



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Budget Priorities include BIE's Strategic Direction initiative, broadband expansion in schools, and tribal student success

Media Contact: NewsMedia@bia.gov

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WASHINGTON – President Trump today proposed a \$944.5 million Fiscal Year 2021 budget for the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The BIE's budget request is presented separately, continuing the historical action in FY 2020 to recognize the distinct and separate responsibilities and missions of the Indian Affairs' two bureaus. The FY2021 budget request will continue to advance BIE reform, provide autonomy and accountability, streamline services, maximize efficiency, and build capacity.

The BIE's primary mission is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a tribe's need for cultural and economic well-being, in keeping with the wide diversity of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes as distinct cultural and governmental entities.

"President Trump's 2021 budget request for the Department is about investing in our people and public lands and waters," **said Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt**. "He is committed to the mission of conservation and creating more public access for Americans to fully enjoy our national treasures and landscapes. This budget is a critical step in the right direction and provides a path to restore commonsense in our budgeting process."

"The President's request strengthens tribal communities through education reform, broadband development, and strategic investments in student success," said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney. "I am very pleased that the FY 2021 budget continues to support lasting changes for management efficiencies that will vastly improve the delivery of high quality education to the future of Indian Country, our children."

The FY 2021 budget supports the Administration's continued commitment to advance tribal self-governance and self-determination, foster strong tribal economies and economic self-sufficiency, create educational opportunities, ensure safe Indian communities, and preserve and foster cultural heritage. The BIE manages a school system of 169 elementary and secondary schools and 14 dormitories providing education services to an estimated 46,000 individual American Indian and Alaska Native students in 23 states, as well as operates two post-secondary schools and administers grants for 29 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges.

The FY 2021 budget request for the BIE is \$944.5 million in current appropriations. The Bureau estimates the requested budget will support staffing of 2,894 FTE in 2021.

The request for the *Operation of Indian Education Programs* account is \$875.7 million and prioritizes direct school operations, school improvement, and completing the Bureau's Strategic Direction and reform efforts to improve service and technical assistance for BIE-funded schools. Funding includes:

- \$728.7 million for Elementary and Secondary programs,
- \$97.9 million for Post-Secondary programs, and
- \$49.0 million for Education Management.

The budget continues to invest in activities that promote students' educational self-determination by seeking \$83.6 million for Tribal Grant Support Costs for tribes operating BIE-funded schools, an amount that will support 100 percent of the estimated requirement.

The FY 2021 request provides \$33.7 million for Education Program Management. This will enable the Bureau to continue building much-needed capacity in order to decouple overlapping functions it has with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in critical areas such as facilities, safety and acquisitions, and support staff at BIE's associate deputy director offices and education resource centers providing direct and customized technical assistance to schools.

The FY 2021 request includes an increase of \$5.0 million to expand and upgrade broadband access at BIE-funded schools to provide a 21st-century learning environment, where educators and students in remote locations can access innovative resources, support online testing, and access knowledge and expertise worldwide.

The requested increase supports high-cost special fiber construction and increased monthly circuit costs for remaining schools without access – those in the most remote and hard-to-access-areas. Remaining funding will be used to begin upgrading all BIE schools to recommended educational standards to provide appropriate internet connectivity and keep pace with public schools. As school upgrades are completed, the BIE network also will need commensurate work to ensure appropriate response times. The Department will continue to leverage the Federal Communications Commission's E-rate program, which helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband with up to a 90 percent discount of eligible costs.

Education Construction – In addition to support through the Administration's *Public Lands Infrastructure Fund* legislative proposal, the FY 2021 budget requests \$68.9 million in annual funding for Education Construction as follows:

- \$62.8 million for Facility Improvement and Repair at existing schools to provide an environment conducive to educational achievement,
- \$5.1 million for BIE employee housing repair, and
- \$1.0 million in new funding for employee housing replacement.

Available funding from prior years will complete school construction projects listed on the Bureau's [Replacement School Construction Priority List published in the Federal Register on March 24, 2004](#), and continue design and construction phases for schools on [a subsequent list published on April 29, 2016](#).

The [Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs](#) advises the Secretary of the Interior on Indian Affairs policy issues, communicates policy to and oversees the programs of the BIA and the BIE, provides leadership in consultations with tribes, and serves as the DOI official for intra- and inter- departmental coordination and liaison within the Executive Branch on Indian matters.

The [Bureau of Indian Affairs'](#) mission includes developing and protecting Indian trust lands and natural and energy resources; supporting social welfare, public safety and justice in tribal communities; and

promoting tribal self-determination and self-governance.

The [Bureau of Indian Education](#) implements federal Indian education programs and funds 183 elementary schools, secondary schools, and dormitories (of which over two-thirds are tribally operated) located on 64 reservations in 23 States serving an estimated 46,000 individual students. The BIE also operates two post-secondary schools and administers grants for 29 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges.

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