UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
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BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS Tozier - Interior 4306

For Release JULY 12, 1962

INDIANS PARTICIPATING WIDELY ON LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS AND PTA'S

The broad and growing interest of American Indians in education for their children is graphically revealed in a recent survey by the Bureau of Indian Affairs showing Indian participation on 284 local school boards and 414 parent-teacher associations throughout the country, the Department of the Interior reported today.

Included in the number of Indian participants are four school board chairmen in the Montana-Wyoming area and a president of a public school PTA in the Arizona-New Mexico area.

Through membership on the local school boards 367 Indians are playing an active role in the management and planning of public schools where Indian children are enrolled. The parent-teacher associations having Indian members include those affiliated with public schools and with Federal-Indian schools operated by the Bureau.

The study also indicated that one Indian is a member of a school committee in North Carolina and 1,214 others are members of miscellaneous groups associated with school activities.

"The findings of this survey," Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash commented, "are tremendously encouraging. They show that Indian parents are not only interested in the education of their children but actively involved on a significant scale in organizations that help to shape the aims and character of our local schools. As recently as 25 years ago, such broad participation by Indians as members of local school boards and parent-teacher associations would have been almost inconceivable."

In the 1960-61 school year reports by the Bureau of Indian Affairs showed 64,987 Indian children from six through 18 years of age enrolled in public schools throughout the country, 38,876 enrolled in 270 schools operated by the Bureau, and 8,883 in mission and other schools. In addition, 8,092 Indian children under six and over 18 were enrolled in all types of schools.

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P.N. 11270-62