



U.S. Department of Education
Urban Indian Listening and Learning Session
Denver, CO
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Meeting Transcript

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URBAN INDIAN LISTENING AND LEARNING SESSION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March 4, 2011

9:00 am

Denver Indian Center
4407 Morrison Road
Denver, CO 80219-2464

REPORTED BY:

Michele Koss, RPR, CSR
License Expires: 11-6- 2012

Denise Truax, RMR, CRR
License Expires: 3-12-2015

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

MR. GRIMM: Good morning. We call attention to this very important meeting today. I am Jay Grimm. I am executive director here at the Denver Indian Center. Good morning.

We would like to begin with a blessing and ask one of our very respected elders to please stand up and do that for us. Mr. John Emhoolah of the Kiowa Nation, one of our leaders in Indian Education in Jefferson County schools, and he has done so much for this center and our people. It is a great honor to have him here with us.

(Blessing by John Emhoolah.)

MR. GRIMM: Mr. Emhoolah, thank you. You may be seated. Jay Grimm, hello again.

I will be co-facilitating today's discussions. Our invited co-moderator, Tony Vigil, had a conflict come up in scheduling. And he is a principal at one of Denver's highest-performing middle schools. So surely we can excuse his absence as they say and allow him to attend to the needs of our students here in Denver.

So this session is especially important. Any time the government reaches out to us to gain insight to understand the situation and to raise awareness about the condition of our American Indian people either on or off the reservation, it is important that we are here to represent and stand up and speak our mind.

So let us be sure that today has a lot of good ground rules. We respect each other. We share time appropriately, and we make sure that we clearly illustrate the needs of our people, as well as successes and the opportunities ahead of us.

I have the great pleasure to co-moderate with Charlie Rose. He is the general counsel for the U.S. Department of Education. And I would like to just give him the microphone for a few moments to introduce staff and the other distinguished guests that are here with us today.

Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Good morning, everybody. Thank you all for being here.

As Jay mentioned, my name is Charlie Rose, and I have the privilege of serving as the general counsel for the United States Department of Education.

And in that position it requires a nomination by the President and confirmation by the U.S. Senate. And prior to coming to Washington in this capacity I was an attorney in Chicago, Illinois representing school boards and other public entities, including the Chicago Public Schools.

I would like to do some preliminary thank yous and acknowledgments here and then turn the microphone back to Jay who will share some comments, and then I will share some additional comments and we can move into the heart of our program.

First I want to thank Jay for his incredible hospitality in being here with us and hosting us this morning and this afternoon. It is indeed a pleasure to be here.

Secretary Duncan wanted me to express his personal thanks to you for all the work that you have done in making today possible for us. So on behalf of the Secretary, thank you.

I would also want to thank Rose Marie McGuire. Last night we had a really wonderful evening at the Denver Art Museum. The director of the museum was there, the curator of the American Indian exhibit was there, Nancy Bloomberg. And, incidentally, she shared with us an observation that I think all of us from the department took home last night, and that is that American Indian art is art; it is not artifacts, which distinguishes the approach of the Denver Art Museum to its collection, which I think she rightly characterized as the finest in the world and respects the objects that are in the collection as art,

not artifacts. And that is a unique approach. And art museums across this world -- it is an approach which many art museums in this world need to embrace.

It was a wonderful evening. And I want to thank Rose Marie for all of the work that she did to set that up for us.

There are a couple of people from Senator Michael Bennett's office here, Naomi Lelm and Rosemary Rodriguez. We appreciate them taking the time to be here.

We have a representative from the South Dakota House of Representatives, Kevin Killer. It is very nice of him to come down and be with us.

I also want to introduce some of my colleagues that are here around the table. Amy Bowers is the director of the Native American Rights Fund. We appreciate you being with us today.

Carol Harvey is the director of the Governor's Commission on Indian Affairs, a newly appointed position for Carol, and we appreciate you taking the time to be with us.

Colin Kippen is the Director of the National Indian Education Association and a very close colleague of us at the Department of Education.

Robert Cook is with us. Robert Cook recently became the director of the Teach for America American Indian Initiative, and he is also a member of a board that we have in Washington called the Nativ American Advisory Council. The NAAC board is the principal policy advising board to the Secretary of Education. So we appreciate Robert being here with us.

Quintan Roman who is the president of NIEA is here with us. Quintan, like the others, is a very good friend of the department and somebody we rely on for wisdom and counseling as we move through this.

Carol Berry is with us. She is the director of the Denver Indian Advisory Commission.

MS. BERRY: Member.

MR. ROSE: Okay. Member, I am sorry, of the Denver Indian Advisory Commission, and we are glad she is with us today as well.

Let me introduce the individuals who are here from the Department of Education.

First, Michael Yudin. Michael Yudin is the Assistant Secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Bill Mendoza is the Deputy Director, White House initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Jenelle Leonard serves as the Acting Director of the Office of Indian Education.

John Gritts who works in the Denver office and is an analyst in our Federal Student Aid Office.

We also have Don Hu who is the senior counselor in the Office of General Counsel despite his youth.

We have Andrea Falcon who is a director in the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools.

Erik Stegman who is also in the Office of Drug Free Schools and is deputy director. He also was a former policy analyst with NCAI before he recently joined the Department. And, by the way, Andrea recently came to us from the Department of Home Land Security.

Bernard Garcia is the director of Office of Indian Education.

