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**For Immediate Release:**

**Sept. 23, 2022**

## **Indian Education Coordinator Receives National Community Service Award**

*Rodney Jackson recognized by the National Indian Education Association*

Fayetteville, N.C. – Rodney Jackson, the Indian Education Coordinator for Cumberland County Schools (CCS), is one of five recipients who is being honored with the 2022 National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Community Service Award. NIEA is recognizing Jackson for his commitment, dedication and service to students and Native American communities.

“We are fortunate to have Mr. Jackson as part of the CCS family,” said CCS Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr. “He is a dedicated, visionary leader who is constantly looking for new and innovative ways to support our local Native American communities. This Community Service award is a well-earned and well-deserved honor. Congratulations, Mr. Jackson!”



According to NIEA’s website, “Mr. Jackson has established a reputation as an extremely capable, effective leader for the Office of Indian Education. He has consistently displayed qualities of initiative, care, and professionalism. His genuine concern for the welfare of Native students is a true testament of his strong commitment and advocacy for public education.”

At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, Jackson and his staff found seven students from CCS who had dropped out the previous school year. After meeting with them and their parents, Jackson and his staff were able to convince all seven young Native men to return to school and graduate.

In May 2022, Jackson and his team coordinated an Eagle Feather Ceremony for graduating seniors. This Eagle Feather Ceremony was the first of its kind by any public school in the state of North Carolina. Seventy-eight seniors were presented with an eagle feather as a sign of their graduation achievement.

Jackson and his team also visited several schools within the district during last year’s American Indian Heritage Month to educate students about the Native American culture. In collaboration with the local tribe, his team performed mini-Pow Wows and helped students create Native American crafts.

Jackson is a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. As CCS’ Indian Education Coordinator, he leads the state’s second-largest Indian Education program. Jackson will

be recognized during an Awards Luncheon on Oct. 7 as part of the 53rd annual NIEA Convention and Trade Show in Oklahoma City, OK.

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