



Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
(OESE)

Office of Indian Education

Tribal Leaders Consultation

PUBLIC MEETING

The Tribal Consultation was held at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino Hotel, 2500 E 2nd St, Reno, NV 89502 on April 26, 2015 at 9:00 a.m., Joyce Silverthorne, Director of the Office of Indian Education and Ron Lessard, Chief of Staff of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, presiding.

1 RENO, NEVADA, SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2015

2 9:00 O'CLOCK, A.M.

3

4 MS. SILVERTHORNE: It's good to have people here
5 this morning. Thank you for coming out on a Sunday
6 morning and joining us for a tribal self -- or Tribal
7 Consultation For the Department of Education.

8 And the Department of Education has been hosting
9 tribal consultations as you can see on our board for
a

10 number of years, and this is a continuation of those
11 activities.

12 To begin the day, Joe Garcia has consented to
13 offer a prayer for the group, and so we will begin
with a

14 prayer.

15 MR. GARCIA: Good morning, everyone.

16 (Prayer was prayed in native tongue).
17 Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. It is a
18 appropriate to translate what I have said in my
language.
19 And first I said I am humble and grateful that
20 they've called upon me to give a little bit of
21 invocation, and a little bit of guidance.
22 And I call upon the Spirit this morning to be
23 here with us, to help us and guide us and to give us
the
24 courage to address those things that we need to
address
25 on behalf of our children and our grandchildren and
on
1 behalf of our tribal communities.
2 I called upon the Spirit to be here to give that
3 guidance and to help us get together and to discuss
all
4 of the important issues and to not be shy about it,
but
5 speak the truth and we find resolution. That's what
we
6 are headed for, that we collaborate together, we bear
7 these on our shoulders so that it's not just one
person's
8 burden but all of ours and we can go farther.
9 This is what I have called upon the Great Spirit
10 to help us and help our families and help Indian
Country.
11 And I called upon Him also to give you a safe trip
back
12 home and to share information, what you have learned
here
13 with your loved ones back home.
14 And this is what I have asked for. Thank you.
15 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you. It's an honor to
16 have this opportunity to hold this, this tribal
17 consultation along with the self-governance tribes.
18 A personal connection, I belong to the
19 confederate in Salish and Kootenai Tribe reservation

20 Montana, and self-governance has been a process for
us

21 for quite some time now, and so this is, this is a
rare

22 opportunity.

23 Thank you for coming. We have a really large
24 room and a small audience so if you need to come
forward,

25 that's fine. We have reserved the front table for
tribal leaders.

1 We are working to try to encourage tribal
2 leadership to participate in the education issues,
3 activities and policies as we work forward. And so
thank

4 you. We are glad that you are here.

5 Ron Lessard.

6 MR. LESSARD: Good morning, everyone. My name

7 is Ron Lessard, Mohawk, my family is from
Kahnawa':ke,

8 the Kahnawa':ke Reserve, and I grew up in New England
9 area.

10 I work as a Chief of Staff for the White House

11 Initiative on American Indian Alaska Native
Education,

12 and we are -- really want to thank you for coming
this

13 morning. And I am sure that you will have a very good
14 day, and then the conference through the self-
governance

15 conference.

16 Do you want to go ahead and talk about this or

17 do you want me to --

18 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Go ahead, you start.

19 MR. LESSARD: I wanted to spend a few minutes

20 talking about the White House Initiative on American
21 Indian and Alaska Native Education.

22 Previously the Executive Order, we work under

23 Executive Order 13592, and that was -- came about in
24 2011. The title of that is Improving American Indian

and

25 Alaska Native Education Opportunities by
Strengthening

1 Tribal Colleges and Universities.

2 We are housed in the Department of Education.

3 Prior to this particular executive order it was
solely

4 for tribal colleges and universities.

5 But this executive order expanded that to

6 include not only tribal colleges and universities but
7 working to -- throughout the -- throughout the whole
8 country with all tribal colleges, universities, with
the

9 public schools anywhere there are native students
that we

10 work to advance the cause with native students.

11 MS. SILVERTHORNE: For the past three and a half
12 years I have had the wonderful opportunity to be the
13 Director For the Office of Indian Education. My name
is

14 Joyce Silverthorne, and the activities of the Office
of

15 Indian Education serve approximately 1300 formula
16 programs across the country, and with those 1300
programs

17 we have the Education 506 form that all schools work
with

18 to clarify who is eligible for Title 7, and we serve
not

19 only those tribal members, but as well to -- up to
second

20 generation American Indian students.

21 With the 1300 programs that we serve we have

22 about 450, 470,000 the students that we serve, and
23 \$15 million. That amounts to about an average of
about

24 \$150 per student per year, which is a very small
amount,

25 but we are a supplemental program. When we first
started

1 looking at what the

2 formula program was doing we realized that 87 percent
of

3 our programs were doing reading and math. There is
4 nothing wrong with doing reading or math and we
certainly

5 want our children to excel in academics; however, the
6 schools are funded to do reading and math as well and
7 there are other programs that look for assistance
with

8 reading and math such as Title 1.

9 And so looking then at how do schools coordinate
10 all of the various programs that are under Federal
11 provision and how do they coordinate that to serve
12 American Indian students. And so we have tried to
look

13 at some adjustments and some changes to the formula
grant

14 process.

15 We are also trying to look at a change in the
16 objectives. The -- one of the objectives, there were
11

17 areas that we were able to serve under the formula
18 program, and one of those areas was culturally
relevant.

19 Now culturally relevant didn't -- seemed like an odd
20 thing for an objective, and so what we have done
instead

21 is we have tried to look at enhancing the program, is
to

22 shift culturally relevant to the overall goal of all
of

23 the objectives and not as an objective in and of
itself.

24 It's a small change, but we think it's a
25 philosophical change that was needed.

1 And so those two changes have been our major
2 shifts since I have been there.

3 We have also instituted an annual performance
4 report so that we can talk to you folks and tell you
what

5 the program is doing, it's not doing, so that we can
talk
6 about the progress that we are working towards so
that we
7 can talk about coordination of efforts.
8 That's our largest program in the Office of
9 Indian Ed; however, we also have several
discretionary
10 programs. Those discretionary programs include the
11 professional development, the training of teachers,
12 administrators who are American Indian to go back out
and
13 serve in the schools that have American Indian
students.
14 We also do a demonstration program. The
15 demonstration program and the professional
development
16 program have been in place for quite some time, but
this
17 year we have a new shift to the demonstration
program, we
18 have a new priority, and its title is Native Youth
19 Community Project.
20 You will hear more about that as we go into some
21 of the topics for the day, because it is a new
22 competition and it has some new criteria. It is a
direct
23 outgrowth of activities of the President and the
24 Secretary of Education over their summer and spring
this
25 year when they were visiting Indian Country, and they
1 realized they really need to change something
2 that we are doing.
3 It isn't dramatic yet, but it's a shift in the
4 right direction.
5 And then the other program that we have is the
6 State Tribal Education Partnership, and this is a
project
7 that funds the Tribal Education Agency to work with
the

8 state to coordinate the grant funds that the state is
9 receiving for the LEA's, the local schools that they
10 serve.

11 This has been a pilot from 2012 until 2015. We
12 have proceeded through the rule-making process this
past

13 year and the final rule was published, the notice
14 inviting applications has also been published, and
you

15 have a copy of it in your handbook in your packet.

16 We will cover more of that as we go through the
17 information in the packet as well.

18 Those are the activities that we cover under the
19 Office of Indian Education, and so we wanted to be
clear

20 for you that this is the kind of activities that are
21 covered.

22 We also sponsor the, under national activities,
23 the National Indian Education Study that is handled
24 through the NCES and NAEP data, and those are -- have
25 been produced every two years until the last - until
1 2011 and then it's now every four years.

2 Our numbers haven't changed dramatically, and so
3 instead of doing every two years and not finding the
4 changes we needed, they went to the four years.

5 What we hope is that with this 2015 NIES study
6 that we will actually want to change back to every
two

7 years. We do know that the graduation rate for
American

8 Indian students has gained more than any other
9 desegregated group that we follow under the
Department of

10 Ed, so that's good news. Hooray. It's nice to see
good news.

12 It's really sad when we haven't changed and been
13 able to close that achievement gap.

14 So with that, I will turn it back over to Ron
15 and he will start with our overview of our topics.

16 MR. LESSARD: Well, hello again. And so first I

17 want to say that just to clarify, is that -- and I
think
18 Joyce has done a great job of explaining her office
and
19 that we are not the Bureau of Indian Education, that
we
20 are the Office of Indian Education within the
Department
21 of Education. And sometimes there is confusion about
22 that in Indian Country when we present.
23 So we are going to do an overview of the topics
24 that we will be discussing today. And I think if you
25 will look at your packets you will find -- are we
ready
1 to go into that? Yes. We are going to go through this
2 just to give you an idea of what we will be
discussing
3 and how we can lead you to our website and for
things.
4 So first of all, do you want to do that?
5 MS. SILVERTHORNE: I'm afraid our screens up
6 front would mean that you need a set of binoculars in
7 order to be able to read them; however, it does tell
you
8 the same information. This is the website where,
where
9 this information is posted and these are the various
10 tribal consultations that have been conducted over
the
11 years and this policy is a revision to the education
12 policy for consultation. And this is just off the
press.
13 We, we received it just in time.
14 When we were in Fort Yates, North Dakota we
15 were -- it was the first time anybody got a chance to
see
16 it. There is a 90-day comment period and you will see
on
17 the cover of this document that there is a location
to

18 send comments: Tribalconsultation@ed.gov.

19 MR. LESSARD: And we also want to clarify that
20 this -- it first came out, like Joyce said, just on
the

21 13th of April before the consultation, this is a
draft.

22 An initial -- the initial draft has gone through
23 clearance within the Department of Education;
however,

24 now is the time that we want comments certainly from
25 tribal leaders, public comments to maximize this
tribal

1 consultation policy in its final production, in its
final

2 form. So the consultation comment period again ends
in

3 July, and we really want to maximize the kind of
policy

4 that comes forward from the Department of Ed.

5 So this is an opportunity for you to not only
6 look at it today, we don't expect you to comment on
the

7 policy itself today, although you are certainly
welcome

8 to, but there is time for you to look at that.

9 And this particular website is where you can
10 provide written comments. You will see the link to
that.

11 MS. SILVERTHORNE: The next document is the
12 State Tribal Education Partnership Federal Register,
and

13 that Federal Register gives you all of the
information

14 for an application. There is a 60-day period that the
15 applications can be developed.

16 The major challenge for all of the folks who
17 have applied and -- and worked with this STEP program
is

18 that there is a requirement to work with the state
19 education agency. The reason for that is two-fold:

20 First of all, that is the, the entity that most of
our
21 Federal grant programs are funded through and so the
22 money arrives there, and that's all by statute, and
so it
23 arrives there and then is delivered to the local
24 education agencies.
25 So in order for the tribal education agency to
1 play in that arena we need to have the cooperation of
the
2 state education agency in doing that.
3 We have done promotions with the chief state
4 school officers, meetings, and we have been involved
in
5 four states up until now, and that includes New
Mexico,
6 with Navajo, Nez Perce in Idaho, Chickasaw in
Oklahoma,
7 and Umatilla in Oregon. And so those four states have
8 worked with this.
9 What we see over this first pilot project is
10 improved communication, opportunities for
professional
11 development on a two-way basis, an opportunity for
the
12 tribal education agency to be involved directly in
13 programs that they may not previously have been
involved
14 in. Title 1, Title 2, Title 3, for the native
languages.
15 The Title 8 is not funded to the state; Title 8 is
impact
16 aid and so it's separate. So is Title 7 has been
17 separate.
18 With the revision of the rule we are expanding
19 in a couple of ways. Schools on or near the
reservation,
20 because we realize that not all reservations have
public

21 schools, and so looking at on or near the reservations.

22 Also being able to include BIE tribal-controlled
23 schools because those are already schools that are
24 delineated with the tribal education agencies.

25 And also being able to include programs that
1 were not previously under the, under the pilot
program,

2 and that includes Title 7.

3 We weren't able to access Title 8 impact aid,
4 but we did include Title 7 within this.

5 And so looking at coordination of some of these
6 activities and looking at taking on some of the
aspects

7 of what the state would normally do with these
programs.

8 This competition will be open for 60 days and
9 there is a preliminary agreement that is necessary
for

10 the application, and we hope to see a lot of
11 applications. We don't have an increase of funding
this

12 year, so we do anticipate that it's a small number
that

13 will get funded.

14 We are looking at the previous applicants and
15 they have an opportunity as experienced programs, but
we

16 also have opened an area that is required for those
17 programs that have not had previous experience with,
with

18 the STEP program.

19 So if you would like to have questions or have
20 comments later we can address that, too.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. LESSARD: The next item in your packet is a
23 Memorandum of Agreement. Just some sort background,
one

24 of the tasks of the White House Initiative on
American

25 Indian Alaska Native Education is to continue the
1 commitment to further tribal self-determination
ensuring
2 that all American Indian and Alaska Native students
at
3 all levels of education have an opportunity to learn
4 their native languages. We are very involved in the
5 preservation and retention of native languages.
6 So one of the things that we felt was necessary
7 was to bring together three, three of the Federal
8 agencies, which is the first time this has happened
9 around the preservation and retention of native
10 languages. And that's what this MOA did.
11 So that was HHS, Administration for Native
12 Americans, Department of Interior, BIE, Bureau of
Indian
13 Education Schools, and then also Department of Ed.
14 When we did that, there is some -- you will see
15 there are some goals and some purposes inside the
16 memorandum of agreement.
17 One held the, the first language summit amongst
18 the agencies, that was last year in September.
19 As a result of that we had guest speakers, we
20 had members of the White House team, members of
21 Department of Interior and also HHS, Commissioner
Sparks
22 and our director, Director Mendoza, who is unable to
be
23 with you today but sends his, his thoughts and
prayers
24 and wishes for you best for the day.
25 So what we did was we did the summit. It was a
1 small summit, it was kind of a -- we like to call it
2 native language summit 101 just to learn how can
three
3 agencies come together and what can we do to promote
the
4 work.
5 And so since then, we've just put together a, we
6 like to call it an inventory document which we are

7 sending out to all the Federal agencies asking them
to
8 provide what they are doing around native languages,
9 whether it be grants, whether they have programs,
10 initiatives, and so that we can pull together that
11 information and provide a resource guide to you.
12 We hope to have that completed by the next
13 summit which is coming up in July -- I'm sorry, in
14 September, and that will be the 2015 Native Language
15 Summit.
16 The Administration for Native Americans site
17 will start putting that up and we will also -- on our
18 Department of Ed site.
19 That will be held in conjunction with the
20 Association of Tribal Museums Conference which is in
DC
21 in September and we will be doing a full day, similar
to
22 today, with a pre-day to that conference.
23 And we, we certainly welcome any input you have
24 to the agencies, to the three agencies putting this
25 together.

1 What we can do within the Federal government to,
2 you know, to provide more opportunities for -- for
our
3 students learning their languages.
4 Excuse me, and we will have -- we will be
5 posting that save the date.
6 And if you go to our website in Administration
7 for Native Americans website I will say we are going
to
8 start hosting that for the September conference.
9 You also have in your packet, I just wanted to
10 briefly mention attached to the MOA you will see --
let's
11 see, is that attached to the second page on native
12 languages you will see a chart. In the back of that
13 chart those were kind of poster submissions for the
14 conference in September. So you will see a lot of, a
lot

15 of variety of topics around preservation and
retention of
16 native languages.
17 And this came about through not only our
18 listening sessions, but through, through certainly
tribal
19 leaders and educators, also, you know, telling us the
20 importance of our languages for our youth.
21 Okay. The next in your packet with the little
22 house on it is, is about Generation Indigenous,
23 Generation -- Gen I as it is being called. Has
everyone
24 or anyone heard of that? Good.
25 MR. GARCIA: Had a session in Albuquerque.
1 MR. LESSARD: Yeah, that was Friday, Secretary
2 Jewel was there?
3 MR. GARCIA: She wasn't there but Jody was
4 there.
5 MR. LESSARD: Jody was there yes, from the White
6 House. They did a launch that -- at Generation
7 Indigenous.
8 It was -- So from the Tribal Nations Conference,
9 this is the 2014 conference, and through -- after the
10 president's visit to Standing Rock, the president and
the
11 first lady's visit, that they came back from that and
12 wanted several things from that.
13 One of the things was to create Generation
14 Indigenous and one of those was the effort to get the
15 secretaries out and visit Indian Country and see
what,
16 what the president and the first lady had to see.
17 I must say Secretary Duncan is very involved in
18 Indian education. He is one of the first secretaries
to
19 do commencement at the tribal college Salish
Kootenai.
20 We have done several listening sessions with
21 native youth, not only in DC but other areas. So he's
22 very committed to this.

23 So you will see in your packet there are four --
24 there are several things around, around this
Generation
25 Indigenous and I think that we have heard from you
that
1 they really like this term, you know, this Gen I.
It's
2 kind of something that our youth and native people
can
3 kind of own, and they have done that.
4 We have recently in the Center For Native
5 American Youth, those of you who know CNA, they are
6 really partnering with the White House and doing a
lot of
7 work around the Generation Indigenous.
8 There are two challenges that are out there now.
9 One is to challenge native youth and the other is the
10 tribal leader challenge.
11 So I would direct you to the Center For Native
12 American Youth website, and all the details are there
on
13 how youth can get involved in this challenge.
14 And we also want that support of the tribal
15 leaders to do that also.
16 The other thing I wanted to mention, you don't
17 have anything in your packet, but just to let you
know
18 that the Department of Education, the White House
19 Initiative on American Indian Alaska Native Education
had
20 a, a nine city listening tour. This was focused
21 throughout the country.
22 One of the things that we have heard over the
23 years is that we wanted to hear from native youth at
the
24 school environment listening to you address things.
25 We wanted to hear about the disproportionate
1 bullying, offensive imagery, symbolism, mascots,
exactly,
2 and the cultural insensitivity that this has to our

3 children.

4 We wanted to hear testimony from young people so
5 that people know that this is not -- this is harmful
6 to
7 our young people, this is harmful to native youth and
8 to
9 families.

10 We received testimony from I would say over 200,
11 I think. We met about 1,000 people throughout the
12 nine
13 cities, and at this point we are -- we are in the
14 process
15 of compiling that information. We will have a report
16 that will come out, but the report will look more,
17 you
18 know, we have a lot of reports that come out of
19 Washington but I don't think we have many that have
20 the
21 testimonies of young people and what this has done,
22 what
23 it's doing.

24 And they have come together, and not only is
25 this a large issue in Indian Country but the young
26 people
27 have come together with solutions.
28 They are starting to create peer groups
29 throughout the country. A lot of the families are
30 creating -- creating ways and places for the people
31 to
32 come and, you know, provide, if there is a complaint,
33 at
34 least talk about the issue.

35 During this listening tour the Department of
36 Education Office of Civil Rights accompanied us and
37 provided a place and an opportunity and forms and
38 whatever was needed for communities for native youth,
39 for
40 their families, their tribal communities, to if there
41 was
42 a complaint, a place that they could do that.

6 We have that. The Department of Education, if
7 you go to the Office of Civil Rights page you will
8 see
9 the forms. And then we encourage people that if,
10 whether
11 it's mascot issue or disproportionate bullying, you
12 know,
13 a lot of this is connected.
14 We have found that very often if our young
15 people are standing up to that mascot issue, then
16 they
17 are bullied and in a stronger way sometimes within
18 their
19 community.
20 We hear testimony of families that have actually
21 moved out of the community because of the harassment.
22 So this was something we wanted to address, and
23 the best way we could do that was hearing from --
24 from
25 native youth. So look forward to that. We hope that
26 will come out, we are working on the final draft of
27 that
28 now.
29 And also one other point, I'm sorry, one other
30 point because of this, our Office of Civil Rights,
31 similar to the native language MOA is working with
32 Department of Justice and I believe the Department Of
33 Interior to, to look into this, these issues. Same
34 thing, bullying, they want to come together because,
35 you
36 know, often in Federal agencies we have one doing one
37 thing, one doing another, and then we find out that,
38 you
39 know, we need to come together because it's a similar
40 --
41 there are similar issues that are affecting our, our
42 families.
43 So they are, they are talking about the
44 possibility of a listening session or letters, things
45 coming out with the three agencies will be able to

11 identify and be supportive in a civil rights
situation
12 and in Indian Countries.
13 And that would include tribally-controlled
14 schools.
15 MS. SILVERTHORNE: This business of turning the
16 mic's on and off, I have got it on when it shouldn't
have
17 in on and off when it should be on.
18 The other issue that has come to light as of
19 Friday is we anticipate publishing in the Federal
20 Register this week the notice -- the final
regulations --
21 no, I'm sorry. Final regulations have published.
22 The notice providing -- inviting applications
23 for the Native Youth Community Project. This is a
24 demonstration grant opportunity and it will begin
with
25 the community itself identifying the needs as based
on
1 some form of, of data analysis or needs assessment
that
2 the kind of needs that you feel are the most
important to
3 address.
4 Based on that, a partnership of, of programs,
5 entities who are able to come together in agreement
and
6 work toward changing that issue that you have
identified
7 and you want to address.
8 As a product of that, the grant is a four-year
9 program with measurable objectives and there is a
great
10 deal of concern and hope that this will shift a
couple of
11 things that we have been hearing in tribal
consultation,
12 one of which is getting the money directly to the
13 community.

14 And so we are looking at identifying, primarily
15 rural, but not limited to rural, programs that are
16 able
17 to come together to look at how they want to approach
18 the
19 change that they believe needs to happen.
20 This will include the partnership should include
21 an entity who has been able to demonstrate success.
22 That
23 is loosely defined so that you have the opportunity
24 to
25 look for a variety of different entities that that
26 may
27 be. It may be somebody who has done education
28 activities
29 in the public schools, it may be somebody who has
30 worked
31 directly with American Indians, although it isn't
32 necessarily only that.
33 1 But it has to be somebody who wants to work and
34 2 is committed to a four-year project to, to look for
35 3 changing in your community.
36 4 The project is going to be only a little over
37 5 \$3 million this year, but in the president's budget
38 6 request there is a request for 50 million.
39 7 So the intent is there to try and encourage and
40 8 support this, this new program.
41 9 I don't have to tell you the presidential
42 10 budgets aren't a guarantee, but they certainly are
43 11 necessary if we are going to see additional funds in
44 12 Indian education.
45 13 So it's the first step, and your participation,
46 14 your support will be critical to make sure that this
47 15 will
48 16 actually move forward and continue to be supported
49 17 through funding and through development.
50 18 MR. GARCIA: Is that a pilot project or is it
51 19 just a project that's available to all?
52 20 MS. SILVERTHORNE: This is available to all
53 21 tribes. Because it's coming under our already Title 7

21 demonstration statute it already has the foundation.
It
22 isn't considered as a pilot like the step was. Step
had
23 no statute to support it, and so it was considered a
24 pilot from the beginning.
25 Because this is a demonstration project with
1 Title 7 statute it is considered to be a stable
entity
2 and so the funding will expand in the future.
3 MR. GARCIA: Joe Garcia. Just a question
4 about this. Is the notice is being sent out or it's
5 already out?
6 MS. SILVERTHORNE: It will be published in the
7 Federal Register this week.
8 MR. GARCIA: Okay.
9 MS. SILVERTHORNE: I think I should say that it
10 should be published on Tuesday. That was -- that was
my
11 last word and from that data publication it will be
12 available for 60 days to develop applications. There
13 will be a pre-application webinar that will be
available
14 about two weeks after it opens, and there is also a
15 pre-application webinar for the step program.
16 I would encourage people who are interested in
17 either one of these to take a look and listen at both
of
18 these pre-application webinars because in some ways
they
19 have some similar qualities, but they have very
different
20 requirements.
21 And so take a look at them and see what best
22 fits you.
23 MR. GARCIA: Excuse me. Joe Garcia again from
24 Ohkay-Owingeh. Just a question about grants like
this,
25 and grants overall. I know that there is a big factor

1 that we seldom think of but it is a major factor in
the
2 success rate of how grants are awarded, and that is
that
3 the tribes that have much more resources available to
4 them, they can go out and hire a professional grant
5 writer and that grant writer will do the exact format
6 that's required and whatever else that's required.
7 And so the success rate of those tribes with the
8 resources is a lot higher than those tribes that
don't
9 have the same resource base, but much more so, they
need
10 the services much more than some of the other tribes
with
11 resources.
12 And so there is no way to separate that, and I
13 think one of the big issues that we have addressed or
we
14 begin to address in other forms is if -- unless the
15 reviewers of those grants also know that these are
16 additional factors and unless they have a guiding
sheet,
17 if you will, to I guess to judge those areas that are
18 not -- don't come out clearly in, you know, language
of
19 the grant proposal or request, those issues are not
20 addressed by those grant reviewers and so it goes
21 untested and the end result goes back to, okay, this
is a
22 really, really good grant proposal from X tribe, and
the
23 Y tribe might have just as good as ideas about what
they
24 need to do, and the needs may be greater but it
doesn't
25 come through because it's a different form or
different
1 thinking of whatever else.
2 And so that disparity haunts many, many tribes.