Finally, and not least, is Hellen Littlejohn who is the policy advisor to the Secretary for Indian Affairs, and also serves as the Director of the Office of Communications here in Denver.

So the department is well represented. We are excited to be here. This is an important event to us.

I will provide a little bit more context for you after Jay shares some additional remarks with you and we will go from there. So, thank you all for being here.

OPEN FORUM PART I

MR. GRIMM: Thank you, Charlie, distinguished guests and community members. Welcome to the Denver Indian Center. We extend a welcome on behalf of our board of directors and our staff and the all people we serve.

The center works to empower our youth and families and community with self-determination, cultural identity and education. Education is critical to the work we do for the work force, from our youth and at an earlier age, even our elders who are teaching. The programs and services of this 30-year-old community organization are more important than they ever have been.

In the past two years we have served four times as many American Indians, Alaska Native than we ever have in our history. The census is also showing that the American Indian community here in Denver is one of the fastest growing. More of our community members are relocating to Denver and other cities in metro Denver in search of more education, careers; and they come to this center to seek more assistance.

Our work has a sense of urgency to it. Our numbers are growing. Unemployment is high. And dropout rates have improved but there is a lot of work to do. This urgency is driving this center to look at innovative ways to be effective and sustainable, however, we realize we cannot do it alone. This community will unite and must unite and we must partner with schools, local government and federal departments to assist this country's first people and to eradicate the dropout rates and lack of post high school college.

On the basketball courts, in our dance classes, or just in the center we see how bright and resilient and how culturally rich our American Indian youth are, however, they have many barriers.

Today is the day where we can make sure that we give you the information you need to allow them to access early education like their peers, have culturally appropriate support services in their schools, and graduate from high school and later attend higher education.

My hope is that we are able to do great work here today that will allow us to pave the way for tomorrow's leaders. So let us think that thought and work in a good way to make this a very effective and a great meeting.

So, again, I am going to turn it over to Charlie.

Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Just a couple other comments that I want to make before I move into my remarks. I didn't indicate this but, Ms. McGuire, in addition to organizing and hosting a wonderful reception last evening, during the day serves as the director of Indian Education for the Denver Public Schools and does a terrific job in that capacity. We really appreciate your support for us.

I also want to acknowledge Alex Bane who is the youth coordinator here at the Denver Indian Center. He was standing over there but he must have gone back to work. But he brought several of the students that he works with last night to the museum, and they performed three traditional dances for us that were just very moving. And I really wanted to acknowledge and thank him for the efforts that he put into that.

And one other acknowledgment. This is probably the most important. This is Alex here. Thank you.

This proceeding is being recorded and it is recorded because we want to make a record of it and use that record in the policy decisions and policy actions that we take in Washington.

So in order to record and memorialize this proceeding properly we have a court reporter with us and her name is Michele Koss. She is sitting over there with the computer in front of her. And it is important for all of us to state our name and spell our name when we give our remarks and speak clearly into the microphone so she can do her job.

Being a court reporter is a tough job. I know as a former lawyer who litigated quite a few cases and it is often a thankless job. We want to thank you up front.

Okay. So why are we here? We are here because President Obama at the time that he held the Historic Tribal Nations Conference back in November of 2009 issued a memorandum to all federal agencies. And as part of that memorandum he required the federal agencies to do two things.

One is to prepare what he called a plan of action. What specifically are the federal agencies that have relationships with tribes going to do to improve those relationships and improve the programs that they operate on behalf of Native Americans?

The second directive to the President -- that the President gave us is that in fulfilling our duties, our trust responsibilities to native nations we need to consult with tribes.

As a result of the President's memo the Department of Education for the first time in its history conducted formal tribal consultations and, in fact, we conducted six tribal consultations last year across the United States, including Alaska.

Those tribal consultations were held on reservations. At those tribal consultations we heard from many, many tribal leaders, tribal officials, students, teachers, et cetera on what we need to do at the Department of Education in order to improve the programs that we provide to Indian country.

So let me share with you a few of the things that we have done in response to the six tribal consultations that we held last year.

First, we are proposing as part of what we call the re-authorization of No Child Left Behind or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, that we establish a pilot program for tribal education agencies, and a consultation requirement for state and local school districts to meet with tribal education agencies.

We heard loud and clear from Indian country that the tribal education agencies that are operated by our tribes in this country need to be empowered. And that ESEA re-authorization needs to recognize tribal sovereignty in the area of education.

So our proposal, as I mentioned, we are working with congress to enact this year. And the Secretary has been working very diligently on it. It will include a component of tribal education agency pilot programs, as well as consultations.

We also are working hard to address the suicide crisis in Indian country. This issue, this tragic issue came up repeatedly across our six consultations last year. So next week we will be publishing a notice of proposed priorities that will help school districts that serve students living on Indian lands access five Department of Education programs that address anxiety, depression, substance abuse among youth.

These programs, incidentally, are operated by our Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. Kevin Jennings is the director of that office, who is not here today, but he personally has been very, very involved in our initiative with Indian country.

And the fact that we are including this priority in these five programs is really a direct result of Kevin's efforts and the support of the Secretary. We are calling this initiative our sight for healthier schools. This Indian Country Initiative has a set of programs that will include priority grants to reduce alcohol abuse, grants to integrate schools and mental health systems, safe schools and healthy students foundations for learning grants, and elementary and secondary school counseling.

