Visit to Beatrice Rafferty School part of efforts to reform and improve education services in Bureau of Indian Education schools

Media Contact: Jessica Kershaw, Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov Education Press Office, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov
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WASHINGTON, D.C. – As part of the Obama Administration's commitment to promote strong, prosperous and resilient communities, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will visit the Beatrice Rafferty School in Perry, Maine on Monday to discuss ongoing educational reform initiatives to ensure students attending schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) receive a high quality education delivered by tribal nations.

Beatrice Rafferty School, located on the Passamaquoddy Tribal Reservation of Pleasant Point, serves about 100 students, most of whom are American Indians. The K-8 school is partially funded by the BIE and operated by the Tribe under contract. Jewell and Duncan will tour the school to see first-hand the need for additional funding for replacement school construction and will meet with school officials, teachers and students to better understand the shared challenges in delivering educational services.

In 2013, Jewell and Duncan convened an American Indian Education Study Group to assess systemic issues within BIE-funded schools – one of the lowest performing set of schools in the country – and to propose a comprehensive plan for reform to ensure all students attending BIE-funded schools receive high quality education.

The Secretaries' visit builds on a recent Interior Department Secretarial Order to restructure and redesign the BIE over the next two school years, transforming the agency from a sole provider of education into a capacity-builder and service-provider to tribes with BIE-funded schools.

On Tuesday, Secretary Jewell will visit a second BIE-grant school, with a trip to the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School on the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe reservation in Bena, Minnesota. Originally built to house an auto mechanic school and bus garage, the facility was converted into a high school in 1984. The deteriorating building, which serves almost 200 students K-12, has multiple safety and security concerns.

Monday, August 18, 2014

WHO:

- Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education
- James Kvaal, Deputy Director, U.S. Domestic Policy Council
- Chellie Pingree, U.S. Representative

- Monty Roessel, Director, Bureau of Indian Education
- Reuben Clayton Cleaves, Chief, Passamaquoddy Tribe of Pleasant Point
- Ron Jenkins, BIE Superintendent
- Mike Chadwick, Beatrice Rafferty Principal

WHAT: Secretarial visit to the Beatrice Rafferty School in Perry, Maine

WHEN: Monday, August 18, 2014 at 3 pm EDT Note: There will be a media availability immediately after the school tour concludes

WHERE: Beatrice Rafferty School 22 Bayview Drive Perry, Maine

RSVP: Media interested in attending the school tour and media availability are encouraged to RSVP here by 5 pm EDT on Sunday, August 17.

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

WHO:

- Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
- Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs
- Carri Jones, Chairwoman of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Crystal Redgrave, Superintendent of the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School

WHAT: Secretarial visit to Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Bena, Minnesota

WHEN: Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at 3 pm CDT

WHERE: Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School 15353 Silver Eagle Drive Northwest Chippewa National Forest Bena, Minnesota

RSVP: Media interested in attending the school tour and media availability are encouraged to RSVP here by 5 pm CDT on Monday, August 18.
