Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: August 31, 2016
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – Lawrence S. Roberts, who is leading the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, announced today that the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) has extended its deadline for nominations of qualified individuals to serve on a negotiated rulemaking committee (NRC) that will recommend revisions to its school accountability system. Nominees are being sought from federally recognized tribes whose students attend BIE-funded schools.

The new deadline for nominations, a notice of which was published this month in the Federal Register, is on or before October 3, 2016. The BIE initially published its announcement for nominations last November with a deadline of December 24, 2015. That deadline was later extended to May 31, 2016.

"The BIE is seeking invested, energetic and knowledgeable persons for its Accountability Negotiated Rulemaking Committee who will have the opportunity to help the Bureau in developing new standards, assessments and an accountability system for all BIE-funded schools, as mandated under the Every Student Succeeds Act,"Roberts said. "I urge tribes with children in BIE-funded schools to submit nominations, particularly of individuals who have strong backgrounds in Indian education, are knowledgeable about the BIE school system, and understand what is needed for our schools to better serve their students and communities."

Section 8007(2) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes and amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to use the NRC process to develop regulations that define standards, assessments and an accountability system for BIE-funded schools on a national, regional or tribal basis. The regulations must be consistent with Section 1111 of the ESSA, which requires them to be developed in a manner that considers the unique circumstances and needs of the schools and their students, and be implemented no later than the 2017-2018 academic year.

Because the ESSA preserves the right of the schools and tribes to seek a waiver from being subject to the Interior Department's accountability system, the Accountability NRC's regulations will not affect the ability of individual schools and tribes to develop account ability systems that best meet their academic and cultural needs.

For example, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians has successfully developed its own accountability system and the Navajo Nation is in the process of doing so. Their approved accountability systems will be exempt from the BIE's single accountability system. The remainder of BIE-funded schools, however, will be subject to the NRC-developed standards, assessments and accountability system.

Nominations must include the following information for each Accountability NRC nominee:

- A letter of support from the tribe for an individual's nomination to serve on the NRC as a tribal representative;
- A resume reflecting the nominee's qualifications and experience in Indian education that includes the person's name, tribal affiliation, job title, major job duties, employer, business address,

business telephone and fax numbers (and business email address, if applicable);
- The tribal interest(s) to be represented by the nominee [see Section IV, Part F, of the BIE's Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register on November 9, 2015] and whether the nominee will represent other interest(s) related to this rulemaking, as the tribe may designate;
- A brief description of how the nominee will represent tribal views, communicate with tribal constituents, and have a clear means of reaching agreement on behalf of the tribe(s) he or she represents; and
- A statement on whether the nominee is only representing one tribe's views or whether the expectation is that he or she represents a specific group of tribes.

Although the deadline for nominations is October 3, 2016, the BIE will still consider individuals whose nominations were submitted by the December 24, 2015 or May 31, 2016 deadlines.

Send nominations to: Ms. Jackie Cheek, Bureau of Indian Education, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., MS-3642-MIB, Washington, DC 20240, phone: (202) 208–6983.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Education, which implements federal Indian education programs and funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools (of which two-thirds are tribally operated) located on 64 reservations in 23 states and peripheral dormitories serving over 40,000 students. BIE also operates two post-secondary schools, and administers grants for 28 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, and provides higher education scholarships to Native youth. For more information, visit www.bie.edu.

-DOI-