This is an important initiative. It is an important priority. Once it is in the priority, it stays in the priority across the administration. So this is an important initiative that we launched in response to the tribal consultations we held last year.

Another issue that came loud and clear during our tribal consultations is that we at the Department of Education and the programs that we operate, but also in ESEA authorization, need to enhance and initiate programs that will preserve Native American language and culture and also improve the acquisition of native American language and culture.

Our regular public schools erect significant barriers to the acquisition and preservation of Native American languages and culture. We need to remove those barriers. So we are working with Congress to identify ways in which our ESEA proposal can address that.

Another issue that we heard loud and clear is the Department of Education and the Department of Interior need to work together. They need to be partners. We have established in response to that call to action, and that we heard in the tribal consultations, a very, very close relationship with the Department of Interior and it begins at the top. Secretary Salazar and Secretary Duncan have worked very closely together. We have had three or four personal meetings together with them on the Indian issues. So they are personally engaged.

I personally have worked very closely with the Director of Indian Education, Keith Moore, on a variety of initiatives from standards to their collective bargaining issues and the like. I can say that that relationship is bearing fruit and it is something that we very much appreciated the advice and counsel that we received during the tribal consultations.

Finally, we have also heard loud and clear that we at the Department of Education need to elevate the position of Indian education in the Department of Education. There is a variety of ways to attack that. However, one way which we can explore and which we are proposing, is we work with the National Educational Association and NCAU and other interesting groups in attempting to receive their feedback on our proposal, to improve our proposal to create a White House initiative that addresses not only tribal colleges and universities but all of Indian education from cradle to career.

A White House initiative is a significant event. It is created pursuant to an executive order, and those executive orders transcend administrations.

We think this is a way in which we can heighten the role of Indian education at the Department of Education, but do so in a way which will preserve that heightened status from administration to administration to administration. So that's another effort that we are working on in response to what we have heard.

So during the tribal consultations we heard loud and clear about tribal sovereignty, and we are trying to reflect that in our approach to tribal education.

We heard loud and clear that the suicide crisis must be addressed by the Federal Government, and we are attempting to do so by putting priorities in our program so that we can better improve the flow of money into those school districts and communities that need to address this tragic manner.

We heard loud and clear about language and cultural preservation and acquisition, and we are trying to work with our ESEA programs to address that.

We also heard loud and clear that we need to establish a greater relationship with the BIE and the DO, and we are doing that.

Finally, we heard that we need to enhance the status of Indian education at the Department of Education and we are attempting to work on that as well.

So let me conclude by saying that the urban consultations that we are involved in today is very, very different than the tribal consultations that we held last year. When we were spending some time with the department together, our team was reflecting on the tribal consultations and what we can do to improve them and perhaps what we can do differently. We invited some of our friends, some of them are around this table, to give us their feedback.

One gentleman, Colin Kippen, who you know is the Director the National Indian Education Association, he said to us that a majority of Native American youth live in the cities and not on the reservations. 93 percent of Native American youth attend regular public schools, not Bureau of Indian Education Schools.

And while a lot of the tribal consultations are on reservations and initiate processes to address the concerns that you have heard on those tribal consultations, Colin advised us that we also need to

hear the unique concerns and the unique issues that are facing Native American youth in our urban centers. And he urged us to launch a series of urban consultations in 2011.

So in response to Colin's suggestion we are doing exactly that. And Denver is the first place in which we decided we want to hold such a consultation.

On April 26 we will be having one in Green Bay, Wisconsin. On May 6 another in Stockton, California. On May 9 we are going to have another in Los Angeles, California. And then we are planning other consultations for the remainder of the year, Seattle, perhaps Chicago, perhaps Minnesota, perhaps Phoenix which has one of the three largest Native American youth populations in the country.

So this is new for us. We want to have feedback, and we are here to listen to what the unique issues are facing Native American youth in our urban centers, and what we at the Department of Education can do within the scope of our programs to address those concerns.

We take these consultations very, very seriously. They do, in fact, as I tried to illustrate in my remarks, affect the policy decisions that we at the senior level in the administration make, including the Secretary and the White House.

I want to thank you again for being here. We look forward to hearing your remarks, including those of students, which I think will be here shortly. And I also want to just personally thank Colin again for suggesting this.

MR. GRIMM: Thank you very much, Charlie, for those remarks. It is great to know that the ears are open and there is action items and strategy in place.

So it is our great hope today to add these urban issues to the agenda next year and to have all of our American Indian children, whether on or off the reservation, well taken care of. I appreciate it very much.

After another distinguished guest I would like to turn it over to the open forum component of this morning's agenda.

We would like to ask the Denver Public Schools Indian Education Program to start this off for us. Joe Serry, are we ready to go?

MR. SERRY: I would like to introduce Rose Marie McGuire, Denver Public Schools Indian Education. She will help introduce the team here of the Denver Public Schools, as well as the students. She would like to take an opportunity to express her remarks as well.

MS. MCGUIRE: Welcome. My name is Rose Marie McGuire, and I am a tribal member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe in Sisseton, South Dakota.

First of all, I would like to say that we have approximately 1,200 American Indian students attending the Denver Public Schools who are now recognized as native students. We have an Indian Education Program with funds from Title 7, and we have matched funds from the district, which is probably about two-thirds of our budget; and under that we have our Indian focus schools which are very much like the magnet schools in other areas.