3 And I think -- I don't know what the solutions are
for
4 that but I think it's an over, over what would you
call
5 it, redoing a lot of the grants and the people that
6 actually write the conditions of the grant.
7 And so we have done that. We are proposing that
8 in SAMHSA that, you know, there is a big disparity.
And
9 so when you look at the list of grant recipients, the
10 grantees, if you will, you are going to see the same
11 tribes over and over and over.
12 And the ones that have already been lacking have
13 been left behind, are still going to be left behind.
And
14 that's the same thing that I see in this request.
15 Because just one simple statement that you made is
that
16 those that have proven that they have collaborated
and
17 they have partnered up with other entities.
18 Well, other tribes that are less resourceful
19 because of their situation are doing that, too, and
they
20 are doing it with less money and with other things,
but
21 they don't show up in the statistic that you are
22 requesting.
23 And so there is the answer. As I said, it's
24 going to go back to those resources, those tribes
that
25 have the resources to do so and that are in the
media or
1 have been covered by other grants, if you will.
2 So -- but that's going to be a hopefully a point
3 of discussion when the tribal leaders also get here
4 because it's not -- it's not addressed anywhere that
I
5 have seen. And I have read so many documents and so,
you

6 know, I bring that to your attention because if we
don't
7 say anything about it then it's not going to -- it's
not
8 going to come out and we have to address it.
9 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you for your comments,
10 and I agree with you, there is a great concern for
the
11 disparity for having a grant writer. If you don't
have
12 somebody who's written lots of grants, had good
13 experience, it is hard to compete with those people
who
14 do. And we try to look at that from a couple of
15 different options, one of which is the readers that
we
16 bring in for the peer review, and we try to look for
as
17 many people who come from Indian education experience
as
18 we can possibly make.
19 We also try to look for a geographic balance of
20 folks that come. Because if there is anything I have
21 learned in this three and a half years, we have an
22 incredible diversity of who we are.
23 There are so many different circumstances that
24 tribes are, are in -- across the country, that one
25 solution just doesn't fit everybody.
1 That's the beauty of this particular program in
2 that it is the community that puts forth what they
are
3 going to focus on.
4 When I mentioned that somebody in the
5 partnership needed to have experience, I am not
saying
6 that the entity, the tribe or the TEA or the school,
7 whoever chooses to be that lead applicant is the
person
8 or entity that has to have that experience, but
within

9 that partnership look for entities who have been able
to
10 show that they have made a difference. Maybe they
didn't
11 work with Indian students, but could they adapt their
12 program to address Indian students.
13 And I think it's limited, I do. I don't -- I
14 don't know a lot of programs out there nationally who
are
15 looking for opportunities to go to rural America to
work
16 with smaller numbers, and that makes it harder for us
to
17 identify those successful programs.
18 When we look at best practices within the
19 Department of Education, research is hard for us to
do
20 because our numbers tend to be too low to be able to
21 count and show in the ed facts data, and so you show
up
22 as masters instead of asterisks, instead of a number,
and
23 that then doesn't translate well into what happened
or
24 what didn't happen.
25 And we struggle with that. And I agree it is an
1 issue, it is a problem, and we are hoping to address
at
2 least some parts of that in the way that we are
writing
3 this.
4 Please share more as you as you look at it
5 deeper, but I think you are right, we struggle with
6 trying to make sure that everybody has an equal
7 opportunity to get these programs.
8 MR. WRIGHT: Going to comment. Mervyn Wright,
9 Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe.
10 I, too, agree with Joe Garcia, but I think
11 what's more important in looking at this program is
12 developing real criteria that could be -- that can

13 evaluate the need of the community. Because I think
14 if
15 you are going to just base it on who has collaborated
16 the
17 best and who has interacted the best, in many
18 instances
19 it's a reflection of those that will just go along
20 with
21 the -- what people expect you to do and sometimes,
22 you
23 know, the politics of, of what happens with United
24 States
25 government, you know, as long as you are politically
26 correct you are going to get everything you ask for.
27 And I am not saying you need to go in and just
28 rattle the cage and, you know, shake up the
29 foundations
30 or anything like that, it's just, you know, many,
31 many
32 communities have sincere, deep, serious problems, you
33 know.

I serve as our school board chairman also and we
2 are dealing with special education and I just
3 attended
4 the grant school conference down in Laughlin on the
5 Thursday and Friday, it was focused on the Navajo
6 nation,
7 but we went to get, you know, went to hear and listen
8 on
9 how school boards, tribes, deal with various issues.
10 And the statistics of special education
11 nationally is 8 to 10 percent, okay, but when you
12 look at
13 native communities you look at schools, high schools,
14 elementary schools, we are talking 30 to 60 percent.
15 And so when you deal with communities that have
16 such a serious concern the evaluation of these
17 applications should focus on what we can do to reduce
18 those percentages, what we can do to increase, you
19 know,

15 those, those students that are achieving, you know,
and
16 if we could look at real numbers instead of saying
well,
17 we are going to shoot for 15 percent special
education,
18 that's unrealistic, you know.
19 So -- and it's going to take time. Our
20 communities, we deal with a lot of social, social
issues,
21 you know, alcoholism, drug use, that's just the tip.
22 Our students are dealing with a lot of issues,
23 especially on our reservations, sometimes in the
inner
24 cities, and so I think the evaluation and criteria
25 process of evaluating grant applications need to,
need to
1 include people that know what's going on on the
ground on
2 reservations. They are not just looking for the
3 boilerplate language of accommodation and wanting to
4 please the government, the United States government,
5 because our stories, what we know, it's not a kind
thing
6 to tell.
7 And sometimes when people are offended with what
8 is described by our experience maybe they need to be
9 offended because, you know, we deal with it everyday,
we
10 live with it everyday, and folks just need to
understand
11 that this is what -- this is -- this is our
experience.
12 And if they are really sincere in wanting to
13 help then give it to a tribe that has a serious
problem.
14 And if they don't have the resources, then somehow
that
15 has to be bridged so that individuals that can put
those

16 dollars to use are able to, and not just spend it to
17 spend it, you know.

18 So thank you.

19 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you. Yes?

20 MS. WELLS: I'd like to, through the chair of
21 our tribe. I am Susan Wells from Kenaitze Kenai,
Alaska.

22 I spent 20 years as a public school teacher in our
23 district.

24 And so I can attest to what Joe and Mervyn have
25 said.

1 What I'd like to, what I'd like to direct you
2 to, just so that you can really see the dirty things
that

3 happen in Indian Country that we, the Federal
government

4 and sometimes generally our own people want to cover
up,

5 take a look at the Tanana youth. I think if you You
6 Tubed them, the Tanana youth can tell you the video
that

7 you will see on there was I want to say dumbed down,
but

8 in education that's a bad word. It was -- it was
9 prettied up. Because the very first time that they
10 presented their issues it was pretty harsh and the
elders

11 were pretty upset because they weren't sure that we
12 really wanted to have this out.

13 But it is phenomenal. This is an example of
14 what youth can do today. They are saying if you
elders

15 are not going to speak up for us we are going to do
it

16 ourselves.

17 So it's a pretty powerful message, and I think
18 it is a good picture of what's happening throughout
19 America in Indian Country and throughout Alaska, at
20 least.

21 The other issue that I have --

22 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Excuse me, could you, spell
23 what you were saying?
24 MS. WELLS: T-a-n-a-n-a, Tanana youth.
25 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

1 MS. WELLS: And if you can't find that make sure
2 that you e-mail me and I will send you a link to it.
3 MS. SILVERTHORNE: All right.

4 MS. WELLS: The other thing that I think as a
5 public school teacher I was always advocating for our
6 native students, and one thing that the public school
7 teachers, whether they are native or non-native don't
8 get
9 trained in is how to teach culturally appropriately
10 with
11 cultural appropriateness.
12 You know, we talked about developmentally
13 appropriate lessons, that's always important as a
14 public
15 school teacher, but cultural appropriateness is even
16 more
17 so. Because the damage that -- or not the children in
18 our public schools, is, is long ranging, you know,
19 and
20 impacts, you know, entire future and your life.
21 Some of us can -- some of us can rise above it
22 but it's only because we had a grandma back in the
23 day
24 that taught us that and gave us that courage to step
25 out
26 and be cycle breakers.

27 The one thing that I really would like to see as
28 far as Title 7 monies that's not just -- it's not
29 just in
30 Title 7, but generally tribes and tribal
31 organizations
32 end up being advisory. And so -- and our advice does
33 not
34 have to be taken and rarely is it. So I would like to
35 see that instead of an agency or a public school agency
36 be the lead on these grants, that it is the tribe. The

2 tribe knows what's going on with our children right
now.
3 Our -- our -- our tribe has a youth program,
Yaghanan,
4 and it's an at-risk program. We are only getting
funding
5 because these are kids that are at risk, but we have
a
6 lot of young leaders that could be included but we
don't
7 have the money.
8 I am not saying -- I mean, it's a phenomenal
9 program, our people are doing a wonderful program
with
10 that, but it's tucked away. And the school district
had
11 the tribe when I was still teaching come into our
school
12 because they had Title 7 money, and not only teach
native
13 kids, but the whole school about our culture to try
to
14 bring down some of the bullying and some of the --
and to
15 educate our teachers, too, on who we are and what's
so
16 important about -- I mean, what's important to us and
17 what's important to how to improve education for our
18 children.
19 So through that money we were able to use that
20 money and because we, we had a good foundation from
the
21 tribe. And Kenai Middle School where I taught, our
22 scores began to come up. We had 14 percent native
kids
23 in our school, and it's a tri-city area and we had --
we
24 actually had people from outlying areas bringing their
25 kids to our school because some of us teachers would
1 protect our native kids.
2 As soon as our scores began going up we had

3 proven success. The school district moved that
program
4 out of our school and elsewhere, and literally said
to me
5 as a native leader and a native teacher, we are going
--
6 all we needed to do is replicate the tribe's program
and
7 put it in other schools.
8 So they wanted to have a fake program and what
9 was powerful is that it was authentic. Our tribe came
in
10 with authentic teaching, authentic culture, and they
11 wanted to fake it and move it into the other schools.
12 And to me it was a slap in the face. It was a slap to
13 the tribe, and it was worse, is that our children in
the
14 public schools are getting something that is real,
and it
15 is harming them just like the word "redskins".
16 So I'd like to see that the tribes in the school
17 district be the lead and they have the say of where
that
18 money goes. How? Because they know what the problem
is,
19 how can we help our people the best? But generally,
20 that's not how it is. Same with the state.
21 The state has oversight. State says okay, we
22 will give you this grant but waive your sovereign
23 immunity before you can do it. So they are
undercutting
24 their, you know, cutting us off at the knees before
we
25 can even -- we have the ideas, we have the expertise, we
1 have the know-how, we have especially the will and the
2 drive because it's our people, our kids that are at
3 stake, and we have to jump through all of these
hoops.
4 And so many communities aren't even applying,
5 they are -- just kind of give up.
6 So thank you.

7 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.
8 As we continue to have speakers from the
9 audience please know that we have a stenographer who
is
10 taking a transcript of today's events, and please
give
11 her your name and where you're from so that she gets
that
12 information correct. There will be a transcript that
13 will be available in approximately two to three
weeks,
14 and we will be working toward incorporating ideas
from
15 this event as well as the other two that we have just
16 conducted, and the planning as we move it forward.
17 MR. LESSARD: I want to say one thing to Joe,
18 and I know you are familiar with ANA and their
process of
19 pre-application that, you know, maybe at the
Department
20 of Ed we could do a better job once the grant is
21 released, once the announcement comes out, that we
can
22 provide that kind of technical assistance so that we
can
23 make sure that whether it be webinars or, you know,
that
24 kind of thing in talking about like the native youth
25 community projects so we can get smaller tribes to -
1 to -- so there is a level playing field and they
2 understand the criteria and what the budget should look
3 like, things like that.
4 And that's been asked of us and I have had
5 several people ask on previous grants, you know,
because
6 as we know, and often, unfortunately, and sometimes
I, in
7 my past of working on grants when I was not working
with
8 the Federal government but doing tribal grants to see
how

9 that's tied to the -- that our funding was tied to
the
10 budget. And I -- certainly many tribal leaders have
11 expressed that concern about that trust
responsibility,
12 how it is.
13 You know, our budget is not just Department of
14 Ed, but all the Federal government. So Indian Health
15 Service and others, if the budget goes up then there
may
16 be additional funds for tribes. If not, it comes
down.
17 But there may be some things we can do if -- if we
18 don't -- ideally, it would be great to, to consult
with
19 the tribes early on before the programs are even
20 developed and the grants are developed, when the --
when
21 the -- once it's released I think maybe there is more
22 that we could do to, you know, assist.
23 And those pre-application trainings and things
24 that ANA does, that's really helpful.
25 MR. GARCIA: I wanted to -- I'm not sure when is
1 the appropriate time to discuss all of the other issues
2 that I think -- they are not issues, all of them, but
3 there are some recommendations and just eye openers
for
4 many of the Federal agencies that may or may not talk
5 about them.
6 But they are important on the list because they
7 could be a potential solution because we have not
8 identified them as a error prone area or a
problematic
9 area. And you don't really know that unless you have
10 been in the tribal community and local community
being
11 involved, and I think that's what Mr. -- Brother
Wright
12 here has talked about is that the needs are in the
13 community.
14 A lot of solutions are in the community, but how

15 those resources transcend their way back down to the
16 communities is the system is not set up that way.
17 And unless you change the system overall then we
18 have all of these gaps all over the place. And I am
19 going to cite one example.

20 You mentioned New Mexico as a partner in one of
21 the grants. Who in New Mexico? Is it the state
22 government? Is it the Department of Ed? Is it the
23 university?

24 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Department of Ed and the
25 State Education Agency -

1 MR. GARCIA: And that brings the agency.

2 MS. SILVERTHORNE: -- was the partner.

3 MR. GARCIA: As much as I have been involved in
4 education in New Mexico I have not heard a beat from
the

5 State of New Mexico in terms of education.

6 They have an education summit going on at my
7 home, Ohkay Owingeh this coming week, but it, as I
glance

8 through the agenda, it has nothing to do with any
9 partnerships with the state or with the -- at the
10 national level.

11 And the state of New Mexico, I don't know how
12 many other states in the country also have a Indian
13 Education Act. Now, New Mexico is one of those. We
put

14 it together almost by force back in 2004, and that
Indian

15 Education Act, you know, it summarizes all the things
16 that the tribes and the state education system should
be

17 working on.

18 Well, that's a matter of politics because it
19 really, really depends on who is -- who is at the
state

20 level in terms of the administrations.

21 Now, it's kind of gone to, I hate to say the
22 word, pot in this last administration because I am
not

23 seeing anything about education, indian education in
the
24 state of New Mexico, and yet it's statute by the
Indian
25 Education Act.

1 So that's one of the factors that I think
2 this -- the policies and everything that we are talking
3 about even in your -- in the Department of Ed
document
4 about what this consultation is all about, it does
5 mention briefly that, and it doesn't put it this way,
but
6 I am going to put it that way, is that the progress
or
7 regress of the consultation policy and the end
results of
8 not just the policy but addressing the real issues,
the
9 progress or regress greatly depends on tribal state
10 relationships as it relates to education.
11 And if you look at the public schools through
12 state of New Mexico, it ain't happening.
13 The BIE and the state schools, there is no
14 partnership. BIE is over here, state schools are
here,
15 charter schools are over here, tribally-controlled
16 schools, and I will speak positively to tribal-
controlled
17 schools because ours is a tribally-controlled
schools.
18 We went to tribal grants in 1995 and it's taken
19 all these years to progress to a school that now has
made
20 AYP, which is kind of an awkward measuring device,
but
21 nonetheless, AYP for the past four years. It's the
only
22 school in Northern New Mexico, small school, that has
23 made AYP four years in a row.
24 And so that says a lot about tribally-controlled
25 schools and governments actually running the education

1 system, tribal governments, if you will, but how it
2 relates to what's happening at the public school and
even
3 BIA controlled schools, they are like this. They are
not
4 even like this, or they are not even close to meeting
it,
5 they are like this.
6 And so when it goes to the national level it's
7 even worse because now you have got 50 states and
then
8 those states that have tribes in them and the
9 differences, diversity of school systems that are in
10 those, in those states, those are additional factors
to
11 why, well, how are we going to succeed?
12 And I appreciate the statement that says there
13 about the consultation part, there is four pieces
that
14 you mentioned, follow-through, and what was it, I
lost
15 that paper.
16 There were four pieces to the process.
17 Identification, notification of tribal consultation
18 opportunity, tribal input, and then followup.
19 And so the input that we provide and other forms
20 have provided, and you have got one coming up in
21 Minnesota, I believe, all of that input are -- it's
good
22 to have the input, but unless we identify, okay,
where is
23 that program, it's hard to put that item, that
24 recommendation into okay, which problem does this one
25 fit, over here or over there.
1 And so it's got to have a process, if you will.
2 And if we don't have a process for doing the assessment,
3 identifying the real issues and the problematic
areas,
4 then we will have all kind of solutions but no where
to
5 apply it to. And so we have missed the boat.

6 And I think this consultation ought to be a form
7 by which we address that, but the process has sort of
got

8 to be defined. And my big worry is that if you take
9 untrained people that are working, for instance, in
the

10 BIE, what do you call it, what do they call it,
11 transformation?

12 MR. LESSARD: The reform, kind of.

13 MR. GARCIA: Yeah. Unless you take trained
14 people that are knowledgeable about change and
15 transformation and processes and problem solving and
all

16 of those, you are going to have the same people that
have

17 been addressing or not addressing Indian education in
the

18 BIE system. They are the ones who are going to fix
the

19 problem? I think not.

20 And so we -- the change has to be required
21 from -- from the leadership, from the employees and
all

22 of that.

23 So that's why I bring it up as a big, big issue,
24 bigger than just having a -- those four things.

25 So if we have tribal input you will have a whole
1 bunch of input from us and from other tribal leaders and
2 education professionals and whatnot and then it says
3 followup.

4 Okay, what would the followup be? I guess the
5 followup would be we'll have, you said in two weeks,
6 three weeks, we will have the transcripts of what we
said

7 and what others have said, and the followup would be
to

8 review what we have already said. The followup should
be

9 okay, what are we going to do with all that's said?
Did

10 we find any solution? Did we find any -- and that's

11 where part of the issue is going to be.
12 Now, what that leads to is the ultimate phase
13 four, phase five, if you will, is implementing what
we
14 have proposed in the policy, in the recommendations,
in
15 the issues, in the assessment of those problematic
areas
16 and how we are going to address that.
17 The next piece is implementing to do the
18 corrections. And if we don't ever get there, which
has
19 been the problem with consultation is that we, we get
to
20 all those phases except the last phase which is the
21 implementation stage of actually doing those things
in
22 place.
23 And just think about the grants. There is
24 hundreds of grants out there, they all should be
related,
25 but each grant, this is -- this is Grant A right here,
1 these are all the requirements for Grant A I must fulfill
2 that it comes from Department of Ed. Here is all
these
3 other grants that comes from IHS. I have got my
4 requirement that I need to fulfill.
5 Here is my grants, other grants from BIA. They
6 have got all the requirements I have got to fulfill.
7 They are not related.
8 And when it applies to reality, life in the
9 community in Indian Country, they are all related.
They
10 are all together.
11 And so when those grants are submitted to
12 fulfill the grant requirements with no tie back to
13 reality and to each other, in this case who is it
14 impacting? It's the student and their education.
15 So if they are all being applied separately and
16 isolated, then it's not going to work. And so that's
--

17 that's the way we are still functioning and I think
that
18 it's a bigger issue than we realize. It's not just
19 having consultation and then going off and writing it
all
20 down, we have got to find the solution within all of
that
21 and bring them back home and then apply it.
22 And so that's why I say, you know, these
23 consultation sessions are great and I commend
basically
24 President Obama for enforcing it because he is the
25 president that has really, really pushed this and
made it

1 happen. But now the trick is okay, how are we going
to

2 actually make it work in real life.

3 And so I have a number of simple statements here
4 but I, you know, I don't want to hog the show but I
am

5 going to list a few of them just for clarity's sake
for

6 what I am talking about.

7 So again, this is Joe Garcia from Ohkay Owingeh,
8 notices to tribal leaders. How do notices transfer to
9 appropriate tribal departments? Tribal contacts?

People

10 that actually work in this case with education at the
11 tribal level, if it's like SAMHSA was, SAMHSA writes
a

12 letter, they call it a DTL, Dear Tribal Leader
letter,

13 and old Joe here, because I'm a data guy, some people
14 call me a geek because I work with computers and all
that

15 kind of stuff, but I asked a simple question. I said
how

16 do you know this, this message, dear tribal leader
which

17 is a real important letter got to my tribal leader?
How

18 do you know that?

19 And we did some statistical checks on it and we
20 found out that out of 373 dear tribal leader letters
that

21 were actually delivered, because we found out how
many

22 had been delivered, there were only six percent
returned

23 meaning that they actually opened the -- the e-mail.

24 This was just e-mail. Didn't say anything about hard
25 copies, just the e-mail, actually opened it.

1 There were -- well, it was greater than six
2 percent that opened it. I think there were like
3 30 percent that opened it, 37 percent of just kind of
4 opened and looked at it, didn't respond to it, but
only

5 six percent actually really clicked through the
6 information to determine I've read this document, I
have

7 opened this document, and I have got to this level.

Six

8 percent.

9 My God, that's such a low return.

10 And so same question I ask here. The Department

11 of Ed, when you send the notice about these
consultation

12 sessions and other policy changes how do we know what
the

13 return rate is and that the information actually got
to

14 the tribe?

15 Well, there is ways you can do that, but if it's

16 just dependent on e-mail which is not -- I know you
send

17 e-mails off, but I don't know how they really get
there.

18 But my tribe, you know, sometimes they get it,

19 sometimes they don't. Or sometimes they open it and

20 sometimes they don't.
21 And so we don't really know. And so that
22 becomes a big issue if you are -- if you are -- even
your
23 parader rule, your parader rule doesn't even work is
that
24 80/20 percent deal. So if you have got 80 things out
25 there and only 20 percent return rate we are not even
1 close to that, you know. But that's one big issue.
2 The diversity of schools in existence must be
3 considered state by state. The breakdown at
elementary
4 level, middle school and high school, you can't
address
5 them the same way because they are different areas
within
6 the educational system. So we are not separating
that,
7 we are just kind of saying education areas.
8 The testing standards are problematic. We, at
9 the tribally-controlled school at Ohkay Owingeh, we
were
10 forced by the bureaucratic system to go with the
parks
11 system on hand on paper when we had already developed
12 online testing for our students, we were ready, we
did it
13 already one year online, and so the kids were geared
up
14 to do online testing once again and because somehow
we
15 got stuck in a BIE disarray, if you will, somebody
from
16 BIE didn't order the tests to the -- or didn't award
the
17 contract to the testing agency.
18 So we got hooked in that crazy ball game and
19 they said BIE issued a statement, all BIE schools,
and we

20 are not a BIE school, will take this test long hand.
And

21 so we got converted back.

22 And so now our students are suffering because
23 now they have got to go back to un-learn what they
24 learned in the automated way which is technology,
using

25 technology, which is great, now they are going back to
1 this and so they spend -- what they could have finished
2 it in a couple of days, they spent two weeks testing
and

3 they had to forego all of the educational things that
4 they would normally cover, all because of BIE.

5 And so there is a breakdown right there in my
6 mind, and then what I have proposed at, you will
probably

7 see this one in Washington, D.C. when we have the NCI
8 session there, I also testified there but I told
them, I

9 asked them about the parks test because of our little
10 school situation, this proficiency test is an
assessment

11 standard set by somebody, some unknown entity out
there,

12 probably an entity who knows nothing about us who
knows

13 nothing about tradition, language and culture because
14 those won't appear in the assessment. And yet BIE and
15 others has said okay, we are going to -- we are going
to

16 satisfy the state, in our case, State of New Mexico
17 because New Mexico said they are going to go with
parks

18 testing.

19 So in order for us, our BIE school and
20 tribal-controlled school to fit into the game we are
also

21 going to take the parks test, which is common core,
but

22 that's beside the point.

23 Now, my question to the people in DC was okay,

24 the parks is an assessment for our students in
education
25 for proficiency. Now, who is it that set those
1 standards? Who has had the opportunity to assess the
2 parks from our perspective? I would have liked to be
one
3 of the assessors to assess the assessment to see if
they
4 are appropriate for us or not. We don't have that
5 opportunity. Somebody just develops it.
6 And I am going to -- this will be my last thing,
7 second to the last thing is that we took over a Head
8 Start program at home as well, and the feds came to
our
9 little community and they said that our students were
10 deficient in the testing, they didn't score well. And
so
11 I said well, what does the test look like?
12 He said oh, they are pictures, diagrams of
13 things in life and things in the world.
14 And I said well, which part did the students not
15 do well on? And they kind of fiddled around that, but
I
16 asked them, bring those diagrams tomorrow.
17 So they brought the test, part of the test the
18 next day and I said show me one of those examples.
19 Showed me. This is a picture of a cruise ship. And I
20 said, "A cruise ship? So they didn't really know what
it
21 was, is that the issue?"
22 And they said, "Yeah".
23 And I said, "We are Northern New Mexico, we
24 don't have an ocean, we barely have a river right
there,
25 Rio Grand River, there ain't know cruise ships on that,
1 on that."
2 So unless you covered that kind of stuff in
3 kindergarten, these are kindergarten -- I mean, not
even
4 kindergarten, they are Head Start. The next one was a
5 sailboat. I said the same thing. We don't have a big

6 lake, I ain't never seen a sailboat anywhere near
here.

