nations today. The time for healing these **inter-generational traumas** is now—the US must acknowledge their responsibility and role as an important first step toward truth, healing, and justice.



## Our Strategies

**Awareness:** Promote awareness of the US Indian Boarding School Era, policies, and history through education and outreach emphasizing on truth telling about government and church involvement, the resulting trauma, and the lasting effects of the Boarding School Era and experiences.

**Action:** Take action to facilitate, sponsor, or participate in events, workshops, conferences, and to publish, support, or disseminate research and reports that support awareness, healing, and justice of Indian Boarding School survivors and their descendants.

**Justice:** Seek justice through pursuit of restitution, reparations, redress, and public apology and official acknowledgment from all government and religious institutions involved as well as the achievement of public awareness and community healing.

**Healing:** Provide opportunities, training, models, and education for community-led, culturally-relevant, spiritual, emotional, and psychological healing based on facts and research regarding Historical, Generational, and Complex Trauma.



[boardingschoolhealing.org](http://boardingschoolhealing.org)

**The time for healing is now**