



Oregon  
Tina Kotek, Governor



OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

*Oregon achieves together!*

**Dr. Charlene Williams**  
Director of the Department of Education

**To:** Superintendents, Principals, K-12 PIOs, Charter School Leaders, Education Partners

**From:** Dr. Charlene Williams, Director of the Oregon Department of Education

**DATE:** April 17, 2026

**RE:** Tribal Regalia at Public School Ceremonies

As districts begin preparing for the upcoming graduation season, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) reaffirms the state's commitment to House Bill 2052 (2021) regarding Native Tribal Regalia. Codified in ORS 329.451(14), this law recognizes the inherent right of tribal sovereignty and ensures that American Indian/Alaska Native students may wear tribal regalia or items of cultural significance at graduation and other public school ceremonies.

High school graduation is a time of excitement and a time to honor the accomplishments of students, families, and our communities. The passing of the Tribal Regalia bill extends this celebration by honoring the hard work and achievements of our American Indian/Alaska Native students, honoring culturally inclusive ceremonies, and reflecting and acknowledging the diversity of our students and families.

ODE is committed to fostering district government-to-government relationships with the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon. We have heard from tribal partners, and other American Indian students and families, how meaningful it is for students to wear cultural items during graduation ceremonies as a means of honoring their tribe, their community, and their heritage.

ODE fully supports students who would like to outwardly wear items honoring their unique Native American cultures. This law provides opportunities for American Indian/Alaska Native students to honor their heritage by wearing items of cultural significance as determined by Tribes. As districts begin implementing the Tribal Regalia Law, I encourage you to review current policies that may conflict with HB 2052; in the event a conflict exists, important policy changes should and must occur.

**To ensure the smooth implementation of HB 2052, please utilize the following guidance:**

- 1. Compliance:** All school districts within Oregon must adhere to the provisions of HB 2052. It's essential to review your district's policies, student handbooks, and procedures related to graduation attire and make any necessary updates to align with this new law.
- 2. Communication:** Promptly inform your school community, including students, families, staff, and graduation ceremony participants, about the passage of HB 2052 and the allowance of tribal regalia during graduation ceremonies. Emphasize the importance of honoring and respecting Native students' cultural traditions and supporting their sense of identity. Avoid framing this legislation as divisive; instead, emphasize its role in creating a safe and welcoming school environment for *all students*. Communicate in such a way that Native students are not unintentionally singled out.
- 3. Policy Revision:** Review and revise your district's graduation attire policy to explicitly state that Native students have the right to wear tribal regalia as part of their graduation attire. Ensure that the revised policy reflects the spirit of HB 2052 and upholds cultural sensitivity.
- 4. Collaboration:** Establish open lines of communication with Native students and their families to address any questions, concerns, or specific requests related to tribal regalia. Collaborate with cultural liaisons or Tribal Education Directors to gain insights and guidance on appropriate tribal regalia, ensuring cultural accuracy and respect.

5. **Accommodations and Support:** Ensure that appropriate accommodations are provided to Native students who may need assistance with donning or wearing their tribal regalia during the graduation ceremony. Consider providing designated spaces or culturally responsive assistance to address any specific needs.

ODE appreciates all you do to support educational equity in our state and to create a school environment that is culturally honoring and inclusive of our diverse students and communities.

Please contact ODE Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Indian Education April Campbell with any questions at [April.Campbell@ode.oregon.gov](mailto:April.Campbell@ode.oregon.gov) .

Sincerely,

Dr. Charlene Williams  
Director of the Department of Education