



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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**Colt Gill**

Director of the Department of Education

Tribal Regalia at Public School Ceremonies

TO: Superintendents and Principals

FROM: Colt Gill, Director of the Oregon Department of Education and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

DATE: March 15, 2023

RE: Tribal Regalia at Public School Ceremonies

As we begin preparing for graduation this year, I am pleased to share the passage of House Bill 2052 (2021) regarding Tribal Regalia. This bill became effective upon passage and is now law in Oregon (ORS 329.451 (14)). This law recognizes the inherent right of tribal sovereignty wherein American Indian /Alaska Native students are allowed to wear their 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.

The Oregon Department of Education 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 to wear cultural items during graduation ceremonies as a means of honoring their tribe, their community, and their heritage.

The Oregon Department of Education 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 such as eagle feathers, cedar, beaded caps, tribal insignias, and stoles during graduation ceremonies. As districts begin implementing the Tribal Regalia Law this spring, I encourage you to review current policies which may conflict with the passing of HB 2052; in the event a conflict exists, important policy changes should and must occur.

The Oregon Department of Education 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 Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Indian Education, April Campbell with any questions at [april.campbell@ode.state.or.us](mailto:april.campbell@ode.state.or.us)

Sincerely,

Colt Gill