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Indian children in three Bureau of Indian Affairs schools will be given special education services and assistance next school year with the help of funding by the Office of Education.

Schools in which the programs will be initiated include Wahpeton Indian School, Wahpeton, N.D.; Phoenix Indian School in Phoenix, Ariz. and Intermountain School, Brigham City, Utah.

The three programs are intended to establish guidelines for Similar, future operations in other Bureau schools, where they are applicable.

In addition, a creative program to upgrade 58 teachers in special education is being made available to all such Bureau personnel with the help of cooperating colleges and universities, the Department of the Interior said.

The Wahpeton program is aimed at combating the handicap of functional retardation brought about by physical-psychological defects. About 94 per cent of the students at the school come from maladjusted homes.

Its purpose is to meet the unique and individual learning needs of the retarded and physically handicapped students by adding to the present Wahpeton staff special education teachers, experts on mental retardation, as well as counselors and social workers. Cost is estimated at $48,800 per school year.

Phoenix Indian School is launching an evaluation program that will provide developmental profiles on each student from his freshman year through graduation. The accent is on establishing a kind of data-bank for continuous evaluation of student progress.

This will involve not only subjective evaluation of the student by the school staff, but objective measures that will include parent and family interviews, complete physical and dental examination, even psychological tests, vision and hearing screening, and assessment of achievement and communication skills.

The plan for Intermountain School is much the same. It, too, will use the interdisciplinary approach to the educational evaluation of students. As at Phoenix Indian School, individual differences will be delineated, the total school staff will be oriented and participate in the clinical process, and teachers will modify existing curricula based on student needs.

Costs for each of the latter two projects will be $20,000 for the school year.

To supplement these and other Bureau education programs, special education plans for the upgrading regular teachers are being developed.

The new program--Project Pre/Set (Preparing Special Education Teachers) is an attempt to develop teachers prepared to work with exceptional children in the regular classroom--children who are

mentally retarded, whose hearing or speech is impaired, who are visually handicapped, crippled or emotionally disturbed.

Selected applicants will attend a graduate school program at cooperating colleges and universities. Because many of them already will be teachers and aides in the Bureau system, a summer plan is being worked out so that teachers and aides currently employed can continue in the program on a graduate or undergraduate basis on full pay.

Tuition and similar costs will be paid by the Bureau and Office of Education.
