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Earl J. Barlow, Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Indian Education Programs since 1978, has been appointed Director of the BIA's Minneapolis Area Office, Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ken Smith announced today. His appointment is effective March 7, 1982.

Barlow, a Blackfeet Indian, is a member of the Federal government's Senior Executive Service.

Smith said that Barlow had led the Indian education office through an important transition period following the enactment of the Education Amendments Act of 1978. The Act mandated major changes in the Bureau's education organization and the transfer of basic responsibility for the schools to local Indian communities. "The flexibility of the Senior Executive Service," Smith said, "allows us to transfer out top officials as we think necessary to best achieve our goals. I think a new appointee brings new vitality to a job. I believe that good executives welcome new challenges."

John Fritz, a Minneapolis resident until his appointment this past December as Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of BIA operations, will be Barlow's immediate supervisor.

The Minneapolis Area Director is responsible for BIA activities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa. The position has been vacant since last May. Barlow, 54, was Superintendent of Schools in Browning, Montana, from 1973 to 1978. He had also served as the Montana State Supervisor of Indian Education and had worked for 30 years as a teacher, principal and education program administrator. Barlow graduated from the University of Montana, with a degree in social studies and then earned a Master's in education from that University.