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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan hosted the first gathering of the Advisory Committee for the White House Conference on Indian Education in Washington, D.C., on April 17, 1991.

"Our program for Indian education must have one important objective in mind -- achieving the highest quality education for the children it serves," Lujan said in greeting the group. "As we strive to achieve this goal we realize that the essential roots of Indian heritage must be implicit in any program of Indian education. We can not separate Indian education from Indian communities."

Lujan told the committee that it should work with a "sense of urgency" in laying the groundwork for the White House Conference to be held next January. "Each year that we fail to take strong action to improve the education process for Indian children, a window of education opportunity closes on the next generation of Indian leaders," Lujan said.

The Advisory Committee meeting was primarily informational. Attending were nine members appointed last week by the President : Floyd R. Correa of New Mexico, Sandi Cornelius of Wisconsin, Sandra Gjelde of Oregon, Laraine L. Glenn of Alaska, Manning Osceola of Florida , Frank Ryan of Maryland, Jay O. Stovall of Montana, Ross O. Swimmer of Oklahoma, and Rosa Reveles Winfree of North Carolina . One more member will be appointed by the President, five more by the President of the U.S. Senate and five by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Ex-officio members of the Advisory Committee present at today's meeting were Interior Department Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Eddie Brown, Department of Education Assistant Secretary John McDonald, and Buck Martin, Director of the White House Task Force on Indian Education.

The Advisory Committee will provide guidance to the Task Force in arranging an extensive series of state and regional conferences that build a foundation for the White House Conference in January 1992.