

Tribal Regalia at Graduations

Illinois law protects the right of every student to wear items of cultural, ethnic, or religious significance during graduation ceremonies.

This includes Native American regalia, such as eagle feathers, beaded caps, stoles, traditional clothing, or other items of cultural importance.

What is the significance?

Through boarding schools, parent separation policies, and the denial of religious freedoms, there is a long history of appalling actions undertaken by the government and education system against Indigenous youth. And today, Native American students have the lowest graduation rates as compared to their peers. In the face of these hardships, wearing cultural items during graduation is an expression of survivance and resilience by Indigenous youth.

Examples of Native American Regalia

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Beadwork on graduation cap
- Footwear & Moccasins
- Hairstyles
- Jewelry
- Stoles
- Eagle Feathers attached to graduation cap



Nimkii Curley
Photo by: Megan Bang



Under the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/10-22.25b), school dress code or graduation attire policies cannot prohibit students from wearing or accessorizing their cap and gown with items that reflect their cultural, ethnic, or religious identity.