



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: November 9, 1978

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Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Forrest Gerard said today that his office has initiated plans to implement changes in Indian education programs mandated by Title XI of the Education Amendments Act of 1978, (P.L. 95-561), signed by President Carter November 1. Title XI, of the Act stresses self ... determination and control of Indian education programs by the Indian community. Its three parts deal with federally assisted programs in public schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs education programs, and programs administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Gerard said that the "Act will assist us in making major improvements in managing the Bureau's educational program. Because of its importance, we will implement this legislation as expeditiously as possible." He has directed Deputy Assistant Secretary Rick C. Lavis to manage the policy and planning actions necessary for implementation of the Act. On October 23, Lavis wrote Indian tribal leaders, in anticipation of the President's signing of the legislation, to inform them of the contents of the law and to request nominations of persons to serve on implementing task forces.

In this letter to the Indian leaders Lavis said: "I will need your assistance in many ways. First of all, I ask that you distribute copies of the enclosed H.R. 15 Conference Report to your Council and Tribal members for review, and any other individuals you deem appropriate. The more informed we all are, the better prepared we will be for implementation. Secondly, I will be needing your recommendations of people to serve on the many Task Forces that will be required to address certain portions of the legislation. A wide representation of Bureau and Tribal people to serve on these Task Forces is essential to our success." Lavis said there would be 12 subject matter Task Forces established to deal with such things as school boards, education personnel, student rights, funding formulas, education policies, education/living standards and management information systems. He asked that nominees include education administrators and staff, students, tribal education committee members and school board members.

The Bureau is also asking for representatives from major national Indian organizations to serve on the task forces and to advise the Bureau on implementation. Lavis said the Act requires a number of management studies and other actions with specific time-frames for completion. He said the Bureau of Indian Affairs "will need to establish a carefully designed operations plan to meet those deadlines keeping in mind that the ultimate objective is to design a quality education system to meet the legislative mandates."

Lavis said that "Title XI, with its many requirements for improvement in the organization and management of the Bureau's educational program, will be most helpful in our current efforts to strengthen our educational endeavors. We consider Title XI to be a positive step forward, and we will enthusiastically carry out its requirements." Lavis added that he is also forming a task force to work on the, recently enacted Indian Community College Act (P .L. 95-471)· which will: be simultaneously implemented together with Title XI of P.L. 95-561.
