Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C.— Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools can now apply for the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon School program (ED-GRS), which provides national recognition for schools using outstanding environmental programs and techniques, BIE Director Keith Moore announced today.

"The Green Ribbon Schools program will recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the BIE schools that are working hard to create environmentally friendly and healthy learning spaces," said Moore, who noted that the application for eligibility is now available. "The BIE is dedicated to leading the movement to build a healthier and sustainable future for our children across Indian Country."

Interested schools can access the online application on the BIE Green Ribbon School website at: http://www.bie.edu/greenribbonschools/index.htm. Applications are due by February 24, 2012. The BIE will review and select up to four nominees to the ED-GRS. Awardees will be announced in April 2012 and are expected to receive their awards in May 2012.

The BIE joined the recently launched national Green Ribbon School program and launched a nationwide search across Indian Country to find outstanding environmental schools that meet its standards. Many BIE schools are actively saving energy, reducing costs, promoting environmental literacy and providing healthy environments for students, faculty and staff. Those schools will now have the opportunity to be recognized nationally.

States and other education agencies have also been invited to participate in the Green Ribbon Schools program, which is patterned after the long running Blue Ribbon School Program. The U.S. Department of Education took many months to strategically design the Green Ribbon Schools program and have named this year as the "pilot year." The new federal program encourages schools to:

- Implement energy conservation measures that pave the way for reduced environmental impact, cost savings, and job creation;
- Undertake environmental and behavioral changes in schools that ensure the health, wellness, and productivity of students, teachers, and staff, and;
- Promote environmental education that supports students' strong civic skills, environmental stewardship, and workforce preparedness.

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.

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.