7 So -- and that's what I mean about it. That's just an
8 example.

9 So, you know, the same thing goes with what we
10 are doing in this education.

11 And finally, the last point I will make, and I
12 have got a bunch more, but I won't, is that when you
13 train, you talk about training and professional
14 development for either staff or program people or for
15 projects and other things, you know, who trained
those

16 people. Who teaches those courses?

17 I have been to Harvard, too, to look at what
18 they recorded during tribal leadership development
and

19 tribal government, and I said, I lectured there.

20 And I asked, well, let me see, who all are all
21 the teachers that are teaching tribal government
here?

22 They were professors, they were not Indian people.

23 MR. LESSARD: Right.

24 MR. GARCIA: And I said the people that are
25 teaching that, have they ever been in tribal government?

1 The school of hard knocks? Because if they have not been
2 there, they don't have the credentials to be teaching
3 tribal government. Not even at Harvard.

4 And so that's a big issue now because we have a
5 lot of education for, and development for people who
work

6 with Indian people at Indian organizations and tribal
7 government, but if they have not been trained in the
8 proper way in the right setting then it will only be
a

9 perception and it will only be a perspective from
them

10 people depending on what they were taught, good, bad
or

11 otherwise.

12 I think that's a big area of focus that we ought
13 to work at the national level. And, I mean, the

14 Department of Ed is a place to start, but I bring
that as

15 a, as a big issue.

16 And I will turn back the time to others who wish
17 to speak. Thank you.

18 You wish to address some of those, that's fine,
19 too.

20 MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Thank you.

21 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you. I apologize to
22 the audience but because we were able to get so many
23 folks from tribal government that are here this
morning,

24 we are taking a bit longer with tribal government
25 comments and trying to cover that. I understand that we

1 lose our council people at 1:00 o'clock and so we are
2 trying to hear what they have to say.

3 We will have public comment, I promise you, we
4 will announce it when we do. So thank you for
waiting.

5 MS. CLIFFORD: I am Audre Clifford, Tribal
6 Council Member in Kenai, Alaska. The things that keep
7 coming up for me during this discussion is how
education

8 means two different things to our different groups of
9 people.

10 Education for us is knowing our values, knowing
11 our culture, knowing our native ways.

12 Education in the Federal government's eyes is
13 passing tests and that sort of thing. It's -- it's a
14 very different view. And when we are not connecting
15 there, we can't connect anywhere else.

16 Looking at the academic needs of our people, one
17 of the things just from my experiences with my
children

18 that are in the public education system,
19 miscommunications.

20 I remember going into school on Thanksgiving and
21 they were all dressed up like pilgrims and my heart
22 broke. And I said well, what about the Indians? They
23 said well, we are just doing pilgrims.

24 And I mean, I almost started crying. Just the
25 lack of knowledge at our level.
1 And then another thing is like looking at
2 attendance factors, you know, that may work well for
the
3 general population, but when school starts that's
also
4 when we are harvesting, we are doing moose camp.
5 So taking that sort of thing, I don't know that
6 attendance-based evaluations work well for our people
at
7 all.
8 Another thing is looking at the curriculums and
9 what they say, you know, a lot of them is "Indians
did",
10 "Indians did". And that just further perpetuates the
11 myths that we are not still here when it should be
12 "Indians do".
13 We need to hold the state accountable for
14 education on our local people. Our teachers know
15 nothing. I -- well, I'm sorry, that's -- that's an
16 untrue statement. I have seen very little knowledge
of
17 our indigenous tribes from teachers.
18 We need to look at starting to use data
19 measurements. You know, you can start that in
20 kindergarten, asking the youth our indigenous youth,
you
21 know, how comfortable do you feel sharing your
culture in
22 the classroom? Like how comfortable do you feel? Just
23 asking that question, you know.
24 I know my daughter felt very uncomfortable when
25 they were all dressed as pilgrims and she came home and
1 we had to talk about it.
2 And starting to, you know, that data can evolve
3 as their age evolves, as their grade levels evolve,
and
4 looking at how, how they are doing. Because when we
know

5 who we are, we can perform better in a Western
education

6 system.

7 One of the things that comes to mind is I

8 remember I was in college and I was sitting next to
an

9 elder, we had elders in our classroom in college and
we

10 were looking at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. And she
11 took it and she turned it upsidedown and she said now
12 it's right.

13 And I think that that's a lot of how the Western
14 education system is. We are going to meet these basic
15 needs and then we are going to build up when that's
not

16 how we view things as indigenous people. If you don't
17 know who you are, if you are not self-actualized, if
you

18 are not connected with your spirit, you are not going
to

19 be able to sit in a classroom and learn well.

20 So I think that's all I have to say. Thank you.

21 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you. Yes.

22 MS. MILLS: My name is Maryann Mills and I am
23 council member for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. And
there

24 is a few things I would like to just, you know, bring
to

25 your attention.

1 we had to talk about it.

2 And starting to, you know, that data can evolve
3 as their age evolves, as their grade levels evolve,
and

4 looking at how, how they are doing. Because when we
know

5 who we are, we can perform better in a Western
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14 education system is. We are going to meet these basic
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16 how we view things as indigenous people. If you don't
17 know who you are, if you are not self-actualized, if
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18 are not connected with your spirit, you are not going
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19 be able to sit in a classroom and learn well.

20 So I think that's all I have to say. Thank you.

21 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you. Yes.

22 MS. MILLS: My name is Maryann Mills and I am
23 council member for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. And
there

24 is a few things I would like to just, you know, bring
to

25 your attention.

1 And, you know, I think it began with the Dick
2 and Jane books. Our people had no idea what -- the
3 culture was so different, that with the Dick and Jane
4 books it made no sense.

5 And then came the No Child Left Behind, which
6 probably left a majority of our children behind.

7 And, and, you know, if we could teach courses or
8 classes using our culture this would help
tremendously.

9 Like, for instance, in math, you could teach
10 math just by teaching some of our people how to build
dog

11 sleds or -- or there is a number of things that take
math

12 skills that our people just know, they understand,
they

13 know.

14 And also, the State of Alaska is given most of

15 the funding, educational funding, which is so
critical to
16 our rural areas because they are the last ones to get
the
17 funding. And many of our schools in rural Alaska are
18 dilapidated, there is no running water, no indoor
19 toilets. And -- and so these are -- these are issues
20 that need to be addressed. And -- and the State of
21 Alaska really is not held accountable for the funding
22 that -- that they get on behalf of the tribes. And
there
23 needs to be a review of this.
24 I think we would be better off with the BIA
25 schools or funding for the local communities rather
than

1 the Federal government giving large educational
grants to
2 the State of Alaska for our, our native schools. And
our
3 people, our children are forced into public schools
which
4 there is a lot of bullying.
5 I am also a tribal judge, and what I have seen
6 in the schools or what has been brought to my
attention
7 in court were not only the bullying in schools, but
the
8 discrimination that the schools allow to happen in
their
9 institutions.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Good morning.

12 MS. BLIZZARD: Good morning. My name is Liisia
13 Blizzard, and I serve as the tribal council secretary
for
14 Kenaitze Indian Tribe. We are a tribe that's located
in
15 South Central Alaska on the Kenai Peninsula. And I
would

16 like to address some of the problems that have been going

17 on around the state for generations.

18 In the State of Alaska we have the highest rate
19 of suicide among our youth, and there are a lot of
20 reasons for that, but I think probably one of the
biggest

21 reasons is that they have lost their hope.

22 They have -- the villages are very isolated in
23 the northern parts of the state, the very small
villages,

24 and as Maryann Mills had stated, you know, some of
the

25 conditions in the villages in the schools are pretty
bad

1 where they don't have, you know, sometimes they didn't
2 even have heat there a couple of years ago. No indoor
3 bathrooms. The schools are in bad shape.

4 So in a lot of the villages children have to
5 leave their home and their family to go to high
school.

6 They have to go somewhere else to go to school. So
they

7 are losing that bond with their families and, you
know,

8 that's just not a good thing.

9 In Kenai where we live we have a wonderful Head
10 Start program. We have about 60 kids in our program,
and

11 the teachers and the Head Start curriculum, they work
12 with the children's families to try to help the
families,

13 families that are in need, to improve their life.

14 And these children that are going to our Head
15 Start program are doing very well when they start in
the

16 public school. They are confident, they are secure,
and

17 they, they do well.

18 So I, you know, I can't say it enough, Head

19 Start is a wonderful program. It really gets these
kids
20 off to a very good beginning.
21 We have a high dropout rate among our native
22 students. We have a lot of problems there with -- I
23 mean, we get Johnson-O'Malley money to help with
tutors
24 and things like that, but I know from my own
experience,
25 I have four children and when my kids were going to
1 school they would not participate in the JOM programs
2 because they were teased relentlessly, they were
bullied
3 about it, they were made fun of because they were
native.
4 And, you know, no matter what I said I just
5 could not convince them to do it.
6 So the Johnson-O'Malley funds needs to come to
7 the tribes so that the tribes can use those funds to
help
8 our students with tutors. I think it would be much
9 better.
10 Right now, we have a, a youth council that has
11 just started. The name of it is Stand Up Danina. We
12 have about 14 students in that youth council and they
are
13 already very, very busy. They are making blankets for
14 our foster children and they are cleaning the beach
and
15 they are just -- they just got started, but they are
just
16 really a great group of kids.
17 And so hopefully that will just continue to grow
18 where these kids have a place to go, a focus. They
are
19 our future leaders.
20 The Kenaitze Indian Tribe has hoped to establish
21 a tribal school. We, some of us, have taken the
Danina

22 language classes at our college this year, and it was
a
23 great experience. I -- I just, I can't say enough.
You
24 know, our language almost completely went away.
25 And so, you know, if we could get a tribal
1 school established our children can learn their
language
2 and regain their own identity. And I think that that
has
3 a lot to do with the high rate of suicide among our
youth
4 is that they are losing their identity. They don't
know
5 where they are going, they are -- they are lost.
6 They don't -- you know, I think a tribal school
7 is just imperative for our kids.
8 I believe that as native leaders it is our
9 responsibility to leave a better world for our youth
and
10 I think, you know, they are entitled to good
education.
11 So education is at the top of the list.
12 Thank you.
13 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.
14 MR. WRIGHT: Got a comment.
15 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Yes.
16 MR. WRIGHT: Mervyn Wright, Pyramid Paiute
17 Tribe. You know, just listening to the discussion
here,
18 you know, recognizing the Department of Education,
the --
19 this, you know what this consultation is attempting
to
20 do, you know, the disconnectedness of the Department
of
21 Education with the Department Of Interior is a
problem.
22 You have got the Bureau of Indian Education

23 heading in one direction, and, of course, you have
got

24 the Department of Education heading in another
direction.

25 And based on what I have seen and based on my experience,
1 I don't think they are parallel. I don't think that
2 their intentions are equal.

3 Department of Education, you know, certainly
4 through the United States government process connects
5 with the states and it forces tribes to collaborate,
6 partner with states. A lot of tribes will not do
that,

7 just based on the jurisdictional status.

8 Sometimes it gets very difficult when tribes
9 receive grants from either a state or via the United
10 States, be it Justice Department, you know, USDA,
11 Interior, because we sign -- we sign off on what we
are

12 going to commit to with respect to compliance, and
13 sometimes certain waivers of authority just to
receive

14 those grants.

15 And when it comes to the states, tribes will not
16 waive their jurisdiction, they will not waive, you
know,

17 the level of sovereignty that exists. And so when the
18 United States government starts providing funding
19 opportunities to tribes it needs to take that into
20 account.

21 When tribes are going to accept a grant from a
22 state, you know, is it going to be waiving, you know,
23 jurisdiction, sovereignty. What, what is it going to
24 take for that tribe to be eligible to receive that
grant

25 from the state?

1 And I think when it comes to impact aid, you
2 know, having to work with the counties, the school
3 districts, sometimes that becomes a very frustrating
4 process because of the attitudes of mainstream
5 communities and the way they think.

6 And, you know, I am reading some of these

7 documents that are in the folder. We have got to
8 remember that when we see words like expanding and
9 increasing, and we see them as enticing, catching our
10 attention to say hey, this looks pretty good, well,
11 that's all it is, is it looks good. And it's on
paper,
12 of course, but when you look at the funding and you
look
13 at what's being proposed, yeah, you could talk about
the
14 \$64 million increase, but what happens when congress
gets
15 a hold of the president's budget?
16 I served on the Interior budget council for five
17 years, and everything that the tribes advocated, the
18 funding levels, Interior cut the budget anyway. OMB
cut
19 the budget. Congress comes in and cuts the budget.
20 And as much as we try to hold the line and stand
21 our ground, in the end the decisions were made to cut
the
22 budget.
23 So from sequester to looking at all the
24 different impacts that have occurred to native
tribes, I
25 don't anticipate, I mean, \$3 million for this program and
1 you look at the number of tribes that would be
eligible
2 to apply, it's going to be very competitive. That's
why
3 I talk about the criteria.
4 The criteria to evaluate these applications need
5 to be real and not just the boilerplate oh, yeah,
this
6 tribe will get in line, they will stand in line, they
7 won't rock the boat, they will behave, you know, so
let's
8 award it to this tribe, you know.
9 And I guess the last thing I heard a comment
10 over here and I appreciate the comments this morning

11 about students that are lowly because they are taking
12 tutoring and JOM programs.

13 And that's another one, BIA, where are they at
14 in the phone? JOM is a BIA-funded program, and so
they

15 have got three different entities now. Department of
16 Education, BIE and BIA, all heading in separate
tracks.

17 But one thing that our -- that we experience
18 and, you know, my son was a part of this, he, he was
19 teased because he was smart. He was -- he was, you
know,

20 criticized because he was the top of the class.

21 And, you know, his classmates would call him a
22 nerd, and I would tell him hey, son, I'm a nerd, too,
I

23 am a hydrologist, you know, I have got my master's
degree

24 in hydrology. So when it comes to mathematics,
25 analytics, you know, thinking analytically, that's what
1 we do.

2 And so I said it's not a bad thing to be a nerd.

3 Matter of fact, Chairman Brute would tell our
students,

4 you know, you have got to be, I think it was Bill
Gates

5 talks about be nice to nerds because one day you
might be

6 working for one.

7 So that's how I look at education, you know, and

8 so what we do with that, though, is that we have to
try

9 to build back into our communities so that all of our
10 students can see that, that success in education is
not a

11 bad thing, it's not something that because the
majority

12 of our class are struggling and you have got a
minority

13 that are successful making the grade, honor roll,
they

14 can't be pulled back down so that, you know,
everybody's
15 equal, you know.
16 So we have to work on our communities in that
17 sense, to, to, to, you know, from our parents to our
18 grandparents to aunts to uncles, you know, everyone
19 that's, you know, responsible for our students, that
20 everybody can, can get behind that support for, you
know,
21 the quality education.
22 And when I see some of these words, world class,
23 you know, that's in President Obama's report, you
know,
24 come on, you know? State of the art, you know. What
are
25 we talking about here? I mean, we are sending all our

1 money across the seas rebuilding infrastructures at
state
2 of the art.
3 But when you look at our communities just as
4 they were described in Alaska, you don't even have
5 running water in our schools, you know.
6 So let's be realistic. And these are some of
7 the things that we tried to express to President
Obama in
8 2010 when we were in the White House. And as I said
to
9 you earlier, Ron, even the two issues that I took in,
I
10 still haven't even got a response. The night pro law,
11 sacred places, nothing. Absolutely nothing.
12 And so, you know, my frustration, you know, is,
13 you know, I am almost to the point of giving up hope.
14 But because of our children, because of our
15 students, I can't. It's not going to happen.
16 And so you try to hang on as tight as you can,
17 you know, sometimes by your fingertips but, you know,
18 what we can do to influence the Department of
Education

19 today through these sessions, you know, is something
that
20 I hope is going to be real and in the end just as Joe
was
21 talking about, the implementation. You can talk about
22 all of this stuff, but then if you have got the
unfunded
23 mandate and you are standing there, you know, we are
the
24 ones that suffer. We are the ones that have to deal
25 with, you know, just like the No Child Left Behind Act,
1 and now we are -- they are going to have the Every
Child
2 Achieves Act of 2015 coming up. Now, what does that
3 really mean, you know.
4 So when we look at our tribal communities a lot
5 of the times we already conclude that we are not
going to
6 be included. We already come to that, you know,
7 acceptance. But we can't be thinking like that.
8 And so when our students see what's going on in
9 mainstream America, how do we compete? How do we get
our
10 children to know that they are just as smart, they
are
11 just as good as anybody else, and they have to be
able to
12 know that they can compete and know that the
community is
13 going to support that. Thank you.
14 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.
15 MS. TEPP: Rose Tepp with the Kenaitze Tribe. I
16 am going to give you a couple of examples. As a
17 chairperson, there was a -- well, she is kind of gone
18 now, but we have the Johnson-O'Malley in the Kenai
19 schools. I physically had to be there and scream with
20 her and at her to let her know we are a tribe, we
are, we
21 are here, this is our curriculum, use it.
22 Susie was there. It was horrible. This kind of

23 stuff happens in Alaska all the time.
24 We also have to sign waivers all the time to use
25 grants that go through the state which are supposed to go
1 to the tribes. So we are always behind this eight ball.
2 When the tribes take grants, when the tribes take
over,
3 we do a better job. It's proven. You know that
4 yourself.
5 I will give you another example of bullying.
6 Two months ago my granddaughter and my niece were
bullied
7 on the school bus. I didn't sit on my butt and do
8 nothing about it, I went out, I called the school
9 principals, both schools. I, I said this is what I
want
10 done. I want the parents to understand what ubig
means,
11 what Indian means. I want the parents involved. I
says,
12 if you do not do this, I will own every state school
in
13 Alaska. I says, I am not kidding. I am tired of this.
14 This is a couple of months ago.
15 And the two principals from that school got a
16 hold of the parents and they were involved in letting
17 this non-native boy know that we are not different.
18 Most of the time the prejudices begin at home.
19 What you teach them at home. But when I talked to
these
20 parents, both of them didn't even realize that this
was
21 happening to them.
22 So the way I dealt with the bullying is I went
23 straight to the school, straight to the principal and
to
24 the parents of this boy.
25 So when I -- I guess what I want to say is I
1 took upon myself to do something about it. And we all
2 need to do that.
3 And I agree with everybody here and my council,

4 they have done wonderful, excellent, all these
speakers
5 here, you know, they speak from their heart over and
over
6 and over again. I have been at this for 16 years,
same
7 words. Same different year, what's being done, little
8 tiny little steps, little tiny little steps.
Promises,
9 you know. It's frustrating, you know. You testify
over
10 and over and over again.
11 You know we have all these issues and yet little
12 tiny bits of it get resolved. It's -- you can
understand
13 why I get frustrated.
14 And I am very proud of all these leaders that
15 are speaking because they have spoken the same
language
16 over and over and over again. It's time that maybe
that
17 you as the person that carries this message speak
like we
18 do. Be a pimple on their nose, you know, get
something
19 done.
20 Thank you.
21 MS. WELLS: May I followup on what my
22 chairperson said? Not all of our leaders go in and
fight
23 that battle because we have been beaten down so many
24 times. And so just in the reference of a lawsuit, you
25 know, often that's what we have to do. We are
1 constantly, constantly walking this uphill battle and
we
2 have leaders that will fight that, will spend 16,
3 20 years at this job to fight for our children.
4 One of the things, though, that as a solution in
5 Alaska because of a lawsuit our court system was
forced

6 to collaborate with tribes and we had -- it had to do
7 with equats and, you know, there was this
collaboration.

8 And that's one of the things that's happening in
9 Kenai as a tribal court, I am a tribal court judge as
10 well, is that now because of that they were forced to
11 come to us, you know, we are working together, so at
12 least we know each other as tribal court judges and
state

13 court judges, now we have the police, we have AGs, we
14 have prosecutors, lawyers that are now seeing that we
are

15 a credible entity. We -- that we are getting some
16 respect.

17 In our -- our area, we, and in our tribe,
18 another area that we worked on very hard and
diligently

19 is our health system. And so we have a new tribal
20 plenty, and we are not working in silence, you know.
21 We have -- we have a system of care that's
22 person-centered so it involves primary care, dental.
She

23 can speak better to this. We include wellness. We are
24 trying very desperately to get funding for our
behavioral

25 health. We are having to fund it ourselves and we are
1 adding in social services.

2 So if the courts need parents to be drug-tested
3 we can, and send them over there. We need them to
attend

4 parenting classes, we can do that. We are not working
in
5 silos.

6 So I am just wondering if somehow or other the
7 education system can start doing that without having
to

8 go through a lawsuit, but mandating that the state
speak

9 to tribal education systems on a level field with
that

10 respect and that value.
11 Because we are only as healthy as our
12 communities. And our children committing suicide,
13 getting involved in drugs and alcohol because of
14 bullying, because of teasing, that isn't culturally
15 appropriate, and so we are putting -- being put into
a
16 special ed. system often that is very deficient in
17 helping our children to learn.
18 I wanted to talk about Head Start. I saw in the
19 17 years that I was at Kenai Middle School how --
what a
20 huge impact our Head Start, because it's run by our
21 tribe, had on our, our middle schoolers coming in
with
22 the confidence, coming in with knowing who they are,
and
23 being proud of who they are. It's very important.
24 The problem, though, that I see is that -- and
25 being on the tribal council now working with Head Start,
1 the funds are based on income. So our native parents
who
2 get them raised up and we get them to have their
3 children, we got them working, but now they are
making
4 too much money so that their kids can't even qualify
to
5 get into our Head Start program.
6 So we have to go and make a special otter room
7 for those kids that aren't -- that they can't get in
8 because of funding.
9 So we have our own children, our own tribal
10 children that compete against non-native kids to get
into
11 our program. And I am telling you in our community we
12 have a lot of non-native people that want their
children
13 into our program to get them prepared for school.
14 But there again, we are competing for a
15 classroom seat. So that's -- that's a, to me, it's

16 another roadblock. It's another affront to our native
17 people, our native children. Our -- our -- our
mission
18 is that the (unintelligible) thrive or for -- we
don't
19 want to just survive, and we are barely surviving. We
20 want to thrive. We want our children to thrive.
21 And when we get government monies, oftentimes we
22 are -- not only are we competing against a school
23 district or some other entity, we are -- we are
getting
24 enough just to help us click through, just to help
us.
25 You know, like Mervyn said, that we are hanging on by our
1 fingernails.
2 And we need to be raising up leaders that will
3 continue to fight the fight. But some of us are
getting
4 pretty tired in our old age.
5 The other thing that we have is, you know, we
6 want -- we want to revitalize our language. Funding
for
7 that, we need funding, and I know that the mandate
has
8 come.
9 Right now we couldn't even apply for an
10 immersion school because we are just learning our
11 language now. Some of us are learning enough to say
12 hello. So we need to have that funding to revitalize
our
13 language.
14 The other thing, we talked about teachers. In
15 our state we have a huge, huge land mass. Teacher
16 training. Many, many of our teachers in Alaska are
17 coming from the outside, lower America, and they come
18 into the villages, that's how they get jobs is they
apply
19 in the bush villages, they work there a year or two
as a

20 stepping stone into the urban areas and then when we
go
21 to retirement, they put in their 20 years, last few
22 years, if they go back into the bush that increases
like
23 an overseas pay, and that increases their retirement.
24 It's not about our kids.
25 And the Department of Education, whatever level,
1 whatever silo we are in, really needs to start
focusing
2 on training up our people to teach our people.
3 And because we are getting the short end of the
4 stick every time, and we keep saying this. I know
Rose
5 has made a big point about how we are here in front
of
6 you pleading for our people. And we say it over and
over
7 again. And so I am pleading again that you look at
8 employee -- or not employee, but using tribal elders
and
9 tribal representatives and leaders to be on your -- I
10 don't know if you have advisory committees on your
11 selection when you review applications for grants, so
--
12 so that we can make sure that the money is being put
13 where it can best be used.
14 I think about state funding. Right off the top
15 when the Federal government gives monies that are
16 supposed to go to tribes, there is a -- an
administrative
17 fee right off the top, and it's not a little fee.
18 And I don't know, maybe you can put a cap on
19 that fee so much that they don't want it. Let it go
to
20 the tribes, it's not economic for us to do it.
21 Just a thought.
22 Thank you for your time and I know that we have
23 some other leaders over here.
24 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Sorry, there. It didn't want
25 to work with me. I'm sorry. I know that everybody has

1 realized there is a lunch sitting off to the side.
2 For the tribal leaders I understand that you
3 have other things that you need to go on to at
4 1:00 o'clock and so they have provided the lunch for
you
5 so that you can go ahead and have dinner now and we
will
6 continuing on with the conversation.
7 But we will break for a few minutes so that you
8 can get your plates and then come back. And then we
will
9 continue on.
10 (Lunch recess taken).
11 MS. SILVERTHORNE: With that, we will start on
12 the right side of the documents that you had with
your
13 agenda of your packets. Ron?
14 MR. LESSARD: The first one was the -- so the
15 first thing we wanted to mention is that on April
13th we
16 released the draft of Department of Education Tribal
17 Consultation Policy, it's a revised version. The
18 department had a tribal consultation policy and this
is a
19 revised version.
20 That consultation policy has gone through,
21 excuse me, has gone through an initial clearance
within
22 the Department of Education and at this point we are
23 seeking your comments. And comments from -- during
this
24 comment period, which will go up to July 13th. It
will
25 be a 90-day comment period from April 13th.
1 The link to provide comments is on the screen
2 and also you can go to the -- it's also on the office
of
3 Indian, on the cover page, so this is the link to
provide
4 comments.
5 What we are doing is we want to, in order to

6 maximize a really proper and accurate tribal
consultation
7 policy, we want your input and tribal leaders' input
and
8 that's what this time will be up until July 13th.
9 So it's very important that we maximize that,
10 and at the end of that we will compile all the
comments
11 and followup and there will be eventually that
initial
12 final consultation policy.
13 MS. SILVERTHORNE: The next document is the
14 Federal Register notice, and the Federal Register
notice
15 is -- is the State Tribal Education Partnership, and
this
16 is the notice inviting applications. And that program
is
17 the first time that we have had regulations for the
18 program.
19 We did a pilot project from 2012 to 2015, and
20 this is the notice inviting applications. There is a
21 60-day review time to put applications together.
There
22 will be a pre-application webinar on April 30th,
23 tentatively I believe it's at 2:00 o'clock. They were
24 working on a room schedule when I left and I don't
have
25 confirmation on the time, but if you find that that's
1 something you want to do, it will be on the website at
2 the officeofindianeducation@ed.gov.
3 MR. LESSARD: Next you have in your packet a
4 document, it's a Memorandum of Agreement between the
5 Department of Education, the Department Of Interior,
BIE,
6 and also HHS administration for Native Americans.
This
7 is an MOA that was created. The first time the three
8 agencies have come together to work together for the
9 revitalization and preservation of native languages.
10 We have -- After that MOA came out one of the

11 topics in the MOA is to create a summit, a native
12 language summit. We had our first native language
summit
13 in last year of 2014, in June. We are leading up to
the
14 2015 summit which will be in September, it will be in
15 conjunction with the Association For Tribal Libraries
and
16 Museums Conference which is being held in DC.
17 So we will have a full day which will be very
18 similar to what we are doing today, a pre-conference
19 around native languages, and there will be
information on
20 our website and also Administration for Native
Americans
21 website.
22 One thing we are doing prior to that will be
23 putting out to all the Federal agencies an inventory
24 document asking a request for information of what
they
25 are doing around native languages, and this could be
1 anything. It could be grants, it can be programs, it
can
2 be conferences, whatever they are doing, so that we
can
3 provide and put together a resource guide for you
which
4 will be completed in time for the conference in 2015.
5 The next thing I want to briefly talk to you
6 about is in your packet you have some information on
7 Generation Indigenous. At the Tribal Nations
Conference
8 President Obama, after coming back from, from
Standing
9 Rock and the First Lady and President Obama visited,
they
10 came back, it was a very moving experience and they -
-
11 one of the things that they created, the president
12 created, was the Generation Indigenous or Gen I

13 Initiative.

14 There are several components to that and you
15 will see them here. One of the components is the
16 secretary's cabinet tour which is coming up shortly.

