Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C.— Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Director Keith Moore announced today that the Circle of Nations-Wahpeton Indian Boarding School from Wahpeton, N.D. has been selected to receive the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Green Ribbon Schools award.

"I am happy that our BIE School is being recognized for meeting the challenging standards of the Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools pilot program," said Moore. "Being selected as one of the Green Ribbon Schools is a tremendous achievement in a national pool of applicants and allows BIE schools to take pride in our efforts to create healthy learning environments."

The Green Ribbon Schools (GRS) program was recently launched by ED to recognize schools that save energy and reduce operating costs, create environmentally friendly learning spaces, promote student health, and provide environmental education to incorporate sustainability into their curricula. The recognition award is part of a larger ED and BIE effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about practices proven to result in improved student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as a government-wide aim to increase energy independence and economic security.

According to ED guidance, Green Ribbon Schools receiving the national award will have achieved or made considerable progress toward the three pillars established in the program: 1) energy efficient buildings; 2) healthy students and school environments; and 3) environmental literacy of all graduates. The combined achievement in these three areas will be the basis for the Green Ribbon Schools award. All schools must meet high college- and career-ready standards, be in compliance with federal civil rights laws, and all federal, state and local health and safety standards and regulations.

The bureau has posted additional information on their website, including the BIE Green Ribbon Schools application, training opportunities, and program timeline. For more information about the bureau's participation in the program visit http://www.bie.edu/greenribbonschools/index.htm or visit the ED Green Ribbon Schools website at www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools to learn more about the program.

As part of this effort to promote a comprehensive approach to creating a healthier school environment in all BIE-funded schools, the bureau committed to the Let's Move! in Indian Country (LMIC) initiative in 2010 and encouraged all BIE-funded schools to sign up to become Team Nutrition Schools. The LMIC website http://www.letsmove.gov/indiancountry includes information about resources, grants and programs available to assist schools in becoming healthier places of learning.

In addition to being selected for the Green Ribbon Schools award, the Circle of Nations School earned a 2012 Gold Award in meeting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for school meals. The challenge was established in 2004 to recognize schools in the National School Lunch Program that create healthier school environments through promoting nutrition and physical activity. The program is a cornerstone of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative to solve the childhood obesity epidemic in a generation. Only three percent of the 100,000 participating

schools around the country have actually received the recognition as part of the HealthierUS School Challenge. The Circle of Nations School has achieved tremendous accolades in their winning both awards.

The Bureau of Indian Education in the U.S. Department of the Interior implements federal education laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, in and provides funding to 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools and peripheral dormitories located on 64 reservations in 23 states and serving approximately 48,000 students from the nation’s federally recognized tribes. Approximately two-thirds are tribally operated with the rest BIE-operated. The bureau also serves post secondary students through higher education scholarships and support funding to 26 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges. It also directly operates two post secondary institutions: Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M.