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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

May 9, 2025

() Action Required
(X) Informational

**BULLETIN NO. 028-25 OFFICE OF NATIVE EDUCATION AND CENTER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF STUDENT LEARNING**

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Principals
High School Counselors

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Students' Right to Wear Tribal Regalia

CONTACT: Henry Strom, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Native Education and Center for
the Improvement of Student Learning
360-918-3953, henry.strom@k12.wa.us

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Washington State Legislature affirmed inherent rights assured through tribal sovereignty and expressly provided that school districts must allow American Indian and Alaskan Native K–12 and higher education students who are members of federally recognized tribes to wear tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies and related events ([House Bill 2551](#)). In addition, school districts and institutions of higher education are required, when necessary, to update relevant policies or procedures in accordance with this law.

School districts and public schools may not require such students to wear a cap if it is incompatible with the regalia or significant object.

In addition, [House Bill 1393](#) will be enacted this summer stating that school districts shall permit students to wear an item or object of cultural significance with or attached to their gown at high school commencements and other official graduation ceremonies and events.

Whereas HB 2551 pertains to members of Federally recognized tribes, HB 1393 encompasses all students.

School district leaders and staff are encouraged to promptly consult with tribal nations and collaborate with Native American parent and family advisory committees and Native American education leaders to develop policies, procedures, and practices associated with the law. It is critical that districts work in a timely manner to resolve any potential issues regarding cultural inclusivity prior to district or school ceremonies and events.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Henry Strom, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Native Education and Center for the Improvement of Student Learning, at 360-918-3953 or email henry.strom@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

Michaela W. Miller, Ed.D., NBCT
Deputy Superintendent

Henry Strom
Assistant Superintendent
Office of Native Education and Center for the Improvement of Student Learning

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