



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 23 2020

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) values Tribal Leader and stakeholder input into the draft School Reopening Plan (Plan) to safely reopen school sites for the 2020-2021 school year (SY). As such, BIE plans to conduct two formal consultation sessions to inform the development of the Plan.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that some Bureau-funded schools will open school sites for SY 2020-2021 by the end of July 2020, this letter and the Federal Register notice (FRN) provides an expedited notification period of 15 days instead of the usual 30-day notification period.¹ The FRN for the Tribal consultations, when published, may be found at <https://www.bia.gov/covid-19/school-reopening> and a consultation schedule and registration information for the webinars may be found below. All sessions will be conducted virtually by webinar to minimize travel.

The Plan is available for review at <https://www.bia.gov/covid-19/school-reopening>. BIE goals for the Plan include:

- Provide reopening directives to BIE-operated schools for developing individual school site reopening plans with adequate time before SY 2020-2021.
- Provide reopening guidance to Bureau-funded schools, including Tribally-controlled schools, who may utilize the Plan's recommendations to support their individual school site reopening plans.
- Serve as structural guidance for formal government-to-government Tribal consultation as well as separate engagement events with pertinent union organizations, such as the Federation of Indian Service Employees (FISE), and national organizations like the National Indian Education Association (NIEA).

The intended purpose of the Tribal consultation and stakeholder engagement is to ensure that BIE is meeting the needs of its students, schools, and Tribal communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic recovery. The consultation session scheduled on Day 1 is intended for Tribal leaders or their designee. The consultation session scheduled on Day 2 is open to school boards, parents, Indian organizations, and other interested parties who may be affected by the Plan and wish to provide comments.

¹ U.S. DEP'T OF THE INTERIOR, POLICY ON CONSULTATION WITH INDIAN TRIBES, Section VII(A), *available at* <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/migrated/cobell/upload/FINAL-Departmental-tribal-consultation-policy.pdf>.

Consultation Schedule

<u>FOR:</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>TIME (EDT)</u>	<u>TO JOIN WEBINAR:</u>
<u>Tribes</u>	Thursday, July 9, 2020 (Day 1)	3 – 5 p.m. ET	<u>Register in advance for this meeting:</u> https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErc--urTotEt0x9u1tNXmfYuv5DPddpbCc <u>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.</u>
<u>Public</u>	Friday, July 10, 2020 (Day 2)	3 – 5 p.m. ET	<u>Register in advance for this meeting:</u> https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrceGgqjkuEtHzyFJYyaJUG135xP7yYYZp <u>After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.</u>

The BIE will accept both oral and written comments. Written comments may be emailed to consultation@bia.gov or sent by postal mail to Bureau of Indian Education, Juanita Mendoza, 1849 C Street NW MIB-3612, Washington, DC 20240. Comments must be received on or before July 25, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. ET. Questions regarding the Tribal consultations may be directed to Juanita Mendoza, Special Assistant to the Director, Bureau of Indian Education; phone (202) 208-3559 or email Juanita.Mendoza@bie.edu.

Sincerely,



Tara Sweeney
Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs