Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: December 15, 2011
Print PDF

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Bureau of Indian Education Director Keith Moore announced today that BIE-funded schools across Indian Country will have the opportunity to participate in the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Green Ribbon Schools program, and will soon invite them to apply to the BIE to be nominated for this national recognition.

"I am excited to have the BIE participate in the Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools pilot program," said Moore. "The Green Ribbon Schools award will provide additional opportunities for us to showcase how our schools are making progress on creating healthier learning environments for our students."

The Green Ribbon Schools program was recently launched by ED to recognize schools that save energy and reduce operating costs, create environmentally friendly learning spaces, promote student health, and provide environmental education to incorporate sustainability into their curricula. The recognition award is part of a larger ED and BIE effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about practices proven to result in improved student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates, and workforce preparedness, as well as a government-wide aim to increase energy independence and economic security. To date, 35 state agencies, which includes the BIE, have announced that they will be participating. Each participating state agency will have their own unique application meeting ED's program requirements.

According to ED guidance, Green Ribbon Schools receiving the national award will have achieved or made considerable progress toward the three pillars established in the program: 1) energy efficient buildings; 2) healthy students and school environments; and 3) environmental literacy of all graduates. The combined achievement in these three areas will be the basis for the Green Ribbon Schools award. All schools must meet high college- and career-ready standards, be in compliance with federal civil rights laws, and all federal, state and local health and safety standards and regulations.

The bureau will release additional details shortly on their website for BIE-funded schools, including the BIE Green Ribbon Schools application, training opportunities, and program timeline. Up to four schools may be nominated for the award. For more information about the bureau's participation in the program visit http://www.bie.edu/greenribbonschools/index.htm or visit the ED Green Ribbon Schools website at www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools to learn more about the program.

As part of this effort to promote a comprehensive approach to creating a healthier school environment in all BIE-funded schools, the bureau committed to the Let's Move! in Indian Country (LMIC) initiative in 2010 and encouraged all BIE-funded schools to sign up to become Team Nutrition Schools. The LMIC website http://www.letsmove.gov/indiancountry includes information about resources, grants and programs available to assist schools in becoming healthier places of learning.

Immediate questions or inquiries regarding the BIE's participation in the Green Ribbon Schools initiative can be emailed to greenribbonschools@bie.edu.

The Bureau of Indian Education in the U.S. Department of the Interior implements federal education laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, in and provides funding to 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools and peripheral dormitories located on 64 reservations in 23 states and serving approximately 48,000 students from the nation’s federally recognized tribes. Approximately two-thirds are tribally operated with the rest BIE-operated. The bureau also serves post secondary students through higher education scholarships and support funding to 26 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges. It also directly operates two post secondary institutions: Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M.