First of all, I would like to say that we have a large dropout rate and a low graduation rate. I do not want to belabor that. Jay has covered that. But I just wanted to give you an example. Our dropout rate for school year 2009 was 12.7 percent. And the other, all the other dropout rates for the general population in Denver Public Schools is 7.4 percent. So we have a lot of work to do, and hopefully with some of the recommendations that we have the Department of Education will help us resolve some of these issues that we are facing in our Denver Public School population. And I think this is very common throughout the metro area as well. I would like to address some of my concerns.

Also, I would like to add some of my recommendations that I have.

As you all know, and I think that people have spoken to this, is that we need education, college. I would like to emphasize that we have four empty classrooms in the Indian Center that we need to fill with pre-schoolers.

And with this recommendation I would like to recommend to the Department of Education that we share some of the Head Start dollars to be allocated to our Urban Indian Early Education Programs that would be operated by Indian organizations and agencies, as well as collaborated within school districts. That is one recommendation that I strongly, strongly believe in.

Another recommendation I have to the Department of Education is that Title 1 funds be specifically allocated to our urban Indian students. And one might say, well, why aren't our students taking advantage of those funds throughout the district?

But there are challenges and barriers to that within our district. Many times the programs and resources that are available in the district, our parents are not aware of them or do not take advantage of them. We try our best in the education program to allocate for our students to become involved in those programs as well, but I think specifically if some of the Title 1 funds were matched with some of the Title 7 funds we would do a better job of servicing our Indian students in the district.

Is this mumbling? Is this microphone all right to hear? Okay.

And also you spoke about the suicide rate and the substance abuse with our Indian youth on the tribal level. We also have the same issues in the urban area, behavior health. I would like some of those funds and services also allocated to some of our urban students as well.

Saying that, and I am sure some of our staff and other people in the audience will have other concerns and recommendations, but those are the ones that I thought of strongly as I was speaking yesterday.

And I did write up a position paper which I would like for you to take home to Washington DC. We have our Indian focus schools in the Denver Public Schools, and we have -- the reason we did this is we found out about ten or 15 years ago as an advisory counsel to the district, and we took the proposal to the board, school board saying we need to have our students in certain schools. We need to transport them to certain schools so we can provide services to them on a more regular basis, and that way we can have the services in a centralized area and we don't have to use the mileage to run throughout the district to provide our services.

To date we have three elementary schools, one middle school and two high schools that are Indian focus schools where our students can open enroll. And 25 percent of our Indian students are in enrolled in these schools.

In a little while I would like to introduce some of the staff and some of the students that attend the Indian focus schools. We have services that provide cultural related curriculum, and we have strategies and approaches and we have -- one of the largest Denver Public Schools is an Indian focus school. It is really a high-achieving school. And we have a student here that attends East High School who is doing very well.

We in the past had American Indian history culture courses that students were able to gain credit for under social studies. We do not have that course anymore. We were not able to find a qualified teacher under the No Child Left Behind to teach that course, but we are looking for a teacher to continue that as well, and possibly an anthropology class. In the past we have partnered with the museum to have this course going and, also, we can't find a teacher to provide this course.

At this time I would like to introduce Ms. Roy to come up here. She is one of our students who is taking the Lakota language class at East High School. She wants to give her views on what her thoughts are. Can you start it off speaking as much as you can about the Lakota language.

MS. ROY: Okay. I go to East High School and I am part of the Lakota language class. I am part of the Indian Focus Program with Ms. Desirea over there.

As an Indian student going to the public school where there is a lot of like, there is not really that many Indians but it is cool because we still have our own class like. As a Lakota girl I feel the classes is really cool because I get to learn about my culture, and I get to learn my language.

Also, the Indian focus program, like me and Desirea are working right now, we are like starting to look at colleges and starting to see what colleges I can go to and like what scholarships I can take since I am Native American. That is pretty cool.

MS. MCGUIRE: Let me ask you one question, Serena, when you attended a non-Indian focus school, can you do a little comparison between those two educational environments?

MS. SERENA: Yes. The last high school I went to, Mapleton Early College High School, it was not an Indian focus program school, and like I felt that any help that I needed like as a native person I had to go out and find it myself.

But at East I can just go to Ms. Deserea's office and talk to her about like what is going on with school and for like help and everything.

But at my old school like there was not really help for me because I was like one of the only Indians at that school.

MS. MCGUIRE: Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Can I ask a question? Well, first of all, we thank you for being here. We appreciate you taking time out of your day to come and address us. It is important to hear from the students. Obviously that is the reason that we as adults are working to try and improve our system of public education in the United States. I am curious about a couple of things. One is, what year are you in?

MS. ROY: I am a junior.

MR. ROSE: A junior?

MS. ROY: Yes.

MR. ROSE: And you are probably starting that college search process?

MS. ROY: Yes.

MR. ROSE: Good. It is a fun one, isn't it?

MS. ROY: Yes.

MR. ROSE: In your native American language class are there any non-natives that are in the class with you?

MS. ROY: Yes. There is -- we have -- the majority of it is native students, but we also have some Caucasians and yes.

MR. ROSE: And the school that you attend, what is the makeup? Is it mostly like 50 percent native,

three quarters percent native?

MS. ROY: I don't even know. There is really not that many Indians, like native students there.

MR. ROSE: Okay. And what do you like best about the school, about the approach of the school?

MS. ROY: Well, I like how there is resources for us. Resources, yes.

MR. ROSE: Like what kind of resources?

