Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs is strengthening its Office of Indian Education Programs, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson announced today.

Under a new organizational structure, approved July 13, the authority of the office will be extended and some major functions transferred from field units to the Washington headquarters.

Commissioner Thompson said, "We are determined to effect needed improvements and provide the best possible leadership in this most important area of Indian education. We made the first step w]hen we hired Bill Demmert to run the education programs. Now we are moving to give him the staff and organization he needs."

The appointment of Dr. William G. Demmert as Director of Indian Education Programs was announced by Thompson in March of this year. Demmert, who is Tlingit and Oglala Sioux, was the first Deputy Commissioner for Indian Education in the United States Office of Education.

Under the new structure, Demmert's staff is expected to be enlarged.

Functions that will now be centralized in the Washington office include the administration of the Johnson-O'Malley funds for public school programs, higher education assistance programs and the ESEA Title program. Funding, for these programs in 1976 was more than $80 million.

The Washington office will also have line authority over the Bureau's three post-secondary schools. They are the Haskell Indian Junior College, Lawrence, Kansas; Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Office of Indian Education Programs will have in Washington a Management Support Staff, Planning and Program Development Staff, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and a Division of Post-Secondary Education.