Funds made available through the Sovereignty in Indian Education Enhancement Program

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that $1 million in funding is being made available to federally recognized tribes through the Bureau of Indian Education's Sovereignty in Indian Education (SIE) Enhancement Program. The SIE Enhancement Program supports tribes in their efforts to assume control of the BIE-funded schools serving their communities.

"The Sovereignty in Education Enhancement Program supports President Obama's commitment to the tribes' goals of guiding and enhancing their children's education," Washburn said. "Through the SIE program, the Bureau of Indian Education recognizes that tribes have a comparative advantage over the federal government in teaching tribal languages and culture, engaging the tribal community in schools, and providing accountability to the community. With proper resources, tribal governments can provide a higher quality of education in tribal schools and raise their students' academic achievement levels."

SIE Enhancement Program awards will range from $100,000 to $200,000 totaling $1 million per fiscal year depending on the number of schools involved, student enrollment, the complexity of creating a new tribally managed school system, and a tribe's technical approach. These enhancements will provide funds for tribes to:

- Research and develop an alternative definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP);
- Develop an implementation plan that will reform a tribe's current organizational structure towards an expert and independent Tribal Education Department (TED) that supports schools and students; and
- Covers the execution of the implementation plan with identified staffing, projected timelines, proposed budgets and activities.

The funds support the development of school-reform plans to improve educational outcomes for students and strengthen efficiencies in operating BIE-funded schools on the reservations where they are located. A tribe must have at least one BIE-funded school to be eligible for funding.

"The Bureau of Indian Education is actively responding to the recommendation from tribal leaders that it support tribal leadership on Indian education," said BIE Director Dr. Charles "Monty" Roessel. "The Sovereignty in Education Enhancement Program is one example of how we are recognizing the desire and ability of tribal governments to assume responsibility for the BIE-funded schools serving their communities."

The purpose of SIE Enhancement Program funds is to support the tribes' capacity to manage and operate BIE-funded, tribally controlled schools as defined by the Tribally Controlled Schools Act of

1988. The SIE Enhancement Program was established based on a recommendation contained in the Blueprint for Reform, a comprehensive report on how to improve the quality of education in BIE-funded schools. The program fulfills a recommendation in the Blueprint for the BIE to support tribal nations in their efforts to restructure school governance, assume control over BIE-funded schools serving their communities, and develop curriculum that is both academically rigorous and culturally relevant to their students. This is the second round of SIE funds awarded since October 2014.

An initiative of the White House Council on Native American Affairs, chaired by Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, the Blueprint for Reform was issued in June 2014 following consultation with tribal leaders. President Obama established the Council as part of his commitment to engage in a true and lasting government-to-government relationship with federally recognized tribes in a more coordinated and effective manner, including promoting and sustaining prosperous and resilient tribal communities.

The BIE will hold two pre-grant training workshops for SIE applicants via webinars on the following dates: •

- **Pre-Grant Training 1: Tuesday, December 8, 2015, starting at 11:00 a.m. (EST).**
- **Pre-Grant Training 2: Friday, December 11, 2015, starting at 4:00 p.m. (EST).**

Grant proposals must be received by January 13, 2016, at 4:00 p.m. EST.

For more information on the SIE Enhancement Program and to register for a webinar, visit http://www.bie.edu/Programs/Sovereignty/index.htm.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Education, which operates the federal school system for American Indian and Alaska Native children from the federally recognized tribes. The BIE director is directly responsible for implementing federal education programs and laws in 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools on 64 reservations in 23 states serving over 48,000 students. Of these, 59 are BIE-operated and 124 are tribally operated under Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act contracts or Tribally Controlled Schools Act grants. The BIE also funds or operates off-reservation boarding schools and peripheral dormitories near reservations for tribal students attending public schools.