MS. ROY: Like talking to Ms. Deserea about college, and like we can also talk to her about like personal issues that we have. Yes.

MR. ROSE: So do you think the adults make it a pretty welcoming place?

MS. ROY: Yes.

MR. ROSE: And I did not really pick up on it, but what was sort of the differences between this school and the other school that you attended?

MS. ROY: Well, the other school I attended there was not, I guess, enough resources for me because if I wanted to like, I don't know -- like since there was not an Indian focus program at my old school like I felt kind of, I don't know, isolated I guess to the other resources that other Indian focus program schools have, because I was not a part of it. I don't know. It was just hard.

MR. ROSE: May I ask you where you want to go to college?

MS. ROY: I was thinking, my first choice was Fort Lewis, and my other ones was Oglala Lakota College, CU Boulder. Those are my choices.

MR. ROSE: Okay. So I will not ask you any more questions.

MR. MENDOZA: I will say that I am a graduate of Fort Lewis College. I want to thank you as well for being here and sharing your perspective.

And I just wanted to kind of hear your perspective, I am sure we will hear from other students as well, how does it make you feel, the program that you are in now, and how do other students feel about it?

MS. ROY: Well, to me, it makes me feel like I am a part of something. Because I am in -- I am in the American Indian Club at East High School, and like I am in the Lakota language class and the Indian focus program. I feel like it is like a family for me and like I can like go talk to Rose if I want to or go talk to Deserea if I want to, and talk to the other native students and seeing what they are doing, how they are doing in school and everything.

Because I am also a mentor for Tashena. She is a freshman and like, I don't know, I guess I feel like I am a part of something, like I have what I need to succeed.

MR. MENDOZA: Great. Thank you.

MS. ROY: You are welcome.

MS. MCGUIRE: Perhaps at this time it would be good to hear from some of our Title 7 Indian Program staff in the focus schools, which is a combined effort, and staff members within the district. Perhaps Ms. Deserea.

MS. LaMOTTE: Deserea LaMotte.(uninterpretable.) I am originally from a little unit called Kanota, and that is located on the Navajo nation in Arizona. So I am Dine, and also I work with the Indian Education Program. (Uninterpretable.) I come from a big family. I am the second oldest of nine. So I graduated from Dine College in 2009. My degree is in fine arts and social science.

I recently just moved here to Denver in November and started working with the Indian Education Program for the Native American students here. I work at East High, and Serena is one of my students under that program. There is 19 students all together in that college -- in that high school. And I am working with all of them providing services, being an advocate for them and making sure that they succeed and do the best they can in high school, because it is so big. It is like four stories high, and it is the biggest high school I have ever seen, and I am from the reservation.

So I really enjoy working with my students and just being there for them to be their voice and to be someone that they can go to to talk to.

And I also work with the Lakota teacher, Ms. Masquat. I help her there, and then I also work with the Native American Club.

So I think that, to answer your question about the majority of the students at East, I see that they are mostly Caucasian, like she said, and also African-American.

And, like I said, there is only 19 students that are there that are Native American. The majority of them are Lakota, and I have a Hopi student and one Navajo student. Yes. So, that is my job. That is me. Hello everybody again. Good morning.

MR. ROSE: You mentioned that you are trying to create a Navajo language class? Is that what you mentioned? I did not hear that.

MS. LaMOTTE: No.

MR. ROSE: Okay.

MS. LaMOTTE: I could.

MS. MCGUIRE: We are encouraging her to do that actually.

MR. GRIMM: Can you address how responsive the district is to the work that you do and how is it working with the school administration and how supportive are they of the program?

MS. LaMOTTE: Right now I meet with the administration at East, and they are all very supportive of the program. They are all very welcoming. It was really great to be able to work with them and to meet them and it has just been awesome.

MR. ROSE: So what do you see is the main challenges of the student body that you work with, the two or three main challenges that erect barriers to making it through and graduating from East High School and ultimately going to college?

MS. LaMOTTE: The main challenges that I see right now for the students at East is probably that they live so far away from that particular school that they are going to, and most of them travel so far just to go to East. And like Rose was saying, East is a very -- it is like a top-of-the-line high school. And I think just the distances of having those students travel there every morning, because it is a focus program, and we could branch it out to the other high schools around that area so that they -- it would be nice for them to just travel a short distance instead of having to travel so long to get to that particular high school.

I think we need to open up more programs like this to all the high schools in Denver. It would be great.

MS. McGUIRE: Thank you, Deserea. I would like to invite some of our other staff members to come up.

Do you have other questions for Deserea?

Thank you.

MR. COOK: I think Kevin has a question for you.

MR. KILLER: I guess I would like to personally commend Ms. LaMotte because she is one of our leadership programs we all coach on. Part of that is the actual mentoring process.

And first let me introduce myself. I am Kevin Killer. I grew up here in Denver. I went to school at Jefferson County Public Schools, and I went to Jefferson High School actually and I used to play basketball here at the Denver Indian Center. And somehow I ended up back in South Dakota on that same premise.

It is so vital to have people like Deserea and so many people that are supportive of these kind of programs because it kind of helped a lot in my own process to even get to high school.

And, by the way, you know, I used to be kind of outspoken in high school and I used to wear my hair long and all of that. So there is always the kind of confusion, are you a boy, a girl? And you kind of have to deal with that.

