

## **Bureau of Indian Education Reprogramming Request Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. How will BIE pay for the 38 additional FTE proposed as part of this reorganization without an increase in the budget? Will budget cuts have to be made to existing programs to pay for these 38 FTE?**

The proposed reorganization can be executed with existing resources. The 38 FTE are not new FTE to the BIE system. Rather, they consist of vacancies that BIE has not yet filled (funded by Education Program Management budget sub-activity) or existing contract educator or contracted positions (currently funded by Education Program Enhancement and Education IT budget sub-activities) which would become federal positions. The reorganization proposes only three additional positions: the Chief Academic Officer; the Chief Performance Officer; and a School Health Policy Advisor. The estimated cost for these three positions is about \$500,000 which can be accommodated within base funding by reprioritizing non-personnel administrative needs.

The most significant staffing change proposed is an increase of 20 FTE supported by Education Program Enhancements. This can be accomplished without any funding impact. The change would switch contract educator positions for federal positions in the Education Resource Centers (ERCs). The BIE has never counted contract educator staff funded by Enhancements as a part of the total number of FTE staffing the existing Education Line Offices (ELO). Under this proposal, 20 Enhancement funded positions will move into the Education Resource Centers (ERCs) and counted as part of the ERC staff as federal School Improvement Specialists and education data specialists.

The Department's long-term goal is to reduce the federal footprint in Native education. Specifically, DOI's expects the federal workforce working at BIE schools to dramatically shrink due to conversion of federal schools to grant schools in the upcoming years.

### **2. How does the reorganization affect the functions carried out by the BIE's Albuquerque regional office?**

Under our proposal, the Albuquerque regional office will undergo several changes. Currently, the Albuquerque Regional Office supports a staffing level of 44 positions and includes the following functions:

- Associate Deputy Director West;
- Albuquerque Education Line Office;
- Division of Performance and Accountability; and
- Staff Administration.

Under the proposed reorganization, the Albuquerque regional office will support 44 positions with a variety of functions:

- An Office of the Associate Deputy Director for BIE-Operated Schools and an ERC reporting to the ADD;

- An Office of the Associate Deputy Director for Tribally Controlled Schools (3 positions) and an ERC reporting to the ADD; and
- Staff supporting the School Operations Division.

The most significant change will be within the Division of Performance and Accountability (DPA) for which the following changes are proposed:

- Reassign the Associate Deputy Director for DPA to Washington, DC;
- Reassign a majority of the staff for DPA to ERCs around the country; and
- Reassign DPA's data unit to Washington, DC.

### **3. Under the reorganization, why does the Navajo Nation retain its own Associate Deputy Director Office?**

The reprogramming request does not propose any changes to the Office of the ADD for Navajo Schools. The Navajo has been the only tribe to have its own ADD office for several years primarily because a third of all BIE-funded schools are located on the Navajo Nation's reservation (66 schools) and the schools are relatively close to one another making it easier to operate as its own district. Nonetheless, the BIE will continue to provide equal service to all of its ADD offices. The information below shows the workload balance across the ADDs in terms of schools served and staffing/school ratios:

- Under the proposal, the ratio of ERCs to BIE-funded schools in each region is as follows:
  - ADD BIE-Operated: one ERC to seven schools (1:7)
  - ADD Tribally Controlled: one ERC to 13 schools (1:13)
  - ADD Navajo: one ERC to 13 schools (1:13)
- In addition, the ratio of ERC staff to BIE-funded schools is as follows:
  - ADD BIE-Operated: one FTE to one school (1:1)
  - ADD Tribally Controlled: one FTE to one school (1:1)
  - ADD Navajo: one FTE to three schools (1:3)

In developing this reorganization, the BIE has worked to address specific tribal and regional needs for service. For instance, in response to concerns in the Great Plains, the reorganization was modified to establish an ERC in Kyle, South Dakota and create an Education Program Administrator at Pine Ridge to oversee Cheyenne Eagle Butte, Flandreau and Pine Ridge schools. In several areas a smaller scale support center was included as part of the proposal.

### **4. What new functions will the Johnson O'Malley Center in Oklahoma City serve?**

During the consultations regarding the reorganization we heard that most tribal nations in Oklahoma, including Chickasaw, were mostly concerned about Native youth attending public schools (there are only three BIE-funded schools in OK). Because of this concern, DOI has proposed to transform the only regional office in Oklahoma to a national "Johnson O'Malley Center." The new Johnson O'Malley (JOM) Center will provide support and technical assistance

to all tribes receiving JOM funds. Not only will grant processing be conducted here, but the Center will also share best practices regarding the best way to utilize JOM funds.

**5. How has BIE ensured that it has received and confirmed meaningful input and participation from the local level?**

President Obama is deeply committed to honoring the historic nation-to-nation relationship the federal government has with tribal nations. Accordingly, the Department continues to listen closely to concerns and recommendations raised by elected tribal leaders regarding Indian Education and all matters related to Indian Affairs. Nonetheless, the Department also values local input and has integrated comments and concerns from other stakeholders into its planning and tribal consultation report. The BIE has conducted numerous tribal consultations and listening sessions across the country regarding the reorganization. The six national consultations were open to the public and hundreds of local stakeholders attended those consultations and provided input, including members of local school boards and school personnel. At the same time, the Department recognizes that local concerns should generally be resolved within the elected tribal leadership. The Department does not believe the federal government has any role or right to intrude into matters regarding tribal and local politics.

**6. How will the proposed organizational changes lead to improvements in student educational performance?**

The Department's proposed Education Resource Centers scales up a successful best practice. Previously, when Director Roessel was the Associate Deputy Director for Navajo Schools, as a part of a Navajo pilot project for BIE-operated Navajo schools, he clarified roles and responsibilities within the field to enable specialization and avoid the "jack of all trades" approach. In addition, he restructured six separate Education Line Offices into one school district, established school improvement teams (made up of school improvement specialists) and established school clusters organized around strengths and weaknesses.

As a result, percentage of BIE-operated Navajo schools that made AYP increased from 29 percent to 55 percent. Because this approach improved outcomes for students attending BIE-operated Navajo schools, DOI seeks to apply this approach to entire system. A key part of the restructuring will help to clarify roles of everyone involved in delivering a world-class education to students. The proposed changes will result in better support to each tribe so they are better able to address student outcomes. These changes in the field will be supported by clearer central accountability through the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Performance Officer who will be dedicated to the improvement of educational performance and operations.

**7. Can proposed organizational changes be accomplished without changes to current law, including Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1988?**

The purpose behind the Tribally Controlled Schools Act (TCSA) is to enable tribes and local communities to obtain educational services and opportunities allowing Native youth to excel academically and achieve a measure of self-determination. The BIE's proposed restructuring is aligned with the purpose behind TCSA. There is nothing proposed in the reorganization which would require a change in legal authority. The objective of the reorganization is to align the BIE

management structure to provide services to schools and tribes more effectively. As it always has, DOI will continue to provide grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations to (1) operate contract schools under Education Amendments of 1978; (2) operate other tribally controlled schools eligible for assistance under TCSA; or (3) elect to assume operation of BIE-funded schools with the assistance under TCSA.