17 Another component will be the challenge, and I
18 will show you that it mentions -- this will be for
the

19 Center For Native American Youth, if you go to the
Center

20 for Native American Youth website you can see that
here,

21 and you can also go to White
House.gov/NativeAmericans.

22 There are two challenges that are being brought forth
for

23 this initiative; one is the Generation Indigenous
Native

24 Youth Challenge and the other one is Generation
25 Indigenous Tribal Leader Challenge.

1 So you can go to that website, find out the
2 details. And encourage everyone to do that.

3 And also we will be putting on the first -- the
4 first Native Youth Summit. Similar to the Tribal
Nations

5 Summit, the first Native Youth Summit, and that's
coming

6 up I believe on July 9th and there is information for
7 that on the White House site also.

8 The next thing I want to mention real briefly is
9 that the Department of Education along with the
10 Department of Education Office of Civil Rights did a
nine

11 city listening tour around school environment, it was
12 called the School Environmental Listening Tour. We
went

13 to nine cities.

14 One of the things that through -- prior to that
15 was hearing that a lot of the issues around
16 disproportionate bullying, discipline, inappropriate

17 symbols including mascots, that a lot of this was
based
18 on research, the things that we were hearing and that
19 this should be -- we should have testimonies from
native
20 youth. And that's what we did on the school
environment
21 listening tour.
22 We went to -- not only did we go to several
23 cities, but we were able to provide similar to today
24 where youth could call in and provide their
testimonies.
25 We are in the process of putting together the
1 final draft for that report, and that will be
available
2 for all of you to take a look at. I think you will
find
3 it moving when you read some of the testimonies of
the
4 native youth that came forward.
5 In addition to that, Office of Civil Rights is
6 working again, probably for the first time, working
with
7 Department of Justice and Department Of Interior
looking
8 to kind of come together, not necessarily do
listening
9 sessions but at least provide some framework of how
the
10 three agencies can work together to provide Indian
11 Country with an opportunity to, you know, work in a
civil
12 rights discrimination or whatever that might be,
whether
13 it is for children, families, or the communities
itself.
14 So that will be coming shortly.
15 MS. SILVERTHORNE: And the next thing that we
16 have which there is not a piece of paper in your
packet,

17 we would like to announce that on -- we think it will
be
18 Tuesday, the Federal Register should come out with
the
19 notice inviting applications for the Native Youth
20 Community Project. It is a new priority under the
21 demonstration program under Title 7, and with that
new
22 priority it will be a partnership focused on needs,
23 assessment, data analysis within your community,
identify
24 the issue, the concerns or the area you would like to
25 focus on and form a partnership of entities that have
1 similar concerns or may be able to provide additional
2 expertise to address that, that concern.
3 These are going to have a 60-day application
4 period. They also will have in two weeks from
whenever
5 this does publish, we hope it will be Tuesday,
whenever
6 that does publish then we will have two weeks and
there
7 will be a pre-application webinar.
8 I would encourage anyone that is looking at
9 either of these two grants to, to watch both of the
10 webinars, simply because there is similarity, but
there
11 is some very definite differences as well, and choose
12 which makes better sense for your community.
13 So with that, I think that's a brief
14 introduction to the topics that we are bringing
forward
15 today. And we have had a number of good comments from
16 tribal leaders today, and over these issues as well
as
17 some additional issues.
18 So what we'd like to do to continue that
19 conversation is to ask any tribal leaders who have
not

20 yet spoken to be first to provide additional
information
21 and then we will come back around again for anyone
that
22 would like to expand on what they have already said
or
23 have something new they'd like to add.
24 So with that, yes.
25 MS. ABRAMSON: I am Kathy Abramson, I'm on a
1 tribal council, been there for 19 years now. And I am
2 from the Sault Ste. Marie tribe of Chippewa Indians
and
3 we are located in Michigan in the beautiful Woodland
4 area, which I believe you guys all should come and
visit
5 us. I don't think we get enough visitors from DC over
6 there. So -- and so that invitation is always open,
7 please.
8 But I have been very involved with our tribal
9 council even before I got on the council. Our tribe,
I
10 worked with our Youth Education Department, you know,
11 which would be funded by Johnson-O'Malley and our
12 self-governance funding.
13 And I have been on the Head Start Policy Council
14 for over 15 years, and we established Tribal Youth
15 Council.
16 And we will be celebrating our 20th anniversary,
17 by the way, this fall. We are really proud of that.
And
18 out of that, I mean, we have a lot of successful
tribal
19 youth.
20 And they have -- and some time when we gather
21 all the testimony they bring to us we will let you
see
22 how important the Tribal Youth Council was to them,
23 especially at their teenage years. Okay.
24 But I'm glad that there is a memorandum of

25 agreement with HHS and our language -- our Department
of

1 Interior and Department of Education.

2 I sit at the Secretary's Travel Advisory
3 Committee, and through -- for HHS. And I, I am very,
4 very, I want to say supportive of education, truly,
and

5 our culture have been the most important things to
me. I

6 don't know how I got into health but I am there. But
I

7 think it's because of how it all comes together.

8 We are talking about, when we are talking about
9 the health of our people, we are talking about it
10 holistically.

11 And when -- You know, my great-grandmother only
12 spoke Ojibwe as well as my mother before she went
into --

13 when she went to kindergarten she only spoke Ojibwe.

14 So there are a lot of our relatives, and that
15 really wasn't that long ago that they spoke Ojibwe
and

16 they had to learn English.

17 Through the years, because our ancestors, our
18 elders were beaten down into the ground to make them
feel

19 like they were worthless and useless and that they
didn't

20 have anything to offer, and they really did feel that
21 way, too. Because when we got our elders back and we
had

22 them as consultants for our language groups they
really

23 thought well, I don't have anything. I don't -- I
don't

24 know anything.

25 But as you met with them and talked with them

1 they realized what a gift they really had, and you
could

2 see their confidence growing.

3 So that is a -- that is a part. And just the
4 way we lived, I mean, this took -- this took a lot of
5 years to beat us down so it's going to take years for
--

6 to bring us back to being fully healthy again.

7 And I truly hope, you know, and this is nice to
8 have a memorandum of agreement, but right now they
are

9 just words and I'd like to see the action and make
sure

10 action is followed.

11 And because number one, it was the Federal
12 government who is responsible for making us the --
you

13 know, the plan was for us not to speak our language,
and

14 treated again like you are worthless and you have got
to

15 turn us into something that we never were.

16 And slowly but surely, with the Europeans
17 arriving, slowly but surely the pieces of us were
taken

18 away by our -- by taking away our land, our way of
life

19 and the very well-being of, of us who we are as a
people.

20 Thank goodness we still have a lot of those
21 traditions, yet maybe it's because we were in the
woods

22 and -- and they couldn't find us so, so much. So
maybe

23 that's a blessing.

24 And -- but I truly do believe that when it comes
25 to education you need to work with HHS because we
need to

1 partner. Early childhood education is probably one of
2 the most important gifts that we could give to
strengthen

3 our youth so that when they get to where they go,
usually

4 you go from grade schools and then they go into a
middle
5 school that's bigger and then a high school that's
even
6 more bigger, different, you meet a lot of different
7 people. Your confidence, especially in middle school,
8 it's really hard.
9 So hopefully we can build our kids so that they
10 are strong warriors, strong, confident warriors that
are
11 proud of who they are, know where they came from. And
12 not a lot of people can say that. And that's really
13 important. And so I hope that we are able to
concentrate
14 on that and bring that.
15 And then as far as when Head Start, they are
16 awesome in getting parental involvement. And I, for
one,
17 am not just well, the school has to do all this. I
18 believe parental involvement is really important, but
19 that also needs to be encouraged by the schools.
20 There was a time, well, for a lot of our parents
21 and our elders that they didn't have good experiences
in
22 school so why would they want to go to the schools?
Why
23 would they show up?
24 My parents, like I was in sports, and they
25 just -- still hurts. They would only go as far as the
1 fence because they didn't feel like they were -- they
2 could go into the stadium.
3 So anyway, but I had a mother and father, a
4 mother that was always there at home for me, a father
5 that let me know and told me that I could do or be
6 anything I wanted to be. And -- and I think I just --
I
7 have a strong spirit because of that.
8 My grandfather lived with us all the time but he
9 didn't teach us any Ojibwe because that was a bad
thing

10 to do. And it's unfortunate.
11 So I am hoping with the language as it comes
12 along, all the foods we ate and I didn't know, this
13 is
14 the honest to God truth, how we lived, because we
15 lived
16 around our relatives is we all lived the same way. So
17 I
18 didn't think anything of it on how we lived until you
19 start -- just started noticing little differences in
20 middle school and high school, and in college.
21 I never realized that not everybody went sucker
22 clubbing, clubbing fish. Because I was giving a
23 speech
24 in college and people were looking at me really
25 strange,
26 you know, and I just -- I thought everybody did that.
27 And there is a lot of things, and I am still
28 proud. You haven't lived unless you did that, by the
29 way. So -- and the foods that we ate, if you -- it
30 makes
31 me realize, I went to this, the Wings of America have
32
33 1 this, they have teams and then they go to the national
34 2 cross-country finals, I just think it's the most
35 3 wonderful thing that have gone before our people.
36 4 Well, there was an American Indian restaurant,
37 5 it was a five-star restaurant serving our traditional
38 6 foods. And I kind of like, you know, food and native
39 7 people, they always go together, okay. So I always
40 8 thought of that as, you know, why don't we ever
41 position
42 9 our foods higher than we do, you know, because we are
43 10 kind of doing that to ourselves.
44 11 Even, to tell you the truth, wherein -- we have
45 12 a -- I mean, people pay hundreds of dollars for a
46 bowl of
47 13 bird's nest soup or -- birds, to spit and put a nest
48 14 together? I mean, our food's a lot better, I would
49 15 think, than that, and what we do.
50 16 So anyway, my point is we need to position

17 ourselves and be proud of what we have, how we live.
And
18 those are the things that can be taught by our people
in
19 our schools. In some way we have got to get those
school
20 books changed. And I am kind of -- I was always kind
of
21 hoping that maybe the, what is the name of the group,
the
22 education committee, the big one, NIEA?
23 MS. SILVERTHORNE: NIEA.
24 MS. ABRAMSON: Yeah. Somebody needs to take on
25 the project where that is the focus and get the true
1 thought starting at an early age and make sure it's
2 followed all the way through. So I didn't prepare to
say
3 anything, I am just -- hopefully you understand what
I am
4 trying to say. Thank you.
5 MR. LESSARD: Thank you.
6 One thing I wanted to mention about the MOA on
7 native languages is that often we come together and
8 create things with other agencies, you know,
certainly
9 Federal Government is known for not working with each
10 other across agencies, and sometimes it takes many of
us
11 that also come from Indian Country, come from
traditional
12 homes. My mom was in the boarding school, you know,
we
13 know the value of that, of languages. So we bring
that.
14 And so when you see that MOA we know that you
15 know how important that language is but sometimes we
need
16 the vehicle, something to express to, you know, the
17 secretaries and other people across agencies how it
is --

18 how important it is to tribal communities.
19 And so this, this one is a live document. We
20 are actually getting some things done. And when I
have
21 been involved with MOAs they often don't go very far,
but
22 this one is really getting some attention.
23 So I just wanted to tell you that. So --
24 MR. HARDY: Hello, hello, hello. Thank you for
25 allowing me this time to make some comments. My name
is
1 Michael Hardy, I am a tribal council member for the
2 Gwitchin/Koyukuk Tribal Government which is located
in
3 Fort Yukon, Alaska. I am also employed by the council
of
4 Athabaskan Tribal Governments. It is a consortium of
5 tribes representing the Yukon Flats region of Alaska.
6 I'm employed as the Native American and Career
7 and Technical Education Program Director. Right now
the
8 NACTEP program is awaiting on proposed waiver and
9 comments to see if the program will continue. I have
10 submitted my comments last month to the program
11 specialist and still waiting word. NACTEP provides
for
12 tuition, books and fees to tribal members that are
13 enrolled in college. They provide up to occupational
14 endorsement certificate or an associate's degree.
15 I would like to see the NACTEP program fully
16 funded to help tribal members in my region to get
17 educated. I would also like to see the program seek
18 further education such as bachelor's, master's and
19 doctorate degrees.
20 While the associate level is a good doorstep
21 into the higher learning, we could do a lot more if
we
22 get even further in our education.
23 And that's all I have to comment on.
24 Thank you.

25 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

1 MS. PITKA: Hi. I am Rhonda Pitka, the
2 chairwoman of the council of Athabaskan Tribal
3 Governments and I am the first chief of the Village
of
4 Beaver. I also sit on the school board for the Union
5 Flat School District.
6 Mike forgot to mention that he is a council
7 member for the Village of Fort Yukon also, Gwitchin
8 Tribal Government.
9 Okay. Good. Want to make sure. He is also
10 going to be leaving us shortly to take a new job with
11 them.
12 I want to echo what Mike said about about being
13 allowed to get funding for a Bachelor's degree
through
14 this program. I, myself, am a recipient of the NACTEP
15 program. I have a Certificate in Tribal Management
and I
16 am working on my Associates right now, but eventually
I
17 do want to get a Bachelor's degree and it would be
good
18 to get funding in this manner.
19 A lot of the people in our region have barriers
20 to education, especially higher education, that these
--
21 that these programs have helped greatly.
22 I think Mike told me earlier we have 80
23 graduates since the inception of this program. Those
are
24 people with Associates degrees. So they also want to
go
25 forward with their education and continue on.
1 One of my other comments was about state funding
2 in Alaska for K-12 education. Our tribes never see
the
3 money, the state of Alaska does, and they have kind
of a
4 transparency and an accountability problem, in my

5 opinion. I don't know how anybody else from Alaska
feels
6 about that. But -- so I think, I think, if -- if they
7 are allowed to access that money that tribes aren't
8 allowed to then they need to be accountable to us and
9 they need to have much more effective reporting to us
on
10 how that money is spent.
11 Right now in Alaska we have a huge budget crunch
12 because of the low oil prices and our -- all of our
13 budgets are being decreased for education across the
14 state.
15 When the -- when the state legislature started
16 this session they stated that they wanted to hold
17 education harmless. Well, that hasn't been the case.
So
18 our small school districts are hurting, and I think
what
19 they would like to do is they'd like to continue
things
20 like impact aid and the rest of the funding as -- as
21 contributing to the funding of small schools.
22 So really, I always feel like we get very, very
23 little from them for what they do.
24 Thank you for listening to me.
25 MS. BAIN: Hello, my name is -- my traditional
1 is (unintelligible) and my given name is Patsy
Daugherty,
2 my married name is Patsy Bain. I am with the Makah
3 Tribal Council in Neah Bay, Washington. And so this
is
4 my first time at a education meeting, but I took a
lot of
5 notes and so I have a few things to say, mostly
success
6 stories within our own programs out at Neah Bay.
7 And so we do have an early childhood program out
8 at Neah Bay that's very successful and I just would
like

9 to comment on that, that that has been a great
program
10 for the pre-Head Start children.
11 So -- and then we also have a language program.
12 And a few years back we used to only have teachers
that
13 went into the Head Start program, and then we have
14 increased our funding. We do receive grants to pay
for
15 part of that through our museum program, and then
also
16 our tribal council, we subsidize a lot of the funding
for
17 our cultural teachers also because we think that
that's a
18 really good thing for our community.
19 And so I would like to mention real quick that
20 we do have a state-run school but it's on tribal
land.
21 So our school is probably about 90 percent Native
22 American children and the other is made up of -- we
have
23 a small Coast Guard station on the tribal lands also,
and
24 just other families that work for the tribe, you
know,
25 like our fisheries and our IHS. So it is their
children
1 that go to our schools.
2 So our language program, we increased that to
3 our elementary school, and so that was a great
success.
4 And then we got more funding and then we implemented
it
5 into our high school, so we were able to put the --
our
6 culture, our language as a second, secondary
language.
7 Yeah.
8 So that, that was really good for us, you know,

9 because it was just real difficult for us to have
German
10 or Spanish or, you know, even though those are good
11 languages to learn, we just thought that it was
important
12 for our own tribal members to be learning our own
13 language.
14 So -- and with that, I would like to bring up
15 that my tribe is very fortunate that we have never
lost
16 our language and our culture, we have never lost our
17 songs and our dances. And so, anyways.
18 So now with implementing all of those language
19 programs with the help of some of the granting funds
that
20 we do get, the only place that we were lacking was
our
21 middle school students.
22 So now, I think that this year we are finally
23 able to implement our language program into our
middle
24 school. So now we are completely covered as far as
our
25 language, and I am really thankful for that.
1 so I would also like to bring up that our, our
2 language teachers that we have, they are all local
Makah
3 Indians that teach those. So that's, that's just
really
4 awesome. So our elementary school is -- we have, we
have
5 won a lot of awards in our elementary school and so I
6 think that the reason why is we have a local Makah
Indian
7 principal and most of our teachers in the elementary
8 school are our own people that we have sent off to
school
9 to come back and be teachers in our school.
10 And so now we are working on our middle school

11 and our high school because we don't have very many
up in
12 those levels.
13 And you can see a huge, a huge, what do you say,
14 a difference between the two. And I think that has a
lot
15 to do with it is hiring our own people into those
16 positions.
17 So I would also like to bring out that our high
18 school graduation rate just in the last few years has
19 been 100 percent. Yeah. And we used to not have very
20 many high school graduates, you know, for our
classes.
21 And I would also like to bring up, too, that our
22 high school seniors, the last few years have been at
23 100 percent for going into higher education programs.
24 So that means going to college or vocational
25 training or even joining the military.
1 So I would say about 20 years ago when I went to
2 college, our, our tribe only funded -- we only had
enough
3 funding for about 25 people, I am guessing. And so
now
4 our tribe also subsidizes a lot of our higher
education
5 sending our people because we really believe that we
need
6 to invest in to not just our youth, but we have a lot
of
7 middle age and, you know, younger elders that do go
to
8 higher education classes and college.
9 But today we fund about 51 youth for higher
10 education, and our NAIF's are about 100. So we are
only
11 meeting about half of, you know.
12 So our tribal council just this past December,
13 we put in an extra \$100,000 to go towards our youth,
our

14 education so that we could send more of our people
off to

15 college.

16 And I would also like to bring up that that is a
17 majority of, that is only youth that reside on the
18 reservation.

19 And my tribe is a very small tribe. I am two
20 hours away from the nearest city, and so, you know,
we

21 are pretty isolated for where we are at, and so jobs
are

22 limited. So we have a lot of tribal members that do
not

23 live on the reservation, you know, and that's not by
24 choice, it's because limited jobs and housing, you
know,

25 we just don't have it to fit everybody.

1 And so that's a very difficult decision that we
2 have to make when it comes to funding our, our tribal
3 people for, you know, through grants and their living
4 expenses and that kind of stuff, is those tribal
youth

5 seem to always get left out also, and it just seems
not

6 fair, you know.

7 And so no matter what program it is there is
8 never enough funding, you know. I mean, we are
growing,

9 and so anyways.

10 So a lot of the other notes I have, I liked
11 hearing all of the issues that the other tribes have
12 brought up like the waive and the -- oh, waiving the
13 sovereignty. You know, even limited, limited
sovereignty

14 is very difficult for tribes. And the education,
15 educating Native Americans to be in higher up
positions

16 is what I believe and that I am teaching our younger
17 generation.

18 And the reason why is the

19 government-to-government consultation, yeah, that's
fine
20 and good for us to be having conversation here at the
21 table, but those entities are taking that information
22 that we have all spoke about and they are still the
ones
23 that's making the decisions. And so I am trying to
teach
24 our younger generation that we need to be on those
25 boards. Native Americans need to be part of the
1 decision-making for Indian Country.
2 And so that's one of the things that I -- I
3 advocate to our younger generation.
4 So with that, I would also like to bring up, I
5 am very compassionate for not only my own tribe but
other
6 tribes across the nation. You know, it's very
touching
7 for me to hear the barriers that other tribes go
through,
8 you know, that they are not providing that equal
9 opportunity that other tribes -- I am very fortunate,
10 too, that my tribe does have grant writers, we do get
a
11 lot of grants. And, you know, we are awarded year
after
12 year after year.
13 But, you know, it just breaks my heart that some
14 other tribes that don't have grant writers or don't
have,
15 you know, the same opportunities that I have that
they
16 are being left out, you know.
17 And so I think that it's very important to have
18 a different system for other tribes receiving the
grants
19 and, you know, they are -- we are all equal, you
know.
20 And so I think that it's very important that

21 none of our Indian tribes are getting left behind.
They
22 deserve the same education that, you know, my tribe
23 deserves.
24 So that's all I would like to say about that.
25 And then one last thing I would like to bring up
1 is that Washington State had just implemented that
our
2 culture is to be taught in our history programs in
our
3 schools now. So now our children are going to be able
to
4 learn about our own history from hearing from us, our
own
5 tribes, you know, not how non-natives had say in our
6 history or culture, their views, it will be our
views.
7 And so I just think that that's a really good
8 thing. I would like to encourage other states to
9 implement that also so that their local schools and
their
10 people will know our culture and how we live and how
it
11 was in the past. So that's very important to our
Indian
12 people.
13 So with that, I would just like to thank you for
14 having this meeting and for taking the information
that
15 you heard today and speaking and implementing on
behalf
16 of all Indian people.
17 Thank you.
18 MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Just put out a
19 question you don't have to answer now, but one of the
20 things that we are working diligently on within
native
21 language is the certification and alternative
22 certification for language speakers. So we have been
23 hearing a lot of that, and so we have comprehensive

24 centers, TA comprehensive centers, and especially in
25 Oklahoma recently they have been able to work to
change

1 some of the state certification because where the
state

2 was creating, you know, what would be considered a
3 language speaker or teacher, and quite often with the
4 tribes it's not always the one that has gone through
the

5 state system and, you know, is certified in that way.
So

6 any information you have or any success stories
around

7 that, if you would let us know that would be great.

8 MR. GARCIA: Joe Garcia again from Ohkay

9 Owingeh, just on that one item.

10 The State of New Mexico, as I said earlier, has
11 implemented the Indian Education Act. Well, one of
the

12 requirements from our side that became part of that
law

13 is the certification of native teachers or for
language

14 and for cultural relevance, if you will. And so it's
up

15 to the tribe to certify their language teachers.