I think one of the other things is that I am going to commend DPS as well too for instrumenting these Lakota programs into these schools. It helps change perception, especially at the urban level, and really I know they have a struggle finding a teacher and all of that. If there is somehow, somehow that the Department of Education can kind of help, you know, with that process, make it a little bit smoother in terms of like recruitment or somehow because even when you want to talk about language, the nuances of language and the translation of it is really regimented and all of that. At a certain level it is good to have a basic understanding, but when you go beyond that basic understanding there is nuances in every language that really talk about that.

So not really questions, Deserea, but I am going to say thank you for doing what you do and tell the staff that, tell those people because of the results these programs can be in the state legislature, because I was able to go out to school. Thank you, Deserea, and, Ms. McGuire, for doing that.

MR. NOSE: I have a question also. My name is Quinton Roman Nose, Tribal Education Department International Assembly.

As I was listening to your presentation, you talked about some of your students from different nations. You being from the -- nation. I am familiar with the chief -- scholarship in which they have to take, Navajo members, nation members have to take either a course in Navajo language or Navajo government I think it is or history.

And so my question to you is, are your students from different tribal nations, if the Tribal Education Department of those particular nations, if they were to offer distance learning web-based

courses for high school students, do you envision a value of those type of courses for your students and would your students take those type of courses?

MS. LaMOTTE: Yes, I think so. I think so. I mean, the students are really driven. The students that I work with now are really driven, and I am amazed at what -- how much knowledge they know and how much like they are so self -- they want to go. They want to get the education and they want to go. I think that is something that would be great.

MR. NOSE: Thank you.

MS. BOWERS: You are very popular. I need to ask you -- my name is Amy Bowers, and I am the director of the American Indian Rights Fund. I wanted to ask you about the role of parents in your program.

MS. LaMOTTE: Okay. Yes. So right now as soon as I started working at East I have had a student meeting with the students only, and so I do plan on bringing the parents in and meeting them. So I am going to be putting up this meet and greet pot luck kind of deal where we get together and I want to meet the parents. I want to ask them about what their role is. What do they see? What do they see about the program? What do they want the outcome of the program to be? How can we help them with that? Like a one-on-one exchange. I see their role is very important, especially as a parent.

MS. BOWERS: One other question. Thank you. Do your students move back and forth between reservation schools or BIE schools and the public schools in Denver?

MS. LaMOTTE: Since I have met the students and talked to them, some of them have moved from the reservation to Denver. So they do move back and forth.

MS. BOWERS: Do you have any contact with their tribes in terms of sharing data about how those students are performing in the schools that they are moving back and forth from?

MS. LaMOTTE: That is a great idea. Thank you. No, I don't. I don't have any information, but that is a great idea. I would like to see if I can do some research on that for the students to get more information about that. I am trying to research all that I can about them.

MS. BOWERS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. McGUIRE: I must mention that Deserea is a new staff member. She has only been with us for a few months. She has done very well as a new student.

MS. LaMOTTE: My grandpa was an advocate for education, and I feel that I should be too.

MR. GRIMM: I have a question and maybe Rose can answer this too.

Do you have a program or a plan or something that helps the students go from East High School to college so that you can help somebody like this Serena so it is a smooth transition for them?

MS. LaMOTTE: Well, right now I am timely drafting it and I am trying to incorporate the Indian philosophy. That is my way of thinking. I am actually drafting that out on our own Dene philosophy. So I am using those steps to take to -- map out the steps for the students when they graduate to go on to college. So that is what I am doing now.

MS. MCGUIRE: I would like just to add to that that the last couple of years in the Denver Public Schools with all of our high school students we take college trips to all the colleges. We have done four or five this year. We meet with the native person that is at that college to introduce some of the admissions, the curriculum and some of the other career plans that they can make. So they work closely with our -- we work closely with the colleges in the Denver metro area.

We just recently had a trip to the School of Mines. We have two students there, two students that that have submitted their application to the School of Mines that are going to study engineering.

The School of Mines has scholarships that were never utilized so we are tapping into those scholarships with our students as well and have gained strong relationships with the admissions department and the minority engineering department there as well.

So that is some of the initiatives that we are doing now. Because we are, we are having affairs with some of the actives that we are doing at the Indian Center and in our schools as well to acquaint our parents with the schools in the area and to talk to the admissions people. That is one plan that we have in place.

Any more questions for Deserea?

MS. HARVEY: Carol Harvey, the Executive Secretary for the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs.

I just wanted to make a comment about online education, because I am a real advocate of online education and I see it as a means for some different cultural enrichment programs to be presented to our students.

I have a presentation that I did regarding the U.S. Department of Education and the study that they did that showed online education, especially at the college level, is equivalent if not better than in classroom studies.

And so I think it is something that really should be pursued by the U.S. Department of Education for different programs to be developed on different tribes.

My son Erin has been enrolled with the -- nation and worked on his master's at the University of Wisconsin and developed an online education program for high school students regarding the Ho-Chunk Indians and PBS picked up on that and actually made it into a program on PBS TV. But I see that as such a benefit.

I graduated from high school in 1968 and there were no educational programs regarding Native Americans. And I think it is such a benefit that could be provided to our students relatively easily, especially since we have so many rural Native American students.

But we can develop these online programs. And right now the Southern Ute Indian Tribe is working with the Community College to develop a Ute history class that could be an accredited class.

And I think that those tribes have resources to do that, but I think it is something that the Department of Education can certainly focus on and also language classes. We can have online language classes for our students also.

