



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION

Washington, D.C. 20240

March 14, 2020

Dear School Leaders,

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) is actively involved in supporting the Federal response to COVID-19, including collaboration with Federal agencies including the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Education (ED) and Agriculture (USDA), as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Medical and public health experts across the Federal government are working to understand the virus, identify routes of exposure, and limit its spread in coordination with local, state, and Federal partners. As you work with your Public Health Officials and in coordination with local and state officials, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) wants to ensure your local needs are met and you have support from the entire BIE chain of command.

Enclosed with this letter is guidance and the communications protocol regarding the closure of a BIE funded school location due to risks posed by COVID-19 that create facility conditions that may constitute an immediate hazard to health and safety. This guidance is specific to BIE and does not apply to existing DOI or Indian Affairs (IA) policies and guidance. Established closure procedures allow for timely response, efficient and accurate communication, organized operations, and the proper allocation of time and resources.

There is no higher priority than protecting the safety of our students, employees and communities. For the most current information concerning effective hygiene practices for limiting the spread of COVID-19, please refer to the CDC website for general information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>.

For school specific information from the CDC, please use the following webpages:

- Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>
- K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

Once again, we are monitoring this situation closely and will continue to provide updates to our community should further steps become necessary. For inquiries or concerns, please utilize your chain of command for field support and contact the BIE at [crisalert@bie.edu](mailto:crisalert@bie.edu) if you need direct support from BIE Central Office.

Sincerely,

Tony L. Dearman  
Director