



Tribal Education Departments National Assembly

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Board Advisory Committee FY 2005

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September 29, 2005

Mr. Ed Parisien
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Office of Indian Education Programs
MS-3609 MIB-OIE-32
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240

ATTN: Tribal Consultation

Dear Ed:

The Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA) has reviewed the August 2005 Tribal Consultation booklet and submits the following specific comments on the Indian Education Topics for which Tribal Consultation Meetings were held on August 29 and 30, 2005. These comments are in addition to the general comments that we submitted previously at those meetings (copy attached hereto).

Funding for TEDs

Our previous comments focused on the need for the BIA to request appropriations for Tribal Education Departments (TEDs) as part of the annual agency budget for the Department of the Interior. We reminded you that since 1988 TEDs have been a program expressly authorized by Congress. Most recently TEDs were reauthorized in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. See Pub. L. No. 100-297; currently codified at 25 U.S.C. § 2020. We reminded you of the documented historical and substantial tribal support for appropriations for TEDs. We sincerely hope that your agency will use its restructuring plans as an opportunity to request TED appropriations.

Role of TEDs in helping BIA-funded Schools Meet AYP under NCLB

We know that the BIA / OIEP is concerned about helping BIA-funded schools to meet AYP as required by NCLB. To help you understand the role of TEDs envisioned by Congress in achieving this goal, we remind you of the following provisions in NCLB regarding TEDs.

1. TITLE I, Part A, Subpart 1. Under Section 1116(g), with respect to BIA-funded schools, the BIA and the schools review and report academic assessment and school improvement progress to the Secretary of the Interior. 20 U.S.C. § 6316(g). *Section 1111(m)(3) contemplates that BIA-funded schools will be accredited by TEDs and that schools will use assessments developed by TEDs that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be in compliance with NCLB. 20 U.S.C. § 6311(m)(3).*

2. TITLE X, Part D. *Under Section 1121(b)(1)(B), which governs accreditation for basic education of Indian children in BIA-funded schools, the Secretaries of the Interior and Education must, in consultation with tribes, Indian education organizations, and accrediting agencies, develop and submit to Congress a report on the desirability and feasibility of establishing a tribal accreditation agency that would, among other things, establish accreditation procedures for, among other things, recognizing qualified and credible TEDs as accrediting bodies serving tribal schools. 25 U.S.C. § 2001(b)(1)(B).*

These are just some of the specific provisions in NCLB that Congress has determined could help BIA-funded schools meet AYP under NCLB. We ask you, When can we expect the BIA / OIEP to be implementing or otherwise addressing these provisions?

TEDs as Resources for Improving Indian Education Generally

We are very concerned that, in general, the BIA / OIEP is overlooking TEDs as a means of improving Indian education. We remind you that many TEDs today, including those that serve BIA-funded schools, are involved in: student data collection and analysis; developing school curricula, instructional materials, and standards and assessments; and, educational research and planning for our tribal communities.

In our efforts to improve schooling for tribal students, we are partnering with leading educational entities including the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Educational Testing Service, and the National Center for Educational Statistics on specific recommendations and strategies. We would hope that the BIA / OIEP would be joining us in these landmark partnerships, but to date we are uncertain about the BIA / OIEP 's true commitment to TEDs because you do not support us, reach out to us, or even include us in your restructuring or consultation plans.

TEDNA is a new and growing organization, and we attach our membership list for FY 05 so that you can see who the are the very first member TEDs. We remind you that we have scheduled a discussion group entitled "*OIEP Restructuring: Where are the TEDs?*" as part of our upcoming National TED Forum in Denver on October 5, 2005 in conjunction with the Annual Convention of the National Indian Education Association. We have specifically asked you to help us in this discussion group so that you can hear from some of our members first-hand and so that we together can plan to meet the congressional goals of Indian self-determination, a balanced federal budget, and all children receiving educational opportunities and reaching their potential under NCLB.

Sincerely yours,



Jerome M. Jainga, President

Cc James Cason, Acting Ass't Secretary
For Indian Affairs, US DOI