What really benefited me as a high school student was when I was in eighth grade Willard Scott, who was a science teacher at Davar Junior High in Santa Fe, New Mexico recommended me to a program then called United Scholarship Service. And what they had done was identify academically gifted students across the United States, and we were able to go to college preparatory schools on full scholarships.

I went to Santa Fe Preparatory School and from there I went to the University of Denver and got my undergraduate degree and my MBA and my law degree, but it did really help me to have an Indian organization supporting me during high school. And that program was run by Shelly Walker who is Menhahado Indian in North Dakota and she had some young educators working with her, Linda Yardley

and also Patty Baker. And really it helped me as a young person to be around other Indian educated people who encouraged me. Thanks.

MR. GRIMMS: Thank you very much, Deserea. I think that you can be seated now.

One thing that I would like to just jump in and say is Rose Marie and her staff have done an unbelievable job of being innovative and are open to learning new areas. What Title 7 does is provide a nice base for some of the programs that occur. One thing that we have done is the partnering with the school district so the district as well can use some resources and really support the program.

Title 7 alone would probably be concerned with a lot the immediate priorities of students, however, because they have been innovative, they partner with colleges and recruiters and the recruit the college experience for kids and look for ways that they can do things without a lot of money. That is kind of the current situation. So we are thankful for that.

Too often we see our high schoolers show up at the CU campus and they say, this is college. They did not tell me. So it is important that these kids get that experience and say, you know, this is going to be a cool part of my life, because up until that point they have not experienced it too much.

So thank you for that.

MS. MCGUIRE: I just have to mention before we leave East High School we have a student there who is a junior, and I was looking at his grade point average and just looking at his standardized test. And I called his parents and I said, you know, so and so, your son, your student is not taking any AP or honors courses. They said, what are those?

The counselors are spread so thin and next semester or this semester he is enrolled in two AP courses, pre-calculus and physics. And he wants to go into a computer science or engineering career is what he is looking at, but he needs those courses.

So that is some of the things that our program does and Deserea does. We check with our students and see where they are. And without the Title 7 funds and without the district matching funds we could never have the staff that we have, and we need more staff to cover all of our students and to be able to do this individually with many of our students as well.

We have to be able to have a continuum of students. We have students that really are achieving and doing well, and we have those in between, and we have those that have challenges in their life that may have some behavioral health problems or other problems. So we have a continuum of kids that we need to be aware of. It is really vast.

MS. MORMAN: My name is Beulah Morman. I am a school psychologist at the Denver Public Schools. I work with the elementary kids by doing support groups. I go to like cultural activities, as well as academic work, and then I also work as a mentor at other high schools. I work mainly with the non-focus schools where there is a high population of Indian kids attending those schools.

I was a teacher. I have an elementary degree, bachelor's. I went to ASU. Any ASU people? I taught three years first grade. Then I got my school psych license, my master's at UCK, and I have been a psychologist with the district for about ten years.

I am actually doing tutoring here at the Indian Center as part of the SCS program. We called a bunch of Indian parents and said, come, bring your kids here. And so we have tutoring here Tuesday and Wednesday nights, which is great.

My mother was a second language English, second language learner. When she talked to me or my siblings and I, she spoke to us only in English because she had such a hard time in school. So I think language is a very important thing.

And then I think another important thing that our kids need as well is to have a lot of social, emotional support because they have a lot of stuff going on at home sometimes or just in their lives that affects how they are, when they come to school.

We have found that sometimes it goes hand in hand with academics, the social and emotional stuff. I am going to introduce my next colleague, Kathryn Redhorse.

MR. GRIMM: Are there any questions for Beulah, the work she does?

MR. ROSE: You know, on the language issue, can you identify for us things that we can do at the Federal level to try to, Federal legislation to break down barriers or through our programs incentive by states and local school districts, to break down barriers that are there that really inhibit the ability of local schools to provide more language and cultural programs for Native American students, particularly early, you know, kindergarten, first grade, that type of thing, elementary school?

MS. MORMAN: Well, my niece, she is from New Mexico. She is a senior now. When she was in elementary school I know they did have a Navajo language course, but that was on the reservation.

But here in the urban area we had a really hard time doing that Lakota language class. We had two barriers. Basically, we didn't have anyone who had the qualifications as a teacher to be in that class. And the other major barrier was someone who actually spoke the language.

So I guess what we need is what you said, more Indian language courses in the elementary level because for myself, if I would have had that, even though my mom spoke to me in English, I probably would be bilingual right now if we had that in place. I can kind of understand it, but speaking it is the more difficult piece.

MR. GRIMM: To piggyback on Buelah's comment, you know, a good example is here at the Denver Indian Center we go out and seek this from the donors and foundations and government entities to do this great work in language to keep our culture alive.

So it is critical to the resilience of our youth if we can empower them in the traditional ways, the self-awareness of who they are.

I am a product of the Metro Denver Schools system. I know it can be hard to fit in or you feel different at times. As we work with our youth, and try to keep native dance class and language part of the priorities of our programs, a lot of the times the system itself does not recognize the value of those types of programs.

For instance, one of our funders for 30 years have been giving us great money to work with our youth, however, in the past year they decided we need to track school success indicators and track attendance and make sure your native dance class, which we highly value as a community, is showing results in the classroom.

So as a nonprofit agency, as we are kind of trying to make our youth more resilient, we find ourselves with the huge administrative burden of tracking grades and attendance and doing things that are good indicators.

However, as a private nonprofit it is hard for us to access that. We have to work with the school districts and build contracts and confidentiality agreements. We have to work with the parents who say, hey, why do we have to sign all of these darn waivers and forms?

It is because we have to now prove to the funders that our Native dance classes are indeed increasing the resilience of these youth.

So for us, as a nonprofit, we have to, you know, excuse the cliché, but pound a square peg into a round hole at times. If we shave off those corners of the square peg, we are shaving off culture and shaving off languages and shaving off those things that make us unique as an Indian people.

So it is critical that government and foundations and people in philanthropy understand the value of that kind of work. I just wanted to say that.

Thank you, Beulah, for your work.

MR. YUDIN: I had a question to follow up. My name is Michael Yudin with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education.

That data is so important. So I just want to recognize the challenge that you are having collecting it and trying to do the work that you all are doing, but capturing that data is so important moving forward. Those outcomes that these kids are engaged with, they are attending classes and they are impacting student outcomes and it is really critically important.

As a counselor I know you focus on elementary, but as the kids get older and, Rose Marie, you talked about it, you know about the kids not knowing about course work, I was wondering if you could address the issues of really academic readiness. It is so important that these kids move on to college but, you know, they need to get starting to be prepared in middle school. They need to take the right types of courses to get them academically ready.

Can you address that as well or Rose Marie?

MS. MORMAN: What I was going to say is I do go to high schools and I kind of do what Desirea does, I pull students and look at their course work and see what assignments are missing.

When I first started I asked all of my students, who is your counselor? And some of them could tell me and some of them could not.

Then my next question was, when was last time you saw that person? I don't know. They are always too busy.

So I think it is really important that we do that for our work sometimes and at the elementary level we talk about college. We talk about careers and things like that.

So we are trying to start at a younger level just talking about it and making sure they are aware of higher education.

MS. MCGUIRE: I would like to make a comment. Our focus in schools and with advocates in the district, what we are doing is contacting and advocating for students to attend some of the high-performing elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.

Next year we have another focus school going into operation, which is the Denver Center for International Studies, which is a very high-performing middle school and high school. So that is one thing.

Kathryn will talk to you. We have a focus school that has an International Baccalaureate program. She can address some of that academics, what is going on there and how our students are performing very well academically.

Of all the ethnic groups the last couple years on our state assessment exams, which the students are taking this week and next week, and they were able to get out of it today, today is a makeup day, but anyway, what I am saying is of all the other diverse or ethnic groups in the district in elementary schools from three to five we made our -- we have made the most gains in reading and writing. I don't think math and science. We made the most gains in science in the fourth and fifth grade level for the last couple of years.

I think some of it, it all averages out, but I think some of it has to be that some of our students are attending some of the high-performing schools. And, as you know, the quality of your staff, the skills of your staff, and the quality of the teachers is making a difference for our students as well, as well as the support that we are giving our students.

I think it is a combination. It is a partnership with the Indian Center. It is a partner here under Title 7, under SES supplemental services we are providing the Indian Center and students are coming here. We have a large population of Indian students in this area. So it is not one thing. It's a collaboration and knowing.

MR. YUDIN: I want to congratulate you all. It sounds like you guys are making the most out of every dollar that you have and really doing outstanding work.

I want to congratulate you all, and, Rose Marie, I want you to congratulate your staff. They are staff that are really well qualified to be with our students. That is what we are aiming for.

I want Kathryn Redhorse to come up for a minute to talk about the DPS Indian Ed program.

MS. MCGUIRE: I want to add one more thing. Parent advocacy, that is another thing that we do. We encourage our parents and we kind of teach them to learn to advocate or navigate the educational system. Like we encourage them to sit down with their kids when they are enrolling and make sure they have a say in what classes they take so they don't have like a gifted student taking medial courses.

I would like to mention Beulah is working with the board on school psychology, and she is able to sit in on the IAP meetings with our students as well and be able to advocate for our students in this area. That is a large part of her function. So we are lucky to have her with us.

MS. REDHORSE: Kathryn Redhorse, I am half Navajo and half Lakota. I received my bachelor's from DU in biology and psychology. I have been working with education for probably about five years with the Denver Indian Education Program.

I work at Brown International Academy. It is an elementary school with DPS. I am, I am mainly at Brown working with elementary schools which have an IB curriculum which means they have a more worldwide view of the curriculum, not just focused on United States history. They focus on all the revolutions and the world history. So that has just become an IB two years ago is when they officially became an IB school.

We have -- we have about just under 40 students at Brown Elementary School. It is about ten percent of the population. We have 40 students at Brown Elementary which consists of ten percent of the population at Brown. We do family nights. We used to do powwows every year. We are trying to work that in again. Hopefully we will continue that if not this year, the next year.

We try to have high parent involvement, high family involvement at Brown. Any questions?

The attendance at Brown has increased but we do have trouble in attendance. Where I see it is that our families have to go back to the reservation just for family reasons a lot during the year. Our attendance rate is more than the rest of the population, and in addition to that transportation always seems to be an issue.

It is not only at Brown where we do have busing, thankfully, but when we are trying to do after-school activities or if they try to do activities here at the Indian Center, a lot of our families do not have the transportation to go to those extracurricular activities. That is where there is a huge problem there.

MR. GRIMM: Questions or comments?