16 And so in Ohkay Owingeh, we have 12 on our

17 waiting list right now that are going to be certified
by

18 our tribal council. So that's part of a law that we
are

19 using our sovereignty as the basis for causing that
to

20 happen, but in partnership with the state of New
Mexico,

21 because we have a lot of students in the public
school

22 system and we want to be sure that the state doesn't
just

23 go out and do whatever it's going to do just because
it's
24 in the law somewhere, but the requirement is that the
25 tribe with their language certifies that teacher. And
1 the good thing about that is they don't have to be
2 certified educational teachers because it's hard to
find
3 those people, you know, that are working in the
school
4 system. But language speakers can be anyone that is
5 well-versed and knows the language, and so they don't
6 need all of the state other requirements.
7 And so that's the thing that is currently
8 working in New Mexico and a lot of the pueblos have
taken
9 part of that. So --
10 MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Thank you.
11 MR. GARCIA: -- so the working relationship
12 might be that some of the tribes as -- part of your
13 sovereign right to do that anyway, but if you are
talking
14 about public schools that are controlled by the state
15 then you have to worry about well, what is the state
16 going to do.
17 And that's why that law was so important. So
18 you might consider doing that as well.
19 And the other comment that I have, it has to do
20 with my brothers and sisters from Alaska that I have
21 heard the comment about their needs and their -- the
22 funding coming from the Federal Government going to
the
23 state. And the state chooses to do whatever it wishes
to
24 do, but I have heard that comment so many times that
what
25 are we doing actually about it, is my question,
because
1 it seems to not be getting addressed and if we
continue

2 year after year after year and it might even have to
do
3 with the fact that, you know, the state of Alaska is
a
4 PL-2A state which gives a lot of jurisdiction to the
5 state up to and including funds.
6 I know that was the situation with environmental
7 funding, it was sent to the state with the Alaska
tribes,
8 natives in the mix of the funding that should have
been
9 made available to them but when it went to the state
got
10 lost in the shuffle there purposely. Didn't go to the
11 Alaska natives.
12 And so I think that that's a bigger solution
13 than just educational consultation, but I bring it to
14 your attention because it really does need to be
15 addressed and if we can wind up the forces at every
16 consultation, then the Alaska situation I think can
be
17 amended.
18 But I think unfortunately, it's going to take
19 more than just the departments, I think it's going to
20 take Federal law to get that turned around otherwise
we
21 will be seeing this again ten years from now, 20
years
22 from now.
23 But I bring it to the attention because of I am
24 a firm believer that we should all support each other
25 and, of course, I have worked hard with my brothers
and
1 sisters from Alaska.

2 So thank you.

3 MR. LESSARD: Thank you.

4 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Do we have other tribal
5 leaders that would like a -- yes, it's time.

6 MR. HOWARD: Hello, my name is Gerald Howard and

7 I am a chairman of the Bishop Paiute Tribe. I am also
a
8 retired high school teacher. I taught in the schools
for
9 34 years, and I am fortunate to retire.
10 So with that said, I see some problem, you know,
11 there are some real fundamental problems in terms of
12 education for native, native students. And one of the
13 things is that education has to be relevant, and in
many
14 cases it's irrelevant.
15 And I say that because early in my, my career
16 public education was, was really kind of a local
affair
17 in California, left at the local school boards, local
18 districts, and then they came in with state
frameworks
19 and, you know, No Child Left Behind, and what came
down
20 was these standardized tests.
21 And for me as a teacher for probably ten years,
22 I taught Native American History, I taught Native
23 American Literature, and I did tutorial programs, and
24 those programs were good. I mean, they were good for
me
25 and they were good for the students and very
relevant.

1 And they were -- they were -- they were eager to
learn
2 those, those things that they really hadn't been
exposed
3 to before.
4 And then all of a sudden the testing came
5 through, and these frameworks, and because of the
school
6 district since they were mandated to do that, then
you
7 had to have these tests that were strictly in World
8 History, U.S. History, at least in the social
studies,

9 and as a result those programs that were -- that were
10 really good that were kind of on the -- that were
really
11 kind of locally developed were pushed out, and in
favor
12 of these standardized tests.
13 And as a result, those -- those classes like
14 Native American History, Native American Literature,
were
15 gone. Even though they were pretty significant to the
16 local, local population.
17 And, you know, it seems as though, you know,
18 historically education has always been a local
matter,
19 but in recent years it's becoming one that's kind of
20 homogenized, you know, everybody is going to get the
same
21 dose of same, same type of education.
22 And so that, that part of education that was
23 left to the local communities is pretty much gone and
I
24 would think that it would be important for local
school
25 districts, local communities to come back and have

1 control over at least some of that that would be
relevant
2 to them and to their students.
3 And I had a discussion earlier with a couple of
4 educators on historical trauma and I hadn't really,
you
5 know, talked much about that, and through the
discussion,
6 you know, that's -- even though they, you know, they
say
7 it's kind of a theory as far as the impact of that,
but
8 when you -- when you really think about it in terms
of
9 native students generational, all of these little
attacks

10 that hit on an individual that come from the past and
11 that they are thinking about in the present, and
maybe on
12 a daily basis or a weekly basis it's cumulative and
it
13 adds up, and it leads to a lot of problems.
14 And I really think the solution, at least one of
15 the solutions, would be in the form of education, and
an
16 education that's relevant, that gives them a better
17 understanding of who they are and where they have
come
18 from. And then that will give them direction in the
19 future.
20 And I think as far as education for native
21 people, you know, you have to have that relevancy,
you
22 have to deal with those -- you have to deal with that
23 historical trauma, but you can do it in ways through,
24 through the schools, whether they are tribally run
25 schools or public schools, but if you have the right
1 curriculum I think you can deal with those issues in
a
2 very positive, effective way.
3 You know, just thinking about that on a personal
4 level I was the first one in my family to go to
college,
5 first one to graduate, first one to retire. And, you
6 know, along the way you get reminders from people
that
7 you are on the right path. And they may be native
8 people, may be non-native people, but there are just
9 little things that kind of makes -- that give you
10 strength.
11 And as you start to understand your own history
12 you become the stronger person and you see things in
a
13 very different, different way. And I just think that,
14 you know, if we can move education in that direction,

15 giving more control to communities to establish their
own

16 curriculum and make things more relevant to students,
17 that's -- that's the best thing.

18 So that's all that I have to say. Thank you.

19 MS. ROMERO: Good afternoon. Wavalene Romero,
20 the vice-chairwoman for the Tohono O'odham Nation,
21 Southern Arizona, and we are actually --

22 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Could you --

23 THE WITNESS: Wavalene Romero, and I am
24 currently the vice-chairman for the Tohono O'odham
25 Nation, Southern Arizona. Our population base is
about

1 32,000 plus.

2 And the comments that I have is that we are, you
3 know, exploring. We have received the grant from
4 self-governance so we have received a grant and
really

5 looking at going self-governance.

6 Our BIA school, one of the things I wanted to
7 mention is that, you know, because of our population
8 there and we have charter schools, we have state
schools,

9 state funding school there, and we have, you know,
just

10 some of -- majority of our students, too, a high
11 population go to school in the cities off the nation,
and

12 one of the things that, you know, looking at in
regards

13 to self-governance is sustaining and requiring across
the

14 board one curriculum in regards to language and
culture,

15 and as it was stated earlier, that based on what the
16 funding sources of running those schools is, you
know,

17 the regulations and the requirements and the
criteria,

18 and really looking at the overall, and it would be,
you
19 know, really nice to see something from, you know, at
a
20 higher level acknowledging, you know, having those
21 curriculums for all the various tribes, and
regardless of
22 what the funding source is.
23 And, you know, I really appreciate, you know,
24 the grants and the opportunities for the grants and
25 helping to improve the education system. And as
native

1 communities we are entitled to all those grants but
there
2 is so much fine print and so much -- it's so
regulated,
3 it really limits the tribes on what they need to do
more
4 in regards to, you know, utilizing that funding.
5 So it kind of, it has so much limits, but yet
6 the grant is specific, you know, and open to all the
7 various tribes.
8 I don't have any specific grant in mind, but
9 pretty much that's how it works all the way, whether
it's
10 State or Federal funding, grants, there is so much
11 limitations. But yet they say it's to help, you know,
12 Indian Country. But then there is that.
13 So really trying to look at that and improve in
14 whatever way that, you know, we can do together as
native
15 communities to, you know, when we talk about
16 consultation, you know, hopefully that is a priority
for
17 others. If not, it is for our, our tribe because we
know
18 we are entitled to that grant funding, but at the
same
19 time, you know, we don't seek all the grants that we
20 should. But majority of the time it may be because we

21 can't meet those requirements and so we lose out.
22 And some are small, some are large. And again,
23 if it's education-related it should be a little more
open
24 for the tribes to decide on, you know, be able to
move
25 that funding around so it meets their local needs.

1 So those are just some, you know, a comment that
2 I wanted to make and that we are exploring, you know.
3 Right now, right now my tribe is really, you know, a
bit
4 reluctant in going self-governance because there is
so
5 much unmet needs of what they haven't done already in
6 regards to the BIE schools and it's, you know, it's,
it's
7 a big deal for us to have to inherit those burdens
and
8 unmet needs, but at the same time, trying to look at
it
9 on the positive side that we will have more control
over,
10 you know, in regards to self-governance and looking
at
11 it.
12 And it's really, you know, even with some of the
13 faculty, staff, you know, are they educated about
what
14 self-governance means? Not only for in the education
15 field, but in the health field.
16 So that's another one. It's not, you know,
17 having them understand and be educated. And if they
are
18 really about education, it shouldn't -- it shouldn't
19 be -- they shouldn't be threatened about, you know,
okay
20 now we are not going to be a Federal funded school,
we
21 are going to be a tribally-funded education.
22 So it is really key regardless to which schools

23 our students go to that it be, you know, kind of a
24 standard, standard of quality of education.
25 Too many times our students and maybe even the
1 parents and even the faculty are, you know, they
think
2 that the school's better than the other, and they
have
3 uniforms and they don't. And some of our students,
4 because of our land base, they don't have that option
of
5 where they are going to go to school.
6 So that needs to stop on, you know, based on
7 just because this school is not self-governance or
it's
8 not federally-funded but their funding source, they
are
9 able to do more by paying more to their teachers and
10 paying more to their staff and, you know, all these
other
11 extra things that they can do that the other school
12 systems can't, you know, on and off the reservation
when
13 education really is education because it has impacts,
14 too, you know, the, the pressure on our students and
15 their, their learning environment.
16 So it's at all levels. So I just wanted to note
17 that. And it's, you know, it's going to be a really
big
18 move and really assessing it. And I, you know, this
is
19 our first time being involved with self-governance in
20 regards to this.
21 So I really appreciate the consultation, and,
22 you know, hopefully there will be more TA available
to,
23 you know, not only my tribe but others.
24 And I don't know, we are the last ones, you
25 know, jumping on the ship here, but, you know, it is.
We

are trying to do it and do it right.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. LESSARD: Thank you.

4 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

5 MS. MILLS: Maryann Mills with the Kenaitze
6 Indian Tribe. And I'd like to thank Joe Garcia for
7 advocating for the Alaska indigenous people. He's
always

8 been a good advocate for us.

9 And I'd also like to bring your attention to the
10 Tribal Law and Order Commission report that was done
just

11 recently, and they devoted a whole chapter to Alaska
12 because they were so shocked at what they found was
13 happening in Alaska.

14 And reports from the commissioners stated that
15 the treatment of Alaska natives is criminal, and that
we

16 are a national disgrace.

17 And, and, you know, it's so, on so many issues,
18 including, you know, with our educational. And so I
19 think a good place to start is with education. And I
20 know one of the things we are going to be doing is
21 writing our own history. And I think that's a good
place

22 for tribes to write their own history.

23 Also, I'd like to -- I agree with Gerald Howard,
24 and we have also had historical trauma. And -- but I
25 won't go into that because that's not with the
education,

although the educational system does create trauma for
2 our children and they have.

3 And so I guess I would just like to ask you to
4 advocate for us and maybe begin addressing the
waivers of

5 sovereign immunity that the state is imposing on all
of

6 our programs.

7 Thank you very much.

8 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

9 MS. FYANT: Good afternoon. I am with Shelley
10 Fyant with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai
tribes in
11 Western Montana. I just wanted to address the BIE
12 restructuring. F-y-a-n-t, Shelley Fyant.
13 We have a grant school, Two Eagle River School
14 which is -- we are celebrating our 40th year this
year.
15 Actually, next week we have that celebration going
on.
16 But we are one of two grant schools that is
17 BIE-funded, and we have been working with the Office
of
18 Public Instruction in Montana to get state funding
19 because the only funding we get so far is the ISAP,
the
20 transportation, the special ed. you know, just
strictly
21 the BIE funding.
22 And the Office of Public Instruction is very
23 reluctant to share their foundation money with us,
that
24 that ANB money. We have looked at -- we have vetted
25 several options, you know, changing the
administrative

1 rules, doing legislation like Washington, Wyoming and
2 North Dakota did, but we couldn't afford to spend our
3 political capital on that, this session, because of
our
4 water compact.

5 So we are kind of at a standstill right there.
6 And as I understand from our current superintendent
that

7 the ISAP money that we do receive, is that a
commercial?

8 MS. SILVERTHORNE: That means the people who
9 were online with us have hung up. We were sent to the
10 elevator music. We are okay. Thank you.

11 MS. FYANT: So as I understand from our current
12 superintendent that the ISAP money we have is for the

13 basics, reading, writing, arithmetic. That it doesn't
14 fund history, language and culture. So historically,
our
15 tribe has funded that. And we are in the last year of
a
16 school improvement grant through BIE, and we -- I
think
17 we are on deck for a school improvement grant
extension.
18 So, you know, there is -- there is hope there,
19 but the argument we have made with the Office of
Public
20 Instruction is if 100, you know, like 100 tribal
21 students, if 100 kids moved in from Colorado they
would
22 be State Funded, but you have native kids that have
been
23 here for generations upon generations and we are not
24 eligible for that funding.
25 So I just wanted you to be aware of that.

1 The good news is we received an Apple grant. We
2 were one of three native communities in Montana that
3 received an Apple grant which is going to bring us
huge
4 technology and training and professional development
so
5 we are excited about that.
6 The only other issue that I want to bring up is
7 we have Salish/Kootenai college on our reservation,
and
8 we have two programs there, an elementary education
and a
9 secondary science degree, and it is near impossible
to
10 get those graduates hired in our public schools on
the
11 reservation. We have been having great difficulty
with
12 that.
13 You know, I think one of the answers is to have

14 natives on the local school boards. And I did that in
my
15 home community, and we institutionalized that policy
to
16 have the Indian education community be a part of
every
17 hiring committee, but in a neighboring community of
18 Polson they recently let a native teacher go, you
know,
19 who was due for tenure. Even though the union, the
20 Indian Education Committee, everybody, you know, was
for
21 that teacher.
22 So, you know, I don't know how we can affect
23 that, you know, on a higher level, on a state level.
24 But those are just two of the issues that I
25 have. Thank you.

1 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you, Shelley. And by
2 the way, Shelley is the tribal council from my home.
3 It's good to have you here, thank you.
4 I have a note from our folks who are telling us
5 the times and what we are supposed to be doing. And
6 thank you to all the tribal leaders who are still
here,
7 we appreciate the lively conversation we have had
this
8 morning, and the time has gone so quickly. I can't
9 believe it's already time to send you on to the
10 self-governance activities.
11 So for thank you for being here. The Department
12 Of Interior pre-meeting will be in Carlson 1 and 2,
the
13 IHS pre-meeting training will be in Carlson 4, and
the
14 Carlson rooms are to the -- my right? To the right of
15 this room. Thank you.
16 Thank you for being here today.
17 We'd like to take about a ten-minute break and
18 then we will come back and then we will proceed right
19 into public comment.

20 (Brief recess taken).

21 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you for coming up to
22 the front tables. We were feeling like we were all
alone

23 at this end of the room. Thank you.

24 We have some folks who are on the phone who have
25 diligently been waiting for us to come back to public

1 comment and so we will begin with Rachel Allen who is
on

2 the line, and her mute is unhooked.

3 MS. ALLEN: Yes. Can you hear me okay?

4 MR. LESSARD: Yes.

5 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Yes. Could you please tell
6 us where you are from.

7 MS. ALLEN: Yes. Good afternoon, my name is
8 Rachel Allen, I am the Director of the Delaware
Nation

9 Vocational Rehabilitation Program. It's located in
10 Oklahoma, and we are a member of the only national
tribal

11 organization that's dedicated to increasing
opportunities

12 for our people living with disabilities.

13 This organization is called CANAR, it stands for
14 the Consortium of Native Americans Administrators for
15 Rehabilitation. So it is spelled C-A-N-A-R and CANAR
16 works to build a world of full inclusion for American
17 Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities.

18 I am here to give comment as to how the
19 Rehabilitation Services Administration actions and
20 policies impact American Indians' vocational
21 rehabilitation programs and those are funded through
22 grants from United States Department of Education.

23 According to the U.S. census approximately
24 24 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives
have a
25 disability and this is the most disproportionate rate
of

1 disabilities of all population groups. And the needs
of
2 those individuals with disabilities are often
compounded
3 by factors with high poverty, geographic isolation
which
4 affects how well one can tend to their disabilities'
5 needs, high drop out rates and limited employment
6 opportunities in their tribal communities.
7 In 1998 the amendments to the Americans With
8 Disabilities Act set aside a reserve of at least one
9 percent but not more than 1.5 percent of vocational
10 rehabilitation funds for Title 1, Part C, Section 121
11 which is the section that addresses tribal vocational
12 rehabilitation grants.
13 And first I'd like to address the request for
14 the full 1.5 percent of the appropriated funds for
Title
15 1 programs for the fiscal years 2015 and 2016.
16 We are currently only being funded at a rate of
17 1.1 percent of the possible 1.5 percent, and for too
many
18 years tribal people with disabilities have not
received
19 vocational rehabilitation services at an equal rate
or at
20 an equal quality as the general public through the
state
21 VR programs and there are currently only 85 tribal
22 programs throughout the country struggling to serve
the
23 needs of over 600,000 American Indian and Alaska
Natives
24 that are of working age who are living with
disabilities
25 with the latest appropriation of \$41.2 million and
1 compared to the figure appropriated to those programs
2 compared to the state VR programs there are
approximately
3 1 million non-natives served with over \$38.1 billion.

4 Many individuals who go through vocational
5 rehabilitation, both native and non-native, will
receive
6 assistance to complete higher education or other
7 employment related training in order to help them be
8 competitive in their efforts to seek and maintain
9 suitable jobs for their disabilities.
10 A very important component for tribal VR
11 programs is that the programs provide culturally
relevant
12 services, including traditional healing services
which
13 the state is unable to provide and it wouldn't
generally
14 be appropriate for them to do so anyway.
15 Also, the American Indians VR programs are
16 located directly in the tribal communities and employ
17 tribal members whereas the state VR programs often
are
18 not accessible in terms of distance to the tribal
members
19 and are employed by individuals who are non-natives
and
20 don't understand tribal culture.
21 The first step in the right direction to fulfill
22 the congressional intent, the Federal government has
a
23 longstanding obligation to meet the educational and
24 employment training needs of tribal members
regardless of
25 their economic challenges.

1 Further, the state will have to compete against
2 each other like the tribes do. You don't see, you
know,
3 Nevada competing against California or the state of
4 Washington competing against Oregon, but the tribes
have
5 to compete against each other every five years, and
it's

6 already grossly inadequate set-aside funds. They have
to
7 use their own program staff to compete while they are
8 still maintaining their program and they don't have
the
9 luxury of a designated grant writer or other
resources
10 often to pull from for support while they are doing
the
11 grant writing process.
12 As they are already on a very limited budget and
13 staff, to pull the staff members away to try to
compete
14 for the next five years funding really is a strain on
15 their personal resources and the professional
resources.
16 So Federal education and employment policies
17 that fail to recognize government parity between the
18 tribes and states hurt the American economy by
limiting
19 the economic potential of tribal nations. And tribes
20 should be recognized alongside their state government
21 peers in Federal policy.
22 Right now there are many tribal programs that
23 are in their fifth year of their five-year grant
cycle,
24 and today with the current amount set aside for voc
rehab
25 programs there will only be enough funding to see a
1 maximum of 75 percent of the currently and previously
2 funded programs that will be competing this year.
3 It's a big concern with what's going to happen
4 with those other 25 percent of the programs that are
up
5 for refunding but they may not get funded even if
they
6 have really good, high quality fundable grant
7 applications and make them serving individuals with
8 disabilities in their tribal communities for years,
some

9 of them, 15 to 20 years, if they are at risk of
losing
10 their funding right now.
11 And they have been helping thousands of native
12 individuals with significant disabilities over those
13 years to receive training to become employed
successfully
14 in their community.
15 So one of the concerns is if they are not funded
16 then where are they going to go for services, the
17 individuals with disabilities? They probably won't be
18 successful in seeking training or employment without
19 those programs.
20 So our set-aside should be statutorily
21 permanent, just like the state, and at a higher
amount to
22 reflect the need of the American Indian and Alaska
Native
23 populations that are of working age and have
24 disabilities.
25 We've proven we are successful despite the low
1 funding and the large amount of barriers. If we can
get
2 the full set aside of 1.5 percent then at least for
this
3 year all of the 38, currently up for refunding, 38
tribal
4 VR programs that are currently up for refunding will
be
5 able to get funded and continue to provide those
6 necessary services.
7 Also, the amount shouldn't be so much that it is
8 set aside for us. If we were able to get that
increase
9 at some point then that would allow for more tribal
VR
10 programs to become funded in the future. Because
right
11 now, with just 85 programs, that doesn't cover a lot
of

12 the areas that have tribal populations that could use
13 those services.

14 The second thing that I would like to address is
15 the lack of competency required of our peer reviewers
for

16 the grant applications.

17 I was really pleased to hear Mr. Garcia speaking
18 about this as a concern for other programs as well.

19 Tribes oftentimes have various education,
20 training and employment programs through different
21 funding sources and numerous Federal agencies award
22 grants that the tribes use. So frequently, tribes
will

23 split their full-time employees' time and workload
24 between more than one program. We see this a lot in
25 tribal VR where some of the staff members will serve
part

1 of their time on tribal VR, but they also might be in
2 maybe a social services program or an education
program

3 for part of their time.

4 So this has caused some programs or potential
5 programs to lose points on their grant applications
6 because the peer reviewers don't understand how
tribal

7 entities split up their workload and how they do
their

8 budgets.

9 For instance, a tribal VR staff member might be
10 listed as .5 full-time employee by that program but
then

11 they are listed as a program with another tribal
program

12 as well.

13 Another example is tribes using Public Laws
14 1022-477 which allows federally-recognized tribes and
15 Native Alaskan entities to combine Federal employment
and

16 training formula for their grant funds. These tribes
17 admit to the Department of the Interior, excuse me, a

18 single plan with a single budget and a single reporting

19 system.

20 And like I mentioned, that kind of hurts tribal

21 VR programs that have peer reviewers that don't

22 understand that.

23 There have been programs that have been denied

24 awards because the peer reviewers didn't understand.

25 They didn't -- they didn't give them the points that they

1 may have had they understood that.

2 However, the way the system is currently, the

3 peer reviewers aren't required to read all of the

4 information in the proposal, they are only required

to

5 read the narrative portion of the proposal submitted for

6 funding which is a limited number of pages, and it can

7 greatly reduce the amount of information that's being

8 presented to them.

9 If tribes include their explanations in an

10 appendix of the proposal, the peer reviewer is not

11 required to read that and that can go unread.

12 So especially, peer reviewers that have little

13 to no experience with working with tribes or

14 understanding tribes or tribal government or the

15 challenges that tribes face when serving individuals with

16 disabilities in a culturally appropriate way, that the

17 information just gets overlooked by them and it look

18 likes they are not fulfilling, they don't have a strong

19 enough approval if maybe another tribe does that doesn't

20 split their tribal staff members in that way.

21 So these two topics, the amount of Title 1

22 set-aside funds and the competency of the peer reviewers

23 for our grant competitions for American Indians
24 vocational rehabilitation programs, these decisions
25 greatly impact the tribes and those they serve.

1 Right now there is a current grant competition
2 underway to see who is going to receive services,
receive
3 funding for the next five years. And like I said, you
4 have 38 programs currently up for refunding, but not
5 enough funds to even fund those individual programs
that
6 are up for refunding at this time.

7 Thank you very much for the opportunity to share
8 these concerns with you.

9 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you, Rachel.

10 MS. GILLISEN: Our next public comment is Lori
11 Pasqua.

12 MS. SILVERTHORNE: And Lori, my apology for not
13 being able to call you up earlier. Thank you for
14 waiting.

15 MS. PASQUA: You are welcome. I'd like to
16 welcome the U.S. Department of Education to my
country.

17 I am a Washoe, I am from the northern side of Lake
Tahoe.

18 So if you get a chance, take a drive up there. Get
our

19 lake. Yeah.

20 Of course, my name is Lori Pasqua, I am what you
21 call a pre-college advisor for the Washoe tribe.
22 My tribe is a very unique tribe whereas we do --
23 our state has the LEA. The districts take on the
Title 7

24 money, we -- our district is Carson City and Douglas
25 County, and they write a letter to our tribe.

