



NEWS

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President Bush's FY2002 BIA Education Budget Seeks to Replace Aging Schools

Paschal Sherman Indian School in Washington State to be Rebuilt

Note to Editors: Photographs of Paschal Sherman Indian School may be found at
www.doi.gov/bia/news/school_pics.htm

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – President Bush's pledge on education that "no child shall be left behind" was reaffirmed today with the release of his Fiscal Year 2002 budget request of \$2.2 billion for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The request includes \$292.5 million for BIA school construction – an increase of \$162,000 over the 2001 enacted level – of which \$122.8 million is to replace six aging BIA school facilities around the country, including the Paschal Sherman Indian School located in Omak, Wash., on the Colville Indian Reservation.

"President Bush and I are committed to providing all BIA students with healthy and safe schools," said Interior Secretary Gale Norton. "For far too long, Indian children have been left behind. This budget request shows the Bush Administration's dedication to creating environments where the minds, spirits and aspirations of thousands of Native American children may flourish. Children can best learn, and teachers can best teach, when they aren't worrying that their classrooms will fall down."

The Paschal Sherman Indian School is a K-9 school and dormitory located on 26 acres of Colville tribal land. The facility serves 160 students who attend classes in 18 buildings, 4 of which are temporary. The budget request includes \$16.7 million for the Paschal Sherman Indian School Replacement project to replace these buildings, the average age of which is 40 years, with one facility that meets safety, environmental quality, and accessibility standards; that can accommodate an increasing student enrollment; and provides a setting conducive to learning.

Many of the buildings have deteriorated to the point where it is no longer economically feasible to continue making repairs to them, and health and safety code violations expose students and staff to potential life-threatening situations throughout the campus. In addition to educational

and administrative facilities, needs include a gymnasium, cafeteria, dormitories, bus garage, and improved access for disabled individuals are needed. The replacement school will be a safe, modern-day teaching and learning facility that will serve approximately 260 students.

The BIA's 185 schools and dormitories have suffered for decades from neglect and disrepair. The five additional school facilities slated for replacement in FY2002 are: Polacca Day School, Polacca, Ariz.; Holbrook Dormitory, Holbrook, Ariz.; Santa Fe Indian School, Santa Fe, N.M.; Wingate Elementary School Dormitory, Ft. Wingate, N.M.; and Ojibwa Indian School, Belcourt, N.D.

The President's request for BIA education also includes \$5.0 million for advance planning and design of future replacement schools, \$161.6 million to fund maintenance and repair projects to reduce the backlog of needed repairs to BIA school buildings, \$504.0 million to fund BIA school and dormitory operations, and a \$1.0 million increase for operating grants to 25 tribally controlled community colleges.

The BIA's mission is to fulfill its trust responsibilities and promote self-determination on behalf of Tribal governments, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. As part of its mission, the BIA provides services to approximately 1.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who are members of the 561 federally recognized Tribes in the 48 contiguous United States and Alaska.

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