Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Funding will continue the President's commitment to supporting access to high quality education for Native youth.

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WASHINGTON – Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Lawrence S. Roberts announced today the 10 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools eligible for funding for campus-wide replacement. Publication of this list completes the process for identifying the Department's top priority schools for campus-wide replacement developed through negotiated rulemaking required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The School Facilities & Construction Negotiated Rulemaking Committee established under the NCLB to develop a formula for the equitable distribution of funds to address the poor condition of many BIE-funded schools. This process included input from experts on facilities and management from within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Management (DAS-M) for Indian Affairs. In addition, several tribal consultations on the school construction list provided guidance in creating a process for identifying the schools in most need of replacement.

"Providing access to a quality education is a priority for this Administration," said Acting Assistant Secretary Roberts. "Release of this school replacement list identifies academic facilities in the poorest condition that need to be replaced, and will begin to address the crisis we currently face with regard to the condition of our schools. The Department appreciates Congress's bipartisan support for improving Indian education and the condition of BIE schools."

The extensive review and selection process included an examination of all BIE funded schools. The National Review Committee determined eligibility for campus-wide school replacement based on factors as proposed in the NCLB Negotiated Rulemaking report: School facilities having an overall Facility Condition Index (FCI) rating of "poor," and/or are 50 years or older and educating 75 percent or more of the students in portables. Based on these criteria, 78 BIE-funded were eligible to be considered for campus replacement. Schools meeting the eligibility requirements were invited to submit an application to be reviewed and scored by the NRC with representatives from each of the BIE Regions with eligible schools. Of the 78 eligible schools, 53 submitted an application for replacement.

The purpose of campus replacement funding is to provide planning, design, and construction for campus-wide school replacement. The order of school replacement will be determined by the overall condition of each school and its "shovel-readiness." In the coming weeks, Indian Affairs will prioritize the schools based on when each school completes the planning process.

In addition to the School Replacement Program, the Department will provide funding to replace the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig High School in Bena, Minn., through the Facility Component Replacement Program. This program, which differs from the School Replacement Program, received funding for the first time since 2011 when Congress appropriated $11.9 million in FY 2016 to replace individual buildings, and

will support replacement of individual facilities that do not meet standards necessary for an effective education system but may not qualify for full campus replacement. Not originally designed or constructed to house a high school, the BIE-funded Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School serves as an example of an individual structure that requires replacement to address safety and educational needs.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs supports the Secretary of the Interior in carrying out the Department's responsibilities to the federally recognized tribes through BIA and BIE programs and services. The BIA's mission includes developing and protecting Indian trust lands and natural and energy resources; supporting social welfare, public safety and justice in tribal communities; and promoting tribal self-determination and self-governance. For more information, visit www.indianaffairs.gov. The BIE implements federal Indian education programs and funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools (of which two-thirds are tribally operated) located on 64 reservations in 23 states and peripheral dormitories serving over 40,000 students. BIE also operates two post-secondary schools, and administers grants for 28 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, and provides higher education scholarships to Native youth. For more information, visit www.bie.edu.