In 1990 our tribe leader went to the districts
2 and we are allowed to have our own, our Title 7
monies.

3 So during that time before we received the tribal
money

4 we had a high dropout rate and drugs and alcohol in
the
5 school systems. Plus parents that would not attend
the
6 schools because lack of understanding and plus
because of
7 their -- our, what we had gone through, our history.
8 So in our schools now we do have -- well, let me
9 take this back.
10 When I first started working for the school, I
11 have worked in education for the Washoe Tribe for
12 26 years now, and when I first started working I was
a
13 young gal, I was in my twenties, I started as a
tutor,
14 and I was tutoring outside the school system.
15 Years later we came up with a new position for a
16 college position to go in the high schools and help
them
17 with college. I entered the high school, felt really
--
18 I didn't feel comfortable because I myself don't feel
19 comfortable around non-natives. So I was put -- had a
20 little Roll-O-Dex, went into the school with that
little
21 Roll-O-Dex, tried to call students out, didn't know
how,
22 didn't have access. You know, the laws, all that.
23 And I sat there and I started getting -- I
24 started talking to one of the registrars, and she had
25 mentioned to me what I needed to do in order to get
the
1 students. Once I started calling the students I was
2 noticing credits weren't there. How am I supposed to
3 talk about college when credits, units, they didn't
know
4 what was going on. I assumed, you know, counselors
were
5 telling these students.
6 So I went back and I asked the registrar to help

7 me and we worked together as far as getting --
tracking
8 where their units were, how far they are from
graduation.
9 And I know as native people we are very visual
10 people, so I visualized how their goal would look and
11 what, what would happen.
12 So I stayed in this position for 18 years. And
13 we now currently, we are up to, if there is 20 high
14 school students out of those 20 we get 17 to
graduate.
15 So as we moved along we ended up with a pre-college
16 advisor position. That's where I stand now because we
17 were noticing, yes, they are graduating, they are
going
18 to college, but we -- it stops right there. They are
not
19 continuing. They don't know how to get -- their
parents
20 don't know how to get there.
21 So that's where this position came in. So the
22 Title 7 program is very important for our people and
I
23 was very -- I was listening to all these tribal
leaders
24 hearing that some of them don't even have access to
this
25 program where we can actually do something with this
1 money in order to progress as far as graduation. And
now
2 possibly other tribes can get pre-college advisors in
3 order.
4 When I was in the school district, like I said,
5 it was very uncomfortable. I had to start acting as
an
6 advocate for the tribe, an advocate for our people
and
7 that includes working with teachers, working with
8 counselors, working with superintendent of schools.
9 We have gotten to the point where we do have

10 MOU's now in place so that our tutors and other
people
11 can go, we are actually based in the school system
now.

12 Our people are.

13 The MOU's are wonderful because, because they
14 help all of us to be able to get access to what we
need.

15 So hopefully that's how it can go.

16 One of the things that we are having trouble
17 with now is the having to be quarter blood versus the
18 decendents. That's a stickler for us because, I mean,
19 you know, we have to be quarter blood. So we are
trying

20 to --

21 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Not for Title 7.

22 MS. PASQUA: Not for Title 7, no, that's the

23 506, yeah. I was thinking of the JOM. Yeah, the JOM
is

24 the one we want because we use both programs. We want
to

25 try to get the JOM on top because we do have a lot of

1 decendents in that. But the 506 is Title 7, yes.

2 We do collaborate with our superintendent of
3 schools letting them know that we will be giving out
4 506's and it works rather well.

5 In fact, we are losing our superintendent of
6 schools, so I was asked to be on their -- to be one
of

7 the people to pick a new superintendent of schools.

8 So what I am asking here is what I am seeing
9 what would work is if we could get -- you were
talking

10 about alternative certificates. If we could have
11 liaisons from the tribes to be these people to be
12 advocates and put these things in place for public
13 schools around the nation.

14 That after hearing what everybody was saying, I
15 got to thinking, you know, if we could do that for

16 language why don't we do that for the tribes. Because
it
17 does take a tribal leader, it does take our tribal
people
18 to do these things because we are the people that see
it
19 in the communities, we are the people that have to do
--

20 be advocates for ourself to get in there.
21 I know you people are here, but all you guys can
22 do is help us to get some money or to help things,
23 programs run, you know, but we do have to try to get
in
24 there to the systems and work with these people.
25 I know it's not very easy, me myself as growing

1 up, I wouldn't talk to anybody. I can't even believe
I
2 am talking up here. I mean, I was the shyest person,
3 ever. I wouldn't go talk to a counselor, I had no
clue
4 what could help me, you know.

5 But as the years went by and as I was seeing my
6 people needed help, even the parents as far as going
in
7 the school district and assisting them with the IEPs,
8 explaining things, why these decisions are being
made,
9 helps them tremendously.

10 We are now currently getting parents to come to
11 the schools and listening to what the staff have to
say.

12 Although we do have to assist them with explanations,
so,
13 okay.

14 I want to thank you.

15 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

16 MS. GILLISEN: The next one we have is Arlene
17 Dilts Jackson.

18 MS. JACKSON: Good afternoon. My name is Arlene
19 Dilts Jackson, I am the tribal administrator for the

20 Ketchikan Indian Community, the southernmost
community in
21 Alaska, which is like the weather, actually,
22 temperature-wise is kind of like it is here right
now.
23 Thought I was going to be in the warm.
24 I am going to speak to a number of issues. I
25 have just jotted some notes down to kind of refresh
my

1 memory.

2 First, your consultation policy itself is
3 actually a well-written document. The million dollar
4 question is what does trust responsibility mean.
5 The other million dollar question is what is
6 meaningful consultation and input.

7 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Yes.

8 MS. JACKSON: And I watched as a number of
9 agencies have wrestled with this one. You know,
10 defining, you know, kind of the generic policy that,
you

11 know, that outlines the process that would allow us
to

12 have that meaningful input. And yours, you know,
passes

13 the test.

14 The real problem comes in at the implementation
15 level because you have agencies that use what I call
a

16 bare minimum approach. Only what the policy says we
have

17 to do. And then you listen, and there is no real
18 dialogue. We are not having a dialogue.

19 I am offering input into the system and dialogue
20 is if I raise an issue if we discuss it.

21 So in order for this to be meaningful for me on
22 your report back section, that's a good one, but it
23 should be report back with a discussion of the
reason,

24 you know, why you, you made the decision that you
made.

25 It's not, you know, it's not I considered your input
and

1 the answer is no. It's I considered, I considered
your

2 input and we decided this because.

3 And that's, that's an element I think that has
4 been missing from a lot of our dialogue here.

5 The other thing that I wanted to mention because
6 it was mentioned by a couple of the other people here
is

7 we are forced to deal with the states who may be
8 resistant to tribal involvement and whatever it is we
are

9 doing, whether it's education, highway, you know,
10 developing transportation projects, whatever. But
there

11 is a huge chunk of Federal money in whatever the
state

12 does and just because the government is passing
through

13 that money does not mean that you are now relieved of
the

14 responsibility to consult and to enforce that

15 consultation policy on those members that you are --
on

16 those entities that you are passing the funds through
to.

17 The third thing, and I am going to take it down

18 a notch to the operational level. Our kids do not
fare

19 well in this system. Our kids -- my kids were in
school

20 20 years ago and I was wrestling with my son being in
an

21 alternative school setting and somehow, you know,
when

22 the tribe manages that it develops the connotation of
23 lesser than. We have -- the KIC has, through a

24 partnership with the school district, we are managing
our

25 alternative school. And it has -- it's stigmatized
that

1 way. Even though we are the meeting all of the same
2 requirements, but we are developing, but we have a
more

3 culturally-relevant approach, right. So, yeah, at
those

4 levels we are not making progress, guys. I mean, I've
--

5 I've wrestled with this 20 years ago and I hear the
6 same -- I hear the same cry today, which means we are
not

7 making progress quickly enough from my perspective.

8 And the other -- and there are a whole lot of

9 contributing factors. One is, you know, maybe the
social

10 problems, you know, the problems at home, you know,
but

11 those are not just native problems, that's across the
12 nation. I don't care what color you are, that's an
issue

13 that will affect your ability to succeed.

14 The other is you have the stigmatized kind of

15 thing going on where somehow your kids are in a
school

16 that's lesser than. We have to overcome that.

17 The other thing is something that you guys

18 haven't looked at. That there is systemic
discrimination

19 going on here whereas you have rules set in place
that

20 are designed to create a disparate outcome, and that
may

21 be contributing to the problem as a whole.

22 And if the fact that you can't get the, you

23 know, the local players or the state to the table to

24 discuss how we might, you know, collectively and

25 collaboratively overcome this, is a challenge.

1 So let me tell you a little bit about KIC and

2 probably all other tribes in Alaska. We are landless,
3 guys. You don't understand what that means. When you
4 have a landless situation they are all the same
problems,
5 but you have control over your land base and you have
the
6 ability to generate other revenue that can be cast at
7 meeting your needs.
8 We are very limited in that regard, very
9 dependent on the Federal funds.
10 So, you know, we are very -- any little change
11 in the funding formula can, you know, can affect the
12 smallest tribe at the worst. That, and the fact that
you
13 have -- you are forcing us to jump through
increasingly
14 sophisticated hoops in order to get that money means
that
15 your smallest and neediest tribes are going to fall
out
16 of the process.
17 And then you have just simple logistical
18 considerations where in a remote situation you are
not
19 able to log on and file electronically because you
don't
20 have that service available.
21 So you have to take those things into
22 consideration as, you know, at the policy level as
you go
23 about setting these things up.
24 The other thing that I think you are doing well
25 is the MOA is great, the grant is great. The one that
1 reinforces the tribal state. But it's not enough.
2 I think if you are truly interested -- see, what
3 we have is a series of programs at KIC, early
childhood
4 learning and daycare center, youth after school
programs,

5 some of these are Justice, some of these are
Education,
6 but most of these are compact-funded programs. We
have
7 our voc training, our higher education, our cultural
8 programs where -- and our language program where our
9 elders are working with our youth.
10 We force our compact, we use our compact money
11 to support all of these needs when there is only just
a
12 small portion really dedicated to, to education and
13 training.
14 So I think that you guys represent a key source
15 of funds that can help us, and I think you have an
16 obligation to consider a way to fairly distribute
those
17 funds because when you throw us all into the same
pool
18 with all other users to apply for a grant you are not
19 honoring your government-to-government obligations
that
20 you have to us; okay?

21 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Could you tell me what you
22 are talking about, which --

23 THE WITNESS: Examining other compact, other
24 funding relationships like your government-to-
government
25 relationships. Like we have a program arrangement
with

1 Federal Highways Administration to administer indian
2 set-aside funds. In that agreement we agree, on
behalf

3 of the agency, to deliver -- to deliver services on
their

4 behalf to the native people; right? You could do
5 something similar.

6 I mean, I see agencies moving down that path.

7 For a long time I think that there were people that
8 thought that if all we needed is a BIA and that
handled

9 the government's obligation. I don't believe so.
10 I believe that trust responsibility cuts across all
agency
11 lines. And that the relationship that we have with
each
12 agency should be that kind of relationship,
13 government-to-government. Not where we are asking for
14 funds at this end and we don't really have a say.
15 But we craft those rules together. And that way
16 you don't have, you know, this lower end situation
where
17 you are needling with other people at this end who
have
18 no authority to change any policy.
19 So, yeah, the funding is the be all end all for
20 us to have a say in the delivery of our own services
and
21 to be engaged in that process is absolutely crucial.
22 Otherwise, 20 years from now we will be discussing
the
23 same thing.

24 So with that, I will close.

25 MS. GILLISEN: Lucy Nelson. Okay, so maybe she

1 left. Stephen Chapin. Did he leave, too?

2 Kellie Harry?

3 MS. HARRY: Good afternoon, thank you for the
4 opportunity to share some thoughts. I saw the flier
and

5 I just wanted to come down.

6 I am a teacher at Pyramid Lake Junior Senior
7 High School which is one of the Bureau of Indian
8 Education schools here at Nevada.

9 Just what I have been noticing, I am a first
10 year teacher as well. This is my first teaching job
11 that I accepted and wanted to accept at this school
to

12 work specifically with American Indian students and
to

13 close the achievement gap among American Indian
students.

14 I have put in a lot of time and research into
15 looking at the reasons of why this achievement gap
16 exists. A lot of it, of course, and we know and have
17 acknowledged is a lot of Federal policies that have
18 affected that.

19 A lot of the results of those Federal policies,
20 we know and have the research to show that those are
the

21 causes of the historical trauma that Indian tribes
and

22 communities and students are facing.

23 We also have looked at these issues so much that
24 so many programs and curriculums and teacher training
25 programs have been developed based on best practices
that

1 have been set forth in all the empirical evidence.

2 However, again, what we are hearing from the tribal
3 leaders here today, educational professionals within
the

4 state, is that even through the creation of these,
5 without the requirement of or making it a Federal
policy,

6 that these programs be implemented or that these
training

7 programs in developing new teachers aren't required
for

8 teachers to get in their teacher training program or
9 required to take as administrators or any teachers
10 working in BIE schools or working with students of
11 American Indian population, we are never going to
close

12 that gap.

13 So it doesn't matter how much work is done on a
14 local level. Within here in Nevada we do have the
state

15 statute with the teacher certification for tribal
16 languages. Like you were looking or and asking about
as

17 far as what can be done, and so the state has adopted
18 those statutes. There is a Great Basin Language

19 Certificate that is available, and again, numerous
20 language programs and communities have developed
teacher
21 training programs to train and recruit teachers.
22 However, the funding to do those things is, is not
23 available as easily.
24 Just recently, our Washoe Tribe received an ANA
25 Grant. Pyramid Lake Tribe was running off the
language

1 grant for about ten years before our grant writer
forgot
2 to submit a proposal so never did receive the
funding.
3 It's been almost ten years since then.
4 So we are at this very, very, very crucial point
5 in the American Indian lives of -- in the State of
Nevada
6 where I just came out of a job as language
coordinator
7 for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony which is located
right
8 here across the street from the Grand Sierra, where
again
9 when I left there last year out of 1100 members they
are
10 down to three fluent speakers.
11 You know, out of my Pyramid Lake Tribe which is
12 nearing 3,000 members, we have maybe 30 speakers. So
we
13 are just at this very crucial point where I think all
our
14 educators, our tribal leaders, everybody has put
their
15 best foot forward into creating these models and they
are
16 available through our Nevada Department of Education
17 website; however, without any requirement to take
action
18 for, for school districts or teachers to train their
19 teachers to get them into a cultural proficiency or

20 competent state to be able to work with our indian
21 students, it will never be successful.
22 So some suggestions for that. There are two.
23 You know, maybe make that a Federal requirement,
24 especially for your BIE schools, administrators and
25 teachers. Like again, what I have noticed at the
school

1 I work at our principal is just learning how BIE
works.

2 I think he's been there for six years. We have some
3 other teachers that have been there for a number of
years

4 teaching literature, social studies, math. None of
these

5 teachers have, I don't think, put in the right amount
of

6 effort to understand how to close the achievement gap
7 among American students. And again, if it was a
8 requirement, it would be. And I think it's such an
easy

9 fix because all the manuals, all the curriculum has
10 already been created that it could be such a quick
11 turnaround, it can be so simple.

12 And maybe just making a Federal policy would
13 help, you know, to make that a requirement that
states

14 would have to adopt.

15 So to get your teaching license here in the
16 State of Nevada you have to, and it may be relevant
to

17 other states, pass a state constitution test and a
U.S.

18 constitution test. So maybe a cultural proficiency
test

19 as far as what tribes are working with within their
20 state, within their region that they are planning to
21 teach in, that they have a basic knowledge of that.

22 Also, required continued professional
23 development in the area of American Indian students.

24 There is my first year of teaching. As first year

25 teacher, I didn't see any type of professional
1 developments that were specifically geared to
American
2 Indian students. I was never offered those type of
3 professional developments. A lot of it is on my own
4 self-research.
5 So making that, again, as a requirement that
6 there are, as new studies and new findings are coming
7 out, that it's a requirement for all teachers to
continue
8 their professional development working with American
9 Indian students. And again, maybe tying this to the
10 teacher licensure that they are proficient in at
least
11 their native history or culture in their state.
12 So funding for teacher training programs, like I
13 said, funding is, is hard and few and, you know, we
all
14 greatly appreciate the funding that is available
through
15 the language preservation and other programs that
help
16 develop self-sufficiency for tribes, but maybe
17 specifically more allocated to this type of teacher
18 program to allocate maybe consultants for the school
19 districts or the states that can go out and perform
these
20 type of teacher trainings or professional development
21 classes.
22 And again, with the 26 tribes in Nevada,
23 everybody has a higher education person within their
24 tribe already so maybe just, again, finding the
resources
25 or the policy to actually implement those into the
school

1 districts.
2 The next thing I have as well is requirement for
3 funding. Nevada lacks a tribal college. Tribal

4 colleges, again, have proven much significance as far
as

5 providing training for community members, tribal
6 community members so tribes can work towards
7 self-sustainability. Can work towards, you know,
being

8 specifically geared to work with American Indian
youth.

9 So again, any type of training or professional
10 development would be helpful, especially when it's
11 specific to the American Indian needs, language and
12 cultural needs.

13 But also I think as far as the higher education
14 level, being able to, yes, retain -- obtain this type
of

15 education where, where we have our community members
are

16 proficient to be able to sit on our boards and make,
you

17 know, continued positive decisions.

18 So looking at maybe a requirement for each state
19 to hold some type of tribal college education, making
20 that a mandatory thing. I know the colleges that --
and

21 the states that do have tribal colleges, you know,
their

22 communities are on the rise.

23 Like I said, this is so critical for the State
24 of Nevada. I know from firsthand experience being a
25 native Nevadan and going through the educational
system

1 here and looking back where our people are truly at
the

2 last tail end of disintegration where things are
going to

3 be done. Our language and culture is going to be
gone.

4 And I don't know how many are going to want to even
try

5 if there is nothing there, you know.

6 So just wanted to really stress that, that
7 critical need for programing, educational programing
to
8 close the achievement gap among American Indian
students
9 in Nevada.

10 All right. Thank you.

11 MR. LESSARD: Thank you.

12 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Okay, I understand that this
13 is the last person who has registered for the list,
and

14 so what we will look at doing, then, is to see if
there

15 are any further comments that should be made. We have
a

16 lot of time left here. What would you like to do?

17 MS. GILLISEN: This gentleman would like to
18 speak.

19 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Okay. I thought you were
20 exchanging and he said no.

21 Okay, yes, please proceed.

22 Remember to give your name and where you are
23 from.

24 MR. PUTRA: I am the tribal administrator for
25 Shoshone Paiute Tribes in -- on the Duck Valley
Indian

1 Reservation. I am an enrolled member of the Chippewa
2 pre-tribe from Rocky Boy Reservation.

3 I have lived in Nevada, Northern Nevada for over
4 30 years now, married into Shoshone Paiute tribes.

5 One of the things that I think that happens
6 with --

7 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Sir, excuse me, please state
8 your name for the record.

9 MR. PUTRA: Pete Putra. P-u-t-r-a.

10 Anyway, what I'd like to comment on is there is
11 something that came to mind to me as far as the state
and

12 tribal relationship and partnerships.

13 One of the things that I see as, and being a

14 classroom teacher for three years, one of the things
that
15 I see that the states are doing in terms of public
16 schools is 90 -- well, our public school is kind of
17 unique in that 95 percent of our students are native,
and
18 probably even more, more so, they range in the
19 90th percentile, anyway, of a public school. And it's
a
20 school that is run basically by a board of regents
that
21 sits in Elko County, and none of the people that sit
on
22 the school board are native.
23 We have had a couple of -- one native
24 superintendent. We have had -- currently we have a
25 principal who is native, and we have several teachers
in

1 the school that are native.
2 We are unique in that we sit on the border
3 between Idaho and Nevada. Half of the reservation is
in
4 Idaho, the other half is in Nevada. One of the things
5 that we see, like I said, on the stateside
increasingly
6 each year is the standards that keep going up, keep
7 raising the bar, making it more difficult for our
8 students to achieve the things that they need to
achieve
9 in the system.
10 And listening to the other tribal administrator
11 from Alaska Native, it is true that a lot of our
students
12 don't fit into the system very well. Many of our
13 students go on to college ill-prepared for what they
are
14 about to encounter, and some of them don't make it.
Some
15 of them do, some of them don't. But we are seeing a
16 majority of the students that don't make it.

17 An ideal world for me would be to leave the
18 standards the way they are and don't try to raise the
bar
19 each year. To make it more difficult for native
students
20 to achieve those students that they need to achieve.
And
21 I see it a lot. I seen it a lot in the classrooms
where
22 students just give up.
23 And part of the reason is because they, they
24 just don't -- can't pass the proficiencies. Couple
years
25 ago, or maybe a year ago the proficiencies in the
State

1 of Nevada, they were raised to include science as
part of
2 the proficiency. Before it was reading, writing and
3 arithmetic, and now science is part of the
proficiency
4 exam now, too.

5 So now the students have to pass those
6 proficiencies in order to get a high school diploma.
It

7 would have been nice if they had kept it that way
when I
8 was in high school to where you just get the credits
and
9 you graduate, you didn't need to take a test to
graduate.

10 But before forward progress, more and more
11 students in the larger dominant culture are -- they
are
12 achieving a lot more, their intelligence level is a
lot
13 higher in terms of the system that they are working
in.

14 The system that we are working in doesn't allow
15 us to explore our intelligences which are different,
in a

16 way, than, say, the dominant culture's way of seeing
the
17 world. So a lot of our students do falter, do fall
18 behind.
19 And on the positive side we have a few that have
20 gone through and broke through all of those barriers
and
21 are able to get their education, are able to fulfill
and
22 be a productive part of society and in their homes
and
23 their families and the loved ones on the positive
side of
24 it.
25 But like I said, the majority of our students

1 don't make it, and they are the ones that I really
tried
2 to focus on and look at and find out what it is
within
3 the system that's not done correctly.
4 We work with both the State of Idaho and the
5 State of Nevada in terms of our Nevada Department of
6 Education, Idaho State Department of Education, in
trying
7 to come up with the strategic plans that each state
is
8 required to come up with to kind of work with not
only
9 higher ed students, but also students in the
classrooms
10 in these BIE schools.
11 This school that is in Owyhee, Nevada is not a
12 BIE school, it's a public school. And so it's kind of
a
13 unique situation. But that's what I have seen, seen
over
14 the years with probably a big sticking point for a
lot of
15 our students. And I want to see all of our students

16 achieve, you know, from the small, from the youngest
to

17 the oldest.

18 And we start in with Head Start. We have a
19 daycare, we have a preschool, and Head Start's run by
20 ITCN. My grandson, it's kind of funny because my
21 grandson goes -- went to Head Start and they told him
22 that he was morbidly obese. If you see my grandson
you'd

23 say no, he is not morbidly obese. Okay, those are
things

24 that -- the sort of things that we see that it's not
25 really like that, you know.

1 And so we try to do our best to work with our
2 students, but just like anything else, we do have
people

3 that work within our tribal programs as well that
don't

4 think that education is the key to their progress.

But

5 it is a key.

6 I coached basketball for three or four years
7 with the Owyhee team as the assistant coach and I
worked

8 with students and I would indicate to the student
that,

9 you know, you can play basketball, it's good, it's
fun,

10 it's an activity that you can do to stay out of
trouble

11 and keep from getting bored, but it's just something
you

12 are going to do.

13 Because the other part of it is you need to get
14 your -- you need to work on your academics, you need
to

15 work on those to get to achieve the things that you
want

16 to achieve.

17 And that's really the, the key to it. I would

18 tell them if you have need to go and do your homework
and

19 skip practice, that's fine with me, go and do your
20 homework. Get it done. And, of course, there is the
2.0

21 GPA that has to be achieved by all of our students
before

22 they can even play any activities.

23 So those type of things I think really assist
24 and help students within the classroom.

25 I also think that when we talked about school

1 boards that those school boards are really critical
in

2 terms of how we can work with students within
schools.

3 Those school boards really need to be representative
4 of -- have people on those school boards that are
native,

5 that understand the culture, that understand what's
going

6 on with our students.

7 And so those types of things, I think, are
8 really crucial in making the changes.

9 True partnership between the states is one thing
10 that we need to continue to build upon. Whatever --
11 however, this is going to turn out in terms of a
12 partnership with the states and the TEA's, which is
what

13 we are. As a tribal administrator I oversee all of
the

14 JOM higher ed AVT. We do not have voc rehab under our
PO

15 102477. We are under that program as well. And we
have

16 compacted those different areas of education.

17 And also, it's crucial for us to continue to
18 have the funding available to continue to do that. We
19 are unfortunate in that there is -- we have no
gaming.

20 Our resources are limited in terms of what sort of

21 revenue we can bring back into the tribe.
22 And so those, those types of things we have to
23 think about how are we going to generate some revenue
for
24 education programs, and I commend the tribes that are
25 gaming and are able to take some of their revenue
funds

1 and put them back into their education programs, but
we

2 are not that fortunate in that sense. And I think
many
3 tribes in Nevada wouldn't have gaming because what's
the
4 point? I mean, we probably wouldn't make much money,
you
5 know.

6 So those are -- I guess one of the crucial
7 points for me is that we need to just kind of slow
down

8 in terms of our standards that we are setting. If it
was

9 me and I could make a complete decision about
standards

10 I'd say let's do away with them. Not only the
11 standardized testing, but the proficiencies. Let's
just

12 go on the credits of those students have achieved.

13 And it's kind of odd, really odd. When our
14 students graduate from high school it's funny,
because if

15 you have -- if you have not passed the proficiency
you

16 can walk in the graduation ceremony. But if you have
not

17 achieved your credits, you cannot walk with the
18 graduation commencement.

19 And the ones that don't get their proficiency
20 and have not passed it, they get a -- they open up
their

21 diploma thing that they are supposed to have in there

22 signed by the superintendent, the principal, and it's
23 just a sheet of paper that says something about not
24 achieving what they were -- still have to do the
25 proficiency.

1 It's kind of -- and it's kind of embarrassing,
2 too, to some of our students; in fact, we had a
student
3 last year that just stood on the side and couldn't
walk
4 with the rest of the students because she was missing
a
5 credit. And we worked really hard to get her that
credit

6 but she wasn't able to get it in time.
7 As a classroom teacher, I wasn't an actual
8 school district employee, I worked with Boise State
9 University's Upward Bound program, our in-classroom
10 program where we worked with students to -- for
11 pre-college programs.

12 But I did have classes that I took on and taught
13 basic skills, math, reading, the things that they
needed
14 to improve upon, their life skills, those types of
15 classes. Teen success, those types of classes that I
was
16 teaching at the school with.

17 But Upward Bound through Boise State
18 University's TRiO program has really brought a lot of
our
19 students around to really looking at wanting to see
these
20 different colleges in the schools and go and visit
them,
21 and talk to the people that are on those campuses,
you
22 know, visit with them, be a part of their campus life
at
23 least for a few days.

24 It gets our students excited about wanting to go
25 on to college. Gets them involved in things that they

1 had never experienced before. And I really think those
2 are -- it's really a great program for our Owyhee High
3 School. It's done -- had a lot of impact.
4 I know the years that we were there we had
5 students that were graduating at a greater rate and it
6 kind of slowed down for awhile but we are still up there.
7 Our students still go to Boise State every summer to make
8 up credits to graduate. For eight weeks they are sent to
9 the summer school and they are able to, you know, kind of
10 experience campus life and also to make those credits
11 available to them so that they can graduate.
12 Partnerships with universities. Upward Bound is
13 one of them. Gear Up is another one that really should
14 be funded and geared towards native students, you know,
15 as well. And we really want to see those type of
16 partnerships with those higher education institutions, I
17 guess build up more and more funding for those areas.
18 When we talk about our higher ed that we have
19 compacted with the -- in the Federal government, we could
20 develop those type of programs at the tribal level, but
21 we are so strapped funding-wise we can barely make enough
22 to get these students into college.
23 We have a lot of students that sign up to go to
24 college. I think we had 34 traditional and
25 non-traditional students. So if they can develop - if
1 the BIA/BIE could develop a program that allows for

2 tribes to develop something similar to what TRiO does
or
3 something that Gear Up does that allows the students
to
4 go on these trips, that allows them to experience
5 something different, that allows them to get and make
6 their credits up that they need to make up in order
to
7 graduate, I think that would go a long way in helping
8 tribes to do that.
9 And we would take -- We have actually taken them
10 to Indian colleges in Montana and they got to see at
the
11 local level how the tribal colleges work. And they
are
12 not really big colleges, I think the one that we went
to
13 that we were kind of really impressed with was the
one
14 along the Blackfeet Reservation, and a lot of the
15 students were thinking about going there.
16 The other college that a lot of the students are
17 gravitating towards is the Salish and Kootenai
College on
18 the Flathead Reservation in Montana. It's really a
key
19 school because it doesn't require you to pass your,
what
20 do they call those, exams, those entrance exams that
21 schools have. It just slipped my mind right now.
22 But those, they don't require that of our
23 students so our students are -- one of our students
had
24 gravitated toward that school and hung in there for
25 awhile. They have got good 2-year 3-year programs
with

1 the transition to the University of Montana. Really
good
2 programs.
3 I just wanted to make that comment. I guess

4 just from my own experience in working, I think that
5 states would do well by assisting in these
partnerships,

6 can be built up, and I am pretty sure that we have
people

7 at the Department of Ed that are native that always
help

8 us with those things.

9 So, that's all I have. Thank you.

10 MS. SILVERTHORNE: I am pretty sure we aren't
11 supposed to get done three hours early. All right.

12 MS. SILVAS: My name is Anna Silvas. I am from
13 Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso, Texas. S-i-l-v-a-s.
14 Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso, Texas.

15 Okay. As I have just become a director not too
16 long ago, about two months ago, and one thing I did
come

17 across with our empowerment program is the funding
18 opportunities.

19 We did receive a demonstration grant for a Pre-K
20 grant. And I know last year wasn't put out, and this
21 year, again. So that's kind of like something that
has

22 affected us.

23 You know, looking at funding, we do have the
24 resources because we were awarded the four-year grant
but

25 salaries are one thing that we, I guess, are
struggling

1 with.

2 I know our tribal council is going to be able to
3 fund us for one year. Being in the state of Texas,
4 battling that gaming issue with them, I don't know
how

5 it's going to affect us the following year. Maybe the
6 Department of Ed can consider bringing back, you
know,

7 those demonstration grants because with my tribe I
know

8 that, you know, our students have come out, you know,

9 where they go into public schools and the public
schools
10 are reporting back saying that they are at the top
11 percent of their class by being in this program.
12 And so I really hope that the Department of Ed
13 really considers bringing back the demonstration
grant.
14 Again, I know there is other initiatives like the
Native
15 Youth Community, but with ours, we always feel that
the
16 earliest that we can start, you know, instilling in
these
17 children that education is the key and success, I
mean,
18 that's our goal.
19 We do have a early learning center, we used to
20 call it a daycare, we have changed it to early
learning
21 center. Transitioning them from our early learning
22 center to our pre-K program and then over to our
after
23 school program and then going on to the workforce
24 employment. So the Department of Labor, too.
25 So we are trying to do everything that we

1 possibly can, but without funding, I mean, it's
really

2 hard for us to continue with that.

3 But just something that you can please consider.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Just as a point, the Native
6 Youth Community Project is the demonstration program.
7 It's just a different priority within it. And so take
a

8 look at it. It should come out in the Federal
Register

9 on Tuesday.

10 THE WITNESS: Okay.

11 MS. SILVERTHORNE: It will be posted all over.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Yes.

14 MS. HOBBS: Victoria Hobbs, Executive Director
15 for the Tohono O'odham Foundation Education
Department.

16 And I just wanted to put some comments in, in terms
of

17 Native American curriculum, especially Tohono O'odham
18 curriculum development. And I hear the prior comment
19 about graduation requirements.

20 In the state of Arizona, the Arizona Department
21 of Education recently passed, or it hasn't been
recent,

22 two years ago passed a native language teacher
23 certification law that allows us to -- to -- the
tribes

24 to submit a letter certifying native language elders
25 without a college degree. So that helped, in a sense,

1 that it gave us an opportunity to -- to step back and
to

2 look at our own people in terms of teacher
certification

3 for native languages.

4 Unfortunately, the next step in that process is
5 curriculum and assessment. One of the requirements in
6 that certification process is that tribes have to
have a

7 way of assessing teachers.

8 We have been wrestling with that for a couple
9 years now as a tribe because is it our
responsibility,

10 and as the executive director of the department, I
often

11 think to myself I am really not the person to
determine

12 whether an elder has the knowledge base to teach our
13 children. We know they do. While the -- while the
14 bachelor's degree has been removed, the assessment
piece

15 stays in place, and that's where we wrestle as tribes
16 because we are so focused on assessment and we are so

17 focused on making sure that our children pass that
18 assessment.

19 But that's not the only, that's not the only
20 measurement that we should focus on, and I think if
the

21 Department of Education -- I mean the U.S. Education
22 Department starts to look at that area and starts to
23 think beyond assessment is really going to key into
24 the -- some of the issues that, that we have at the
local
25 level.

1 And I wanted to say to the State of Nevada, we
2 are completely opposite. We have a proficiency test,
the

3 Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards, that our
high

4 school students had to pass to graduate. And they
also

5 had to have the minimum credits.

6 Now we are in a situation where the state did
7 away with the AIMS test, and we have two years of
high

8 school graduates that received what's called a
9 certificate, meaning that they had the credits, they
had

10 the high school credits, but they didn't pass the
AIMS

11 and really what can they do with a certificate? They
12 can't go into the military because the military
requires

13 a high school diploma.

14 For our tribe, our standards are high for
15 incoming employees meaning all of the employees for
the

16 Tohono O'odham Nation, we are the largest employer on
the

17 reservation, have to have a high school diploma and
have

18 to have -- or a GED. And so we had several members
who

19 have been in limbo for the last two years because of
20 state requirements that resulted from assessment.
21 And so what we are doing as a tribal education
22 department is we are starting to look for those
students
23 from the past two years to start to -- we are asking
our
24 school districts what is going on, what is the state
25 standard.

1 So we are in a situation where for two years now
2 our students have -- our high school graduates, they
3 don't have a degree -- I mean they don't have a high
4 school diploma, but they have a certificate. And this
5 didn't go out well. I mean, our families weren't as
6 informed, but it all went back to the state requiring
7 that assessment to graduate from high school.
8 And so on a local level it's really hurt us as a
9 tribe. And so that, that area, when we think of all
the
10 standards that are being implemented, measuring those
11 standards by assessment isn't the only way. And I
think
12 if there is something that the Department of
Education
13 can do to, to develop those studies and then when we
14 apply for grants it has to be research-based, I can
tell
15 you there isn't much research out there for the
Tohono
16 O'odham Nation language and culture. We have to pull,
we
17 have to look, we have to develop our own numbers. And
we
18 are in our early stages of doing that.
19 And so if there is funding available, research
20 grants for tribes or direct funding to tribal
education
21 departments that focus in on curriculum development,
I
22 really hope to see that we move away from assessment

23 being the only measure of our programs or of our
24 graduates, of our students, and that we start to --
the
25 Department of Education start to look at government.

1 And this is -- this is good to see that this is
2 happening now, the government-to-government
relationship
3 in tribal consultation.

4 And I say that, I think about -- we have had
5 standards that were approved and adopted in 1987. And
6 those standards were developed under a U.S.
Department of

7 Education grant, bilingual education program. And so
we

8 have had them in place for many years now;
unfortunately,

9 what's been happening is they have been sitting on
the

10 shelf. Many of our O'odham teachers still use them in
11 the classrooms, you can tell, the books are falling
12 apart, but they still go back to those standards
because

13 they value what's happening in those standards.

14 Unfortunately, it's inconsistent. And as a
15 tribal education department we don't have -- we don't
16 administer our K-12 schools, so it's been very
difficult

17 to enforce the standards.

18 Then the state comes in -- and this is a true
19 story, and I bring this out every time I talk to our
20 tribal leaders. In 1987 we had a standard that all
our

21 members will be literate by grade three. This was in
22 1987. The state established a standard about five
years

23 ago, reading by three, meaning all children will be
24 literate by grade three. And I say this because a lot
of

25 times -- and so when I talk to our tribal people I
say we

1 had that standard in 1987, what happened? Whose
2 responsibility is it to ensure that we kept that
3 standard? Because we were ahead of the state of
Arizona

4 at that point in time.

5 And so it is really going back. And this is
6 where I think we need the assistance -- not the
7 assistance, because we can determine in our case is
the

8 standard, reading by three, literate by three. It is
9 that we can determine those standards. It's just that
10 when someone else comes along and says here is a
11 standard, the Arizona Department of Education in this
12 case, oh, yeah, it is a new standard, let's do this.

But

13 we have had that standard there and so it is really,
I

14 mean, I really think it comes back to the
15 government-to-government relationship.

16 And, I mean, I know that the state, the state
17 has to be involved in the step grant, but what BIE
did in

18 their restructuring and their sovereignty in Indian
19 education grant, we were one of the grantees, one of
the

20 six grantees. We are currently involved in and
21 completing a comprehensive plan for the Tohono
O'odham

22 Nation. We are currently working on an implementation
23 plan that will give our tribal leaders an opportunity
to

24 make an informed decision on our four BIE operated
25 schools. So those are our two main goals for this
grant.

1 But the approach that the BIE took was the
2 government-to-government relationship. And it's been
a
3 very difficult few months because when you start to
talk

4 about tribal education departments, and I am putting
in a
5 word for those of you that are in tribal education
6 departments, a lot of times we are still thought of
being
7 supportive of what happens in K-12. We are JOM, we
are
8 scholarship after high school.
9 And that the validation of what we do as TEDs,
10 that government-to-government relationship will help
key
11 into that what our role is. We are the education
12 department, as I stated from the time that I have
gotten
13 my position, we are the education department for the
14 nation. And we have very good leaders that have
15 supported us in this role.
16 Now we need to take the next step where the U.S.
17 Department of Education start to have that
relationship
18 through these tribal consultations. Because we do
have
19 people locally that understand and that know what the
20 education standards are, that know what education
codes
21 are.
22 And someone said it earlier, it's that we are --
23 it's your tribal people that need to be sitting at
the
24 table.
25 And in Arizona, I think the native, there are

1 standards that are coming up, native language. Native
2 languages are included with the foreign language
3 standards and yet they are not the same thing.
4 And so I just wanted to add that in terms of
5 where -- where -- we are heading in a good direction
as
6 tribal education departments, and it's good to see
the

7 support from the U.S. Department of Education, but
it's

8 really, again, how much -- that closer partnership
9 between tribal governments and the Department of
10 Education, and then that collaboration amongst the
11 agencies which I am happy to hear there is a summit
12 happening in August, September. Or --

13 MR. LESSARD: Yes.

14 MS. HOBBS: So thank you.

15 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

16 MS. PASQUA: I almost wanted to go off what she
17 was saying there. As a pre-college advisor the other
18 thing I do is higher ed, the scholarship. And I am
19 noticing we need to --

20 MS. SILVERTHORNE: I'm sorry, she needs your
21 name each time because she doesn't necessarily watch
to

22 see who is who.

23 MS. PASQUA: Okay. This is Lori Pasqua with the
24 Washoe Tribe again. Pre-college advisor.

25 I do with the higher ed department, too, and I

1 do the higher ed scholarships.

2 I am currently -- I notice what helps, like she
3 said, we are all a department in itself. And what
really

4 helps is the parents are coming back to school. So
the

5 VOC money is very low, and that's where some of the
6 parents need to go.

7 As long as they get that education, they are
8 helping their self. In turn, they are getting their
9 students to try to understand education and work with
10 education. So that's a big -- that's where we need
11 assistance, too, is with the VOC department. Very low
12 for those parents that need to go back to school, or
help

13 their students.

14 MR. LESSARD: I was going to make a comment
15 about what she was saying. The government-to-
government

16 relationship, and the -- sometimes the understanding
of
17 both governments, who has -- if there is authority or
if
18 there is not authority to implement things like
19 curriculum, creating curriculum, which we can't do,
is
20 that right, Joyce? We don't create curriculums for
the

21 Department of Education.

22 And a question has come up at several tribal
23 nations, conferences at the White House, is that if
we
24 are the Department of Education then the tribe wants
to
25 work with us to develop a curriculum. And we are not

1 able to do that.

2 But I think that one of the things is, you know,
3 it's important to keep that dialogue amongst tribes
and

4 bring that up at these kinds of, not only with us,
but

5 certainly at the Tribal Nations Conference, when we
have

6 the Native Youth Conference coming up in July, and,
you

7 know, all these education-related issues, you know,
keep

8 the tribal leaders and tribal education departments
to

9 keep bringing them forward at these, these events.

10 And I say that because I think, and as we all
11 know, we are in a very important window of time with
this

12 administration. And Joyce can tell you also that it
13 takes time to get things through to even, you know,
14 reach, reach the level of policy.

15 Sometimes, you know, how long does it take to
16 get the word immersion put into something that we
have

17 been, you know, pressing for a long time and then
finally
18 gets into a document?
19 So I think that, you know, you made that
20 comment, too, that in addition to what we can do in
the
21 Federal Government, but that the tribal leaders and
22 tribal education departments need to come together
and,
23 you know, push some of these things as we get -- as
this
24 administration -- you know, we have a president who,
we
25 don't know what we will get next time, so this is an
1 opportunity to keep, you know, bringing these things
to
2 the forefront.

3 MS. HARRY: Kellie Harry, Pyramid Lake Paiute
4 Tribe. Again, I work at Pyramid Lake Junior Senior
High
5 School as a teacher.
6 And just to branch off kind of what you guys
7 were saying on this government-to-government
relationship
8 and you guys kind of have in this verbiage that you
are
9 putting out that BIA is the, it is our sole trust
10 responsibility to see the academic success of these
11 students be served within their community and their
12 community needs met, as far as what that needs so
that
13 cultural relevancy as it pertains to each tribe and
each
14 language dialect or each policy that's affected that,
you
15 know, we have gone on and on and on around that,
through
16 that.
17 You know, it's just a suggestion as far as

18 having that cultural curriculum director or program
at
19 least for each BIE school would probably be the
simplest
20 place to start and the most effective. You are going
to
21 reach the most -- the greatest population of American
22 Indian students that way.
23 And then once that's proven successful and then
24 that can come out into the states or school districts
25 from there on out, but maybe that being a requirement
as

1 far as that trust to trust relationship.
2 Currently, there is -- there is not that.
3 That's a missing link. And so that trust is not being
4 fulfilled by one end or the other or acknowledged on
5 either end, or maybe not even noticed, so it can't be
6 brought to attention.
7 But, of course, the person that can see it
8 usually doesn't have that voice to bring it to
attention,
9 but we know the need is there. It shows in all the
data
10 that the need is there.
11 So that's just a recommendation again, that
12 probably like the easiest, simplest, best way to
start is
13 to require a cultural curriculum director in each BIE
14 school.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. LESSARD: I wanted to mention, too, that,
17 you know, BIE just recently re-did their framework
around
18 native languages. If you get a chance to look at
their
19 site, they are taking some steps forward around that,
20 which is good to see.
21 We, as the White House Initiative and Department
22 of Ed, of course, when we talk about BIE we are
looking

23 at, I guess on a good day, 8 percent 7, 8, 9 percent
of
24 our students. And we are also very concerned about
that
25 other 90 plus percent that are attending public
schools

1 and other schools.

2 So there are some things that are within our
3 realm that we can certainly work on and then some
things

4 that are not. And we, at those native serving
5 institutions that have the highest population of
native

6 students, I think that it's important that we, we do
more

7 work with those, the school boards.

8 Director Mendoza recently spoke at the native --
9 the large board of directors, school board conference
10 where they had the native caucus involved trying to
get

11 more and more of the school boards throughout the
country

12 looking at not only bringing native people to that
board

13 but also looking at native issues, you know, that
would

14 affect the students.

15 MS. HARRY: Kellie Harry, Pyramid Lake Paiute

16 Tribe. Can I ask you a question just on how, how then
do

17 you collect the data or ensure that your
consultations or

18 your policies are being implemented?

19 So as far as like especially like you just

20 mentioned, BIE and the Native Language Act, how do
you

21 ensure that's happening within each BIE school?

22 MS. SILVERTHORNE: We are not BIE.

23 MS. HARRY: Correct.

24 MS. SILVERTHORNE: And so our offices actually

25 have little or nothing to do with how they implement
1 their Native American Language Act.

2 MS. HARRY: Okay.

3 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Where we are talking with BIE
4 is more of at a policy level; and unfortunately, it
5 doesn't always filter down into the other activities.

6 MS. HARRY: Okay.

7 MS. SILVERTHORNE: We find out after the fact.
8 We didn't know the sovereignty grants were going out
9 until they were ready to go out.

10 MS. HARRY: Oh.

11 MS. SILVERTHORNE: So I think that we are
12 struggling, too, with how to better have
communication

13 between these agencies and it is an ongoing, ongoing
14 debate.

15 As much as we talk about education being a
16 siloed process, so is, so is the Federal government
and

17 how we operate.

18 And it's very challenging when we try to cross
19 those boundaries. And we create memorandums of
agreement

20 where we are going to do this and everybody agrees
and

21 they sign on the paper, but then it's hard to pull
the

22 meetings together, it's hard to bring the
discussions, be

23 able to have everything presented as well as it needs
to

24 be. And time.

25 The many different agendas that have to be met

1 on a regular basis regardless of the memorandums or
the

2 executive orders. And those, unfortunately, wind up
3 taking precedence.

4 We have talked today about the two programs that
5 are coming into the Notice Inviting Applications step

6 last week, and this one next week will be the Native
7 Youth Community Project. It is an 18-month process to
8 say yes, we are going to do rulemaking until the
9 rulemaking has completed with a grant competition.

That

10 is an incredibly long time to go back and forth.

11 Have any of you done a paper for -- an English
12 paper and you have had the English paper come back
with

13 red marks and lines and edits and little jotted
notes,

14 and -- that's what our clearance process does.

15 And every office within our department has the
16 responsibility to look at their particular component
and

17 make sure that what we have put into these rules
doesn't

18 violate something within their department.

19 Budget services, legal, the -- the between the
20 White House Initiative and the Office of Indian Ed,
we

21 have to look at how we are working so that we are not
in

22 competition with each other but complementing each
23 other's work.

24 So a lot of this is a very long process. You
25 are right, we, we need yet to be able to find ways
where

1 the information flows better between different
agencies.

2 And it's -- I would like to say it's improving, but
3 sometimes that's hard to demonstrate. I -- maybe it's
4 just because I am hearing it and I am listening to it
in

5 a different way because of where I am sitting, but
that

6 doesn't necessarily mean everything is improved out
7 there.

8 We have a very complex system that we work
9 within, and being able to define what the Bureau of

10 Indian Education and the Office of Indian Education
do
11 isn't just an issue for today or these consultations,
it
12 goes all the way to the congressional representatives
and
13 they need to understand who they are setting the laws
up
14 for, who they are changing laws, and how it's going
to
15 affect them. And they don't always know.
16 They get to Washington, D.C. and there are
17 students from the classrooms, they didn't get the
18 difference between what is a reservation and why does
it
19 exist or what the legal responsibilities are. And now
20 they are in congressional seats, and they, at the
raise
21 of a hand, change laws.
22 And I can't tell you how many times they don't
23 know the difference between the BIE schools and the
24 schools that the Office of Indian Ed. works with.
25 So there are many different pieces and wedges

1 and places where things work and where they don't
work.

2 MR. LESSARD: It's -- are you finished?

3 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Go ahead.

4 MR. LESSARD: One thing is that there should be
5 more data sharing, you know. So BIE has a set of
tools
6 that they use to capture data, and we do, and then
often
7 there is data sharing on certain things.
8 I think like Joyce's department being like a
9 Title 7, that's something you can kind of, you can
track
10 because there are grants and they can -- they
provide,
11 you know, success stories and things like that.
12 We -- we can't go to the BIE and, you know,

13 demand they tell us what's happening, what's
successful,
14 what isn't. And we certainly want that information.
And
15 that's an issue across a lot of Federal agencies.
16 But I think that one thing that is very
17 important is letting -- having that dialogue. So
that's
18 a great question that you bring up because that needs
to
19 be continually asked, you know, it needs to be.
20 So for us to say, well, we are the Department of
21 Ed, we can't do that, and I know tribes have been
hearing
22 different things like that for years from all the
Federal
23 agencies. And you need to have an explanation of, you
24 know, how can those things be better or what are we
25 doing.

1 The MOA on native languages came as a result of
2 consultation and listening sessions. And so we took
that
3 and said we are listening to what the tribes are
saying
4 so let's create an MOA and let's try to work with
these
5 three agencies together to do something that needs to
6 happen more, I think, with a lot of aspects of
education,
7 of, you know, Indian education.
8 MS. HARRY: Yeah. And just as far as the
9 priority list, again, with our population, American
10 Indian population being decreased so drastically, you
11 know, and as Federal policies that have made our
culture
12 illegal and put us in the state of critical need for
13 language, cultural preservation for academic
equality,
14 you know, to have all those things to be successful,
you

15 know, I think the priority list is a little
upsidedown.

16 You are looking at a culture and a people that
17 are dying right in front of you. Policies that were
set
18 forth in the beginning and -- and thank you for the,
you
19 know, amendments to try to reverse those effects but
20 again, I think the priority should be a little higher
21 than what I have just heard where we fall on the
priority
22 list, you know, when it comes to the U.S. Department
of
23 Ed.

24 So --

25 MR. LESSARD: Yes.

1 MS. HARRY: -- I thank you for your explanation,
2 thank you for clearing that process up.

3 MR. LESSARD: Thank you.

4 MS. HARRY: That's what I leave you with today.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

7 MR. LESSARD: Thank you. One thing that we
8 certainly do and I know Joyce does and I do and
Director

9 Mendoza, and most of the Indian people I know working
in

10 the Federal Government is we spent a lot of our time
11 internally trying to educate supervisors, program

12 people --

13 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Colleagues.

14 MR. LESSARD: -- peer reviewers, whoever it is
15 about things that we know because we lived it, we are
16 Indian from the day we were born and we understand
these

17 things.

18 And sometimes those meetings someone will say,
19 and I had this happen most recently, it's like well,
what

20 is the trust-trust responsibility? This is not a
person
21 in decision-making, but I think why, you know, why
didn't
22 we explain that in those civics classes that we all
took
23 when we were younger, you know? We do need to start
24 early talking about what treaties are and what is
even
25 the reservation period, and, you know, that our
tribal
1 governments, even as they are, that that's not always
the
2 way that -- that's a fairly modern thing, you know,
3 compared to how our tribes were governed before.
4 So yeah, it's difficult to get things through
5 because sometimes they have to -- they have to frame
it
6 and interpret it themselves.
7 And often, and I say they, I mean, lots of
8 people when we are speaking of this they, you know,
it's
9 very easy to say well, what are the tribes doing?
10 Well, just with the federally recognized, we
11 have 566 with different cultures, different
governments,
12 different frameworks. We have a lot of state tribes,
we
13 have some tribes that we know are indigenous to land
but
14 are not state or federally recognized.
15 And so it's, it's daunting sometimes to, to help
16 people understand, but I think that it should start
17 early, you know. Start in the public school system.
It
18 should start, you know, these things should be
explained
19 properly, you know.
20 But so many people don't know that there are
21 three forms of government, Federal, State and Indian

22 Tribes, and yet they have gotten their master's in
23 something, you know. So it's like, yeah.
24 But I appreciate all your comments because this
25 is -- this is what we take back. Yeah.

1 MS. ROMERO: Fredina Drye-Romero,
2 D-r-y-e-R-o-m-e-r-o.

3 I didn't mean to speak today because I really
4 wanted to just hear, listen, but I think you have
kind of
5 brought up a lot of really great testimonies that I
6 wanted to speak to and I wanted to respond to Pete.
7 I am with the Nevada Department of Education,
8 and we do have to pass proficiency. It's a
requirement
9 as of a year ago last year was our first time where
10 students weren't able to walk across the graduation
11 ceremony. We no longer have certifications so it's
12 unfortunate, and I think that's maybe a problem that
is
13 existing which we haven't dealt with or understood
quite
14 until you just speaking about it. So I am really
15 interested and excited to talk with my pre-college
16 advisors throughout the state.
17 Another thing is, you know, really kind of
18 looking at not lowering the standards, and I am going
to
19 just read off. I just spoke to the principal at
Owyhee,
20 and really not believing to lower those standards and
to
21 really increase rigor and work on changing the school
22 culture where working hard and being smart is the
norm
23 versus the exception.
24 Because when you get to those colleges and
25 universities you are going to be expected to be able
to

1 write, to read, to be eloquent in each and every of
those
2 areas. To be able to be in the positions of whether
you
3 are in Washington, D.C. or your state or even in your
4 tribe or whatever area you are in, our tribes are
5 suffering now because of lack of knowledge even
within
6 their own history in their own content.
7 So my inherent interest is to be able to have,
8 to -- to -- for our state to really kind of be in
9 agreement in having some sort of requirements for the
10 Nevada Revised Statutes and the Nevada Administrative
11 Codes that are put forward towards Indian education
in
12 our state such as the programs and curricula which
13 allowed us to develop the history and contemporary
14 lifestyles of the tribes in Nevada, which is Northern
15 Paiute, Southern Paiute, Washoe and Western Shoshone.
16 A curriculum guide was developed, lesson plans
17 are being put forth to that. We have, for the last
three
18 summers, this is going into our fourth summer,
developed
19 lesson plans that are based on that curriculum guide
20 which focused solely pretty much on the Federal
Indian
21 Policies and how it affected our tribes in Nevada.
22 It's very vague. We have 27 reservations,
23 colonies, and bands within our state of what is now
the
24 State of Nevada, so we are desperately trying to get
25 input from those tribal groups. They, themselves,
don't

1 have the history sometimes written down.
2 We have tribes like the Washoe and Reno-Sparks
3 Indian Colony that do have documentations on their
tribes
4 and maybe possibly Duck Water or Duck Valley, and --
who

5 do have these types of information for us to be
putting
6 into our appendix eventually.
7 This is a living document, I don't see it ever
8 being obsolete.
9 We have another curriculum guide that was in
10 that was written and is very -- our history never
doesn't
11 go extinct. Extinct is the word I want to use. So
12 that's the great thing is we are pulling together
13 resources that could be available.
14 You see a group of students in the classroom and
15 whether they are fourth grade, sixth grade, high
school
16 or even in college level, if they are being talked
about
17 in that classroom they are pretty much going to be
18 listening in.
19 So that's my argument. And hopefully, you know,
20 in the next few years or so, it takes time, it takes
a
21 lot of time. I have been in this position for eight
22 years and have seen some movement that has happened
in
23 the 1980's. I had no say in the NRS or the NAC that
was
24 established prior to me being here, but it was a
25 foundation that was put forth, and I hope that my
state

1 agency will see that it is fulfilled.
2 And another thing is really kind of aligning all
3 of the different areas, such as the Federal areas and
4 what are the goals within the parameters of your
offices.
5 How does our state agencies align to our school
6 districts? How do our -- and to our schools? And then
7 down into our tribal education departments, how are
we
8 all talking and how are we all at the same table?
9 And moving in the right direction for our

10 students. Because our students are first. We are here
11 for them. We are not here for our jobs, we are here
12 for

12 them. It's important that we really start aligning
13 our -- not -- I understand our culture and our
14 traditions

14 are really important and they need to be integrated
15 throughout, not a soul set on the side type of class.

16 We need our students to be talked about and our
17 people to be talked about in the classroom throughout
18 the

18 entire school, not just during Native American
19 Heritage

19 Month.

20 So I didn't really mean to talk, but I did want
21 to respond to some of the things that we are working
22 on.

22 Again, it's a slow process but we have a lot of
23 really

23 great people in our State of Nevada who are working
24 on

24 those issues.

25 And it's hard because I am state funded and

1 don't get able to go across the state unless I am on
2 a

2 Title 1 meeting or, you know, I am going through the
3 process of moving or talking with a school in a
4 different

4 area.

5 In our state we have four schools that have high
6 pops of American Indians. Two are combined schools
7 which

7 is elementary through 12th grade. And we have two
8 elementary schools.

9 So we are hoping that they get out of focus

10 school status or the one star status. We are -- ESA
11 waivers or trying to make sure that our schools --
12 and so

12 we do, unfortunately, have to be rigorous and we have
13 to

13 get our kids prepared.
14 Whether they are going to be heavy equipment
15 operators or they are going to be sitting at the
16 table
17 such as this, they need to be able to know and to be
18 knowledgeable and to not have to be finishing in the
19 middle of a race, but go to the very end and do it
20 with,
21 with rigor.
22 With -- because our people were not halfway
23 people, our people were let's go to the very end, or
24 else
25 we wouldn't be here today sitting at this table.
26 That's all I have to say.
27 Thank you.

28 MR. LESSARD: Thank you. I want to tell you a
29
30 brief story when Secretary Duncan met with the youth
31 that
32 are coming up, about 15 or 20 youths, some of the
33 ones
34 that had been on Standing Rock with the president,
35 and I
36 don't know if you know that story about them visiting
37 DC
38 and of course the President and Michelle took them
39 out,
40 the First Lady, took them out for pizza and the
41 motorcade, it was pretty exciting.
42 But one of the things that came up with
43 Secretary Duncan, and I think he -- I mean, I know he
44 listened. You know, he is, I think I mentioned
45 earlier
46 that he is one of the first secretaries that has done
47 commencement at Salish Kootenai, he's been at several
48 round tables and discussions with native youth and
49 visited Indian Country a number of times.
50 But one of the things this young man said, and I
51 think it is very important for our young people to
52 know

17 is that it's very easy to talk about -- or not easy
to

18 talk about, but the statistics for our health
19 disparities, our suicide rates, you know, all those
20 things are there, and often in a lot of meetings and
21 things there is a focus on that, and we should.

22 But we are also telling the story of the
23 successes and the stories of what, as native people,
what

24 have our contributions been to this country as a
whole?

25 So we know our contributions to our tribes
individually,

1 but, you know, they were saying we need to tell
people

2 that, you know, our grandparents, not only did they
3 contribute to the tribe in some way, but they
contributed

4 to the country as a whole. And the country needs to
5 understand, whether it's native languages or, you
know,

6 just the health and well-being of native youth, it is
an

7 asset to the country as a whole.

8 I think the President and first lady, Secretary
9 Duncan, recognize that, which is why they are putting
so

10 much effort into it. And I think we need to, you
know,

11 keep encouraging our young people, you know, to
thrive,

12 you know, by, you know, living that.

13 And we have had some incredible round tables of
14 young people, first one to graduate from high school,
for

15 example, from their -- in their family. And then the
16 first one to graduate from college.

17 And we are hearing more of that, you know, so I
18 think it's important that we keep that dialogue
there.

19 MR. PUTRA: My name is Pete Putra. Kind of want
20 to clarify for the record. When I talked about
21 proficiency, standardized testing, if you really
research

22 the standardized testing all it is is measuring that
23 student. That's basically what they are doing so that
24 they can measure the school and see how the school is
25 doing.

1 If the school isn't doing well based on their
2 standardized test then the school is put under a
3 microscope. The school is basically audited, every
4 teacher is audited, seeing how they are doing in the
5 classroom, how they are teaching their students.
6 If those standardized tests don't meet other
7 schools in competition with other schools, then that
8 school, again, is put under a microscope by the
state.

9 So standardized testing is not a learning tool,
10 it's not a teaching tool, and you can ask any
teacher, a

11 classroom teacher, it assesses the student.

12 But it doesn't really teach the student, and
13 that's always been an argument for teachers is that
14 you're measuring me in terms of what I am doing
within

15 the classroom with my students.

16 It's a score. It's basically a scorecard for
17 teachers to see how they are doing and schools to see
how

18 they are doing. And if they are not doing well, then
--

19 then they are put under a microscope and audited.

20 So teachers have argued that maybe standardized
21 testing doesn't really assist them at all more than
it

22 grades them to see how well they are doing within the
23 classroom and how well the schools are doing.

24 And I am not saying they should lower the

25 standards, but what I am saying is that if it doesn't

1 really help us then how -- I mean, if it's not going
to
2 be something that they are going to come in and
actually
3 help us with, so it's kind of like -- it's kind of
like
4 an audit, in a way, because you are not going to get
the
5 extra money to help your teachers, you are not going
to
6 pay teachers more.
7 So, you know, that's -- that's the argument that
8 I put forth.
9 But, you know, the dialogue here is not to do
10 that, either. The dialogue here is to express our
11 concerns towards -- to you about how we see things at
the
12 Department of Education, how we would like to see
things
13 change or maybe come up with some way to assist. And
so
14 we look at it from that point of view. I do. It's not
15 because based on my experience in looking at those
16 things.
17 As far as the proficiencies are concerned I
18 never knew that, this is something new to me, I never
19 knew that there was a certificate offered in Nevada
at
20 any time for the credits that are built up for those
21 students.
22 But in Arizona I guess it's that way now.
23 What I want to do is I would like to see all
24 students become successful, and like I said, I do
agree
25 with the lady from Alaska Native tribes that the
system

1 has -- we have to work within a system that has never
2 really worked for us, but we have to find a way to
work
3 within it.

4 And there is a lot of people, good people like
5 Fredina that work at the state level and Johanna
6 Jones
7 that works at Idaho state level that are sitting in
8 those
9 key positions that can help us.
10 So we really want to see those things take place
11 and in a good way. Because, like I said, and you
12 mentioned it as well, I believe, Joyce, that we have
13 to
14 have people sitting on those school boards, too, that
15 are
16 key to helping those individual schools.
17 So -- and when Fredina chats back to my niece
18 she can just tell her that that's the clarification I
19 was
20 making. Otherwise, I will get in trouble when I get
21 home.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. SILVERTHORNE: There are many issues and I
19 recognize that we are not going to solve everything
20 today. And certainly everything that we have talked
21 about today is a part of all the things that we do in
22 education.
23 Today my grandson is leaving home and he is
24 joining the military and he will be a marine from now
25 on.
26 I am incredibly proud of him. They turned him down
27 six

28 months ago and said you are overweight, you are out
29 of

30 shape, you can't be a marine.

31 He put in incredible time, effort, and today he
32 leaves, and for nothing better than his commitment,
33 his

34 passion, and his work to get there, I am incredibly
35 proud

36 of him.

37 I still will worry, I still will be concerned,

38 but today is the day that he leaves home.

9 So for all of the things that we do, it all
10 comes back to the stories and the personal events
that
11 happen for each one of us, for each of our children.
And
12 how well they have learned to be capable, confident
and
13 move forward, will vary from each one.
14 So I am very glad that you have been here today.
15 The best thing about today is that all of the
comments
16 that have been made, some of them hard to hear, some
of
17 them without answers, we just won't have answers
today.
18 And yet they become part of a record and that record
is
19 available and indisputable.
20 Ten years from now we can still pick that up and
21 look at it, but this is what they were saying then.
All
22 too often in the past the reports, the information
that
23 were shared weren't documented in that way and aren't
24 available to us as we look at these same issues
again.
25 So hopefully this will help us to be better at

1 how we make those changes occur.
2 And I want to put in a note for the State Indian
3 Education Specialists. Thank you, Fredina, for being
4 here today with us. But these are positions that are
not
5 funded by anything in the Federal government, these
are
6 the initiative of each state and whether or not they
see
7 Indian students in their state as significant enough
to
8 create the position.
9 And so remembering that helps sometimes when

10 it's very challenging to look at all of the issues
that
11 are -- that we are all struggling with, and every
piece
12 of the puzzle is important. So thank you for today.
13 With that, I guess we will close early. Thank you.
14 MR. LESSARD: I just wanted to thank you also.
15 I'd like -- You know, just know that, that your
comments,
16 like Joyce said are recorded, but that also we do
take
17 this back and we will take a, you know, look at these
18 comments coming in for the consultation policy.
Please
19 encourage people to make comments on that. And that,
you
20 know, thankfully, and I just enjoy working with
Joyce,
21 because I know that these things, they don't go on
deaf
22 ears. We take them back and the appropriate people
hear
23 what needs to be heard.
24 And so I wanted to thank you all for being here
25 today.

1 So, oh, yes, please do.
2 MS. WOLFE: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm,
3 Edwina Butler Wolfe, I am the governor of the
Absentee
4 Shawnee Tribe from Shawnee, Oklahoma. So I missed the
5 morning session for the tribal leaders because I was
on
6 an airplane getting here, but I wanted to -- you
know,
7 sitting here and listening to everyone, and it's the
same
8 song sung because I was in the education field before
9 becoming governor of the tribe, and I worked 15 years
in
10 a public school in their Title 7 program.

11 And the same. It's the same song keeps playing.
12 But, you know, but we get through it. You know, we
got
13 strong leaders and teachers in Oklahoma and I just
wanted
14 to say that. And it is -- tribal leaders do need to
15 bring themselves more to the table because I try to
make
16 every listening session that when the White House
comes
17 in the area I am always traveling somewhere.
18 I just got back from Louisiana last week with
19 trying to build a networking and communication with
the
20 City of Shawnee, you know, because there is issues
with
21 state taxes.
22 We were in a -- they thought that the tribe
23 should be paying state taxes to the city. So we were
in
24 a battle there.
25 So I am trying to make a little bit of a leeway
1 of, you know, eliminating that problem. And I can
2 honestly say that we have placed two Native Americans
on
3 a city council board, so, yes. So that's quite an
4 accomplishment. One of them is my staffer that I have
5 staff in my office, in the governor's office.
6 So she ran for city commissioner and she won,
7 and then another one from another tribe, he won.
8 So -- and then -- and we do have one school
9 board member, so I am excited about that. On the
public
10 school there in Shawnee, Oklahoma, Shawnee Public
School,
11 we have do have a Absentee Shawnee Tribal member that
was
12 just elected to the school board. So I am kind of
13 anxious to see how that pans out with him, and I
visit

14 with him every now and then and try to make it to the
15 school board meetings.

16 And, you know, as being in the education field I
17 get a lot of notices of wanting me to be at their
school

18 board meetings and I try to make every one, but
sometimes

19 you are not able to make it because being a tribal
leader

20 you got so many other issues that come up.

21 But education is a very big part in my heart

22 because I worked in it for 15 years, and I know what
23 everybody goes through, you know, that works. You
know,

24 the teachers around Oklahoma, I know what they go
through

25 because, you know, we put out more than what anybody

1 really realizes because you are always paying for
2 somebody's field trip or some child, student needs
some

3 kind of funds to go somewheres. And I always don't
4 have -- you know, our tribal kids, they are -- they
have

5 got needs. And, you know, we need to try to work a
6 little bit more, and, you know, in Washington to see
if

7 we could meet those needs.

8 And one thing that I really have a big question

9 about because, like I said, I worked in a school
system

10 for 15 years and I worked in Indian ed department,
and

11 I'd like to see more accountability for those funds
when

12 I go to that public school of what they are doing.

13 Because I went to one of the public meetings with
this

14 public school that I worked at and I went in there,
sat

15 back and just listened to how they conducted their

16 meetings.

17 Well, this one particular school, you know, they
18 didn't give any of the parents any kind of financial
19 status handouts, didn't give them anything about what
20 those funds were for. So after, you know -- during
the

21 meeting I kept nudging the person next to me, I said,
you

22 need to ask them about financial. I said, find out
what

23 they are doing with this money. I said, because you
know

24 that goes into general fund is what they say.

25 So I like to see more because I do that in the

1 tribe and I am governor, you know, I wanted to know
where

2 every dollar and every cent went. And if it meant
being

3 audited then we got an audit, you know, because I
want to

4 know. The transparency is what it's all about, you
know,

5 because this money is for those kids and if those
kids

6 are not getting to utilize that -- I even -- we

7 implemented an after school program in that community
8 center -- I mean community there.

9 So the first year we had about 30 to 40 kids, I

10 wasn't supposed to take preschool but I did, but I
went

11 ahead and took four-year olds all the way up to
eighth

12 grade and I utilized the Oklahoma Baptist University
13 there in Shawnee. So the students out there, they

were

14 non-Indians, but they would come out there and tutor
our

15 kids and the kids really loved them because it was
kids

16 from other states, you know, these students came from

17 Maine, from east to the west coast.
18 And our, our students got the influence of how
19 education was and how they lived in another state and
20 it
21 was just nobody there, you know, that was just right
22 there in town.
23 So a lot of the kids really loved that and I
24 loved it, too, because the kids did their homework
25 and
26 they excelled in the school. They were anxious to get
27 back to school because they had their homework
28 prepared,

1 they had their folders ready.
2 And when I was out there instructing that after
3 school program before I got my title as governor on
4 Wednesdays, they couldn't wait to get there on
5 Wednesday
6 and off that bus. And they had their Wednesday
7 folders
8 where all their homework was in there and it was all
9 good
10 signs of them, and just to see the -- the brightness
11 and
12 that light in their face, you know, it's something
13 that
14 they accomplished.
15 So I think that, you know, there is so much
16 needs of the after school programs. Indians, I mean
17 Indian ed, and just nurturing the kids.
18 I just had one child so I just, you know, he is
19 28 years old. So, you know, the kids are always,
20 always
21 a part. I'm not sure if -- we wouldn't be here if we
22 didn't have that, have that compassion for them.
23 So I just wanted to say that because I try to
24 get our tribal leaders in the state of Oklahoma to
25 those
26 listening sessions, but at times I think I went to
27 the

20 one in Oklahoma City and I was the only one that gave
a

21 testimony.

22 But, you know, what I talked about was about the
23 land run and the mascots. And one of the public
schools

24 in Oklahoma City did change their mascot name from
25 Redskins.

1 And I did -- Two weeks ago I got a call from
2 this school which is Capital Hill there in Oklahoma
City,

3 the superintendent and his staff came down and wanted
to

4 meet with me and I met with them and they were going
to

5 get ready to change -- they are getting ready to vote
on

6 a new mascot. So, but they wanted to know how they
could

7 work better with the tribes.

8 So that's a -- that's a stepping stone there,
9 that that superintendent in Oklahoma City, because
that's

10 30 miles away from where I am at. So -- but I do have
11 tribal kids up there in that school system so they
wanted

12 to know how we can communicate better.

13 So I think that that just really, you know,
14 whereas the area school, he hasn't yet come to visit
to

15 the tribes, you know. This man traveled 30 miles down
16 and I have got someone right under my nose, you know,
17 that don't even think about how they could
communicate

18 better with the tribes.

19 So I think that communication, and the tribes
20 step up and take lead. They need to take lead on
this.

21 They have to.

22 And like I said, and it is a part of people

23 that's in these tribal positions, some don't have
24 education. Some of them leaders never -- probably
never

25 went to school but they are leading a tribe, you
know, so

1 they don't really know. And I think that they are
scared

2 just to get up and talk in front of a setting. And it
is

3 scary, you know, and I never thought that I would do
it

4 either, because I thought that basketball was going
to be

5 my career when I was in high school, so I didn't
think I

6 had to think about this. Because I thought I was
going

7 to be that ball player, that first Native American.
But

8 that was a long time ago.

9 So I wanted to stress that out that tribal

10 leaders do need to get in there. And I try very hard
to

11 get our area tribal -- we have got 39 tribes in the
state

12 of Oklahoma and it's hard. And I know they have got
13 other things on their agenda, just like I do, but you
14 have got to make time. Don't go home.

15 But I wanted to thank you and thank you for
16 listening and being here.

17 MS. SILVERTHORNE: Appreciate it.

18 MR. LESSARD: I wanted to say thank you also for
19 supporting the school environment listening tour and
20 being there for those young people in Oklahoma.

21 It was when the -- we did the school environment
22 listening tour and Director Mendoza was in Oklahoma
City,

23 but it was those brave young people that stood up and
24 told their stories and their testimonies, and, you
know,

25 we have captured that.

1 And they were the ones, who -- you know, when
2 they can stand up and tell their stories, and then it
3 gets to the school board and that school board -- was
it

4 the president of the school board? I think he came
and

5 heard those testimonies. It was moving to him and he
6 went back and invited them to come and they changed
the

7 name.

8 Thank you. I just wanted to thank you again and
9 wish you a safe journey and enjoy the conference
today

10 and the rest of the week. And have safe travels back
to

11 your homes.

12 And we will see you again soon.

13 (Off the record, briefly).

14 MR. LOUD: So my name is Jerry Loud with the Red
15 Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, and I just wanted to
make

16 a comment in regards to the consultation which you
were

17 talking about.

18 In the beginning of 2014 the Adult Equivalence
19 Diploma, the format, the test was all changed. And
how

20 that's affecting tribal nations is that currently,
21 currently I am the Executive Director for
22 Oshkiimaajitahdah, O-s-h-k-i-i-m-a-a-j-i-t-a-h-d-a-h,
23 which is a tribal TANF program, and what we do is
break

24 down barriers.

25 And what this new format and this change in the

1 adult equivalency diploma has done is created another
2 barrier for tribal, tribal citizens.

3 As far as -- So what has happened is that due to
4 the fact that we had not been consulted in the new

5 changes and the new format, we weren't able to adjust
for

6 our tribal citizens and the result has been in 2013
we

7 had 99 graduates in the GED test. 2015, we had six.
And

8 it's not -- and the, the fact is it's not a tribal
issue,

9 it is a nationwide issue, because the whole state of
10 Minnesota had all went down.

11 And we brought this up to the Minnesota Indian
12 Affairs Council and they had no idea that this was
going

13 on.

14 But what we need is to -- can you go back?

15 The changes come for the Adult Equivalency Test.

16 They don't come -- they come every decade or so, but
so

17 the consultations, and what we need is to have a more
18 planning session on how this affects all tribal
nations.

19 So that's one point I wanted to make.

20 And in regards to the executive order that the
21 President Obama had issued in 2010 or 2009, it would
--

22 it would seem like we would have been informed about
23 these changes in education, but now how that affects
Red

24 Lake is that we have a new tribal college that we
just

25 built and 42 percent of those students that are
currently

1 in our -- the college are GED graduates. And so this
2 coming year, 2015, the 2015-2016 school year, it is
not

3 going to affect the college, but the 2016-2017 is
going

4 to affect them immensely, especially when we are
starting

5 to make loan payments on that school.

6 So anyways, I just wanted to make those comments
7 and the issues is still out there, nothing has been
done.

8 The Minnesota Department of Education Director
9 Cassellius, I don't know how to spell Cassellius, has
10 made a statement and she says that it's a legislative
11 issue because there is -- there is a couple of
options

12 you can do. You can become a three multitest state,
but

13 then you can also, one of the issues you can do is
you

14 can grandfather test scores from the 2013 from then
on so

15 the students don't feel like that everything that
they

16 have already done, it was wasted time.

17 So we would like support from the Federal level

18 to maybe put a little pressure on the state levels so
we

19 can get these things to find solutions.

20 I guess that's all I wanted to say.

21 I want to make one more comment in regards to
22 educational funding.

23 Currently, I also run a PL 102477 program for
24 the -- for Red Lake, and we get scholarship dollars.
And

25 again, it's not enough. We currently are funding
roughly

1 around 350 students a semester, but we are only able
to

2 give them \$1,500, which barely covers books.

3 We need to do a paradigm shift because of the

4 fact that the graduate degree now in the 21st Century
is

5 on the equivalent scale of a, an undergraduate
degree.

6 So I think we need to start talking about having
dollars

7 available for tribal students, leaders, to get that
next

8 level of education.

9 That's all. Thank you.

10 (The consultation adjourned at 3:25 p.m.).