



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Office of the Secretary

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Assistant Secretary of the Interior Harrison Loesch today directed the, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to replace immediately the Superintendent and the Principal of the Chilocco, Oklahoma, Indian school pending completion of a thorough investigation of conditions there.

The high school is run by the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs. It accommodates about 1,000 Indian boarding pupils from various parts of the nation.

A BIA education team, in reviewing the .operation of the school, charged' that some students had been subjected to handcuffing for long periods and to other physical punishment.

The conditions were discovered last November, but no further action was taken by the Bureau.

"I have urgently requested that the Federal Bureau of Investigation check into the possibility that criminal laws may have been violated," Mr. Loesch said. "Other actions will be taken to improve both the quality of education being offered to the students and the living environment," he added.

Mr. Loesch, sworn in. as Assistant Secretary last week and given supervision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, said he is considering a personal visit to the school within the next few days.

The Superintendent, Dr. Leon Wall, and the Principal, Clarence Winston, are being reassigned temporarily to other duties by BIA while the investigation continues. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett said Gordon Gunderson, BIA's Assistant Area Director for Education at Anadarko, Okla., has been detailed to serve temporarily as Acting Superintendent at the Chilocco School.

<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/top-officials-indian-school-ok-ordered-replaced>