CITY of ALBUQUERQUE
TWENTY FOURTH COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. _R-21-205_ ENACTMENT NO. _R-2021-073_

SPONSORED BY: Isaac Benton, Cynthia D. Borrego, Lan Sena, by request

RESOLUTION

ACKNOWLEDGING AND RECOGNIZING THE ALBUQUERQUE INDIAN
SCHOOL CEMETERY AT 4H PARK AS A HISTORICAL AND SACRED BURIAL
SITE; ACKNOWLEDGING THE HISTORICAL AND ONGOING
INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA EXPERIENCED BY NATIVE AMERICAN
INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND TRIBAL NATIONS AS A RESULT OF INDIAN
BOARDING SCHOOL POLICIES; AND COMMITTING TO WORK WITH TRIBAL
NATIONS AND LOCAL NATIVE AMERICANS TOWARD RECONCILIATION AND
HEALING.

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque is built upon the traditional homelands
of the Tiwa peoples and recognizes that Tribal Nations have lived upon this
land since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque values the contributions to our society
accomplished through and by Native American thought, culture, and
technology; and

WHEREAS, the United States government adopted the Indian Civilization
Fund Act of 1819 to provide financial support for church run schools to
“civilize” Native American children through education; and

WHEREAS, the United States government adopted the Indian Boarding
School Policy of 1869 also known as “President Grant’s Peace Policy” in a
deliberate attempt to eradicate Native American languages, beliefs, cultures,
and identities and to assimilate them into White American culture through
federally funded Christian-run schools, which had the effect of cultural
genocide; and

WHEREAS, between 1869 – 1960’s the Indian Boarding School Policy
authorized the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of Native American
children from their families and communities and relocated them to one of 367
residential facilities across 30 states; and

WHEREAS, Article II(e) of the United Nations definition of genocide states
"Forcible transferring children of the group to another group" with the intent
to destroy, in whole, or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group is
an act of genocide; and

WHEREAS, Native American children were required by law to attend
boarding schools with the stated purpose of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man,"
often through physical, sexual, psychological, and spiritual abuse; and

WHEREAS, many Native American children ran away and remained
missing, or died of abuse, illness, or substandard healthcare provided by
Indian Boarding schools; and

WHEREAS, by 1926, nearly 83 percent of Native American school-aged
children were enrolled in Indian Boarding schools in the United States, but
because nearly 62 percent of the school records have been lost or destroyed,
the full extent of the Indian Boarding School Policy has not been identified;
and

WHEREAS, the Albuquerque Indian School (AIS) was operated by the
Presbyterian Church and by the United States government from the 1881 to
1981; and

WHEREAS, the Albuquerque Indian School received Native American
children from surrounding Pueblos and Tribes from within and outside of New
Mexico, including Native American children from Ute, Apache, Pima, and
Navajo tribal nations; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of these harmful federal policies resulted in
the isolation, separation, and death of Native American children who died
while attending the Albuquerque Indian School and were buried in unmarked
graves at the Albuquerque Indian School Cemetery, away from their families
and community never to return home; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque received a request to acquire the site
where the cemetery is located on June 20, 1972; and
WHEREAS, information regarding the number of individuals buried and
their location at the Albuquerque Indian School cemetery at 4H Park is
inconclusive and further research of the site is required; and

WHEREAS, Albuquerque City Council Ordinance 2-6-6-1 established The
Commission on American Indian & Alaska Native Affairs
(CAIANA) as an advocate for Native American resident affairs and was
amended in 2019 to have CAIANA serve as the forum for formalized
government-to-government relations between the City of Albuquerque and its
adjacent Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, the City, through its Office of Native American Affairs, has
contacted the eight Pueblos and Tribes originally identified with this burial site
to gather and provide information on this issue along, and is reaching out to
the remaining affected Pueblos and Tribes within the State of New Mexico to
engage in ongoing, meaningful tribal consultation; and

WHEREAS, the City convened a 4H Park Burial Site Stakeholders’ Meeting
on August 10, 2021 to provide a forum for community stakeholders with a
connection to the site to provide recommendations for future actions by the
City; and

WHEREAS, the CAIANA issued a formal memorandum to the Mayor’s
Office on September 20, 2021 entitled “Recommendations on Albuquerque
Indian Boarding School Cemetery Site/4H Park” that provides information,
discussions, and recommendations for short-term and long-term actions to
address this specific issue and the legacy impacts of Indian boarding schools;
and

WHEREAS, the City, through its Office of Native American Affairs, held a
public event entitled “Albuquerque Indian School Cemetery Acknowledgement
and Healing Reflection” on September 25, 2021 focused on the history of the
site, acknowledging the historical and intergenerational trauma of Indian
Boarding Schools, and recognizing the City’s commitment to ongoing redress
of the issue; and

WHEREAS, the City’s Parks and Recreation Department has temporarily
demarcated the assumed location of the cemetery at 4H Park, placed signage
identifying the park as a sacred site to help educate the public about the site’s
significance to begin implementing recommendations from community
stakeholders connected to the site; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque has a government-to-government
working relationship with adjacent Pueblos and Tribes, and a responsibility to
its Native American residents to make the AIS Cemetery Site a place to be
treated with respect and reverence now and into the future.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
ALBUQUERQUE:

Section 1. Pledges to provide resources both financial and human, as
feasible, to implement short-term and long-term recommendations provided
by the City's adjacent Pueblos and Tribes, CAIANA, and community
stakeholders with connection to the site.

Section 2. Support the establishment of a working group to gather,
analyze, and assess all historic and current information and documentation
related to Albuquerque Indian School burials and cemetery sites. This working
group should be Native-led and include historical and cultural experts.

Section 3. Support the development of and implementation of strategies to
address issues, concerns, and health disparities Native residents of
Albuquerque face due to the impacts of historical trauma and racism. These
will include short and long-term goals in relation to education, economy,
environment, health care, intergovernmental relations with Native
Nations/Pueblos in the state, and the homeless population.
PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 4th DAY OF October, 2021
BY A VOTE OF: 8 FOR 0 AGAINST.

Excused: Harris

Cynthia D. Borrego, President
City Council

APPROVED THIS 11 DAY OF October, 2021

Bill No. R-21-205

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor
City of Albuquerque

ATTEST:

Ethan Watson, City Clerk