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Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Forrest J. Gerard said today (December 4) that the challenge of educating Indian children is in the hands of tribal governments.

Gerard, speaking to the eleventh annual convention of the National Indian Education Association in Denver, said the tribes face a challenge "to raise a whole child, to instruct the intellect in the laws of nature, to educate a nation." "Children of the 1980's will determine the future of the Indian people," he said.

"The generation of the 1980's will receive the benefits of the crucial federal Indian policy changes of the 1970's--just as the legislation of the 1970's resulted from the unfinished agenda for racial and social justice in the 1960's," said Gerard. "The coming generation may take passing academic note of many of the bold initiatives achieved through great personal sacrifice by many in this assembly."

Gerard said another example of the Carter Administration's support of Indian education was the last stages of the implementation of public laws 95-651 and 95-471, Indian Education Amendments Act and the Indian Controlled Community College Act. He said that both of these acts were "milestones in Indian education which place authorities in the hands of the tribes and school boards unlike any of the past."