Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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More authority for the Johnson-O' Malley program -- by which American Indians in public schools get special help from the Bureau of Indian Affairs -- may be placed in the hands of Johnson-O' Malley parent committees that must approve special need programs for eligible Indians submitted by public school districts, Morris Thompson, Commissioner of Indian Affairs indicated today.

In addition, regulations governing the public school assistance program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs may be changed to insure that more attention is given to expenditure of these funds solely for the education of Indian students

These two changes in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Johnson-O'Malley program may come about as the result of a proposed change in Title 25, Code of Federal Regulations, Indians, 33. Notice of the proposed revision was published in the Federal Register of January 14, 1974.

Those interested may submit written comments, suggestions, or objections regarding the proposed revision to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Attention: Director of Indian Education Programs, Washington, D.C. 20245 within 30 days after the date of publication of the notice.

''These regulations are proposed to make certain that money the Congress intends to go to Indian students goes to those students, and that programs are tailored to the needs of the Indian young people in the public school district, said Thompson.

An Indian, for purposes of the Act, is a member of a tribe, band, or other organized group of Indians, including Alaska Natives, which is recognized by the Secretary of the Interior as being eligible for Federal services. Contracts may be entered into under the provisions of the Johnson-O'Malley Act for the education of Indian children of 1/4 or more degree Indian blood, unless excepted by law, in grades kindergarten through 12.

Monies appropriated by the Congress for such purposes can be expended only in eligible public school districts containing large tracts of non-taxable Indian-owned land and educating large numbers of eligible Indian children, as compared to the total school population.

The contracts may authorize payments for educational programs in two categories:

(a.)In support of the basic school program offered to all students, to meet educational standards established within the State, only if authorized by the Education Plan, and only if a school district's financial need is proven, after consideration of all income, including income from P. L. 874, 81st Congress (64 Stat. 1100) as amended; and

(b.)In payment for the costs of providing supplemental programs to meet the specialized needs of Indian students, as determined by the Indian Advisory School Board, which may result from the financial status of the parents, or from cultural and language differences, and where such programs are necessary so that Indian students can benefit from the basic educational programs equally with non-Indian students.

Program operations conducted through contracts under this part must be conducted for the primary benefit of eligible Indian students enrolled in eligible public school districts.

To become eligible to administer the contract funds, the contractor shall formulate an operational plan for distribution of contract funds, and this plan shall become a part of the contract.

Contracts must specify that there will be no discrimination against Indians or schools enrolling such Indians. The school district serving Indian students shall provide educational programs required by established State standards.