Holbrook Dormitory in Arizona to be Rebuilt

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(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 Holbrook Dormitory located in Holbrook, Ariz., on the Navajo 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 budget request includes $14.5 million for the Holbrook Dormitory Replacement project to replace the current dormitory and gymnasium that were built over 40 years ago to serve 115 students in grades 9-12 from the Hopi and Navajo reservations. The project includes completely replacing the existing dormitory and gym, as well as constructing a bus garage and maintenance shop and demolishing existing buildings. The new facilities will continue to serve 115 students from the two reservations attending Holbrook Public Schools.

The existing facilities are being replaced because they were found to be functionally obsolete and in such poor physical condition that the cost to rehabilitate and maintain them would be prohibitively expensive. Problems such as leaky roofs, burst pipes, and technological breakdowns created risks for students and faculty that will be alleviated with the building of new facilities. The BIA's 185 schools and dormitories have suffered for decades from neglect and disrepair. The five additional schools slated for replacement in FY2002 are: Polacca Day School, Polacca, Ariz.; Wingate Elementary School, Ft. Wingate, N.M.; Santa Fe Indian School, Santa Fe, N.M.; Ojibwa Indian School, Belcourt, N.D.; and Paschal Sherman Indian School, Omak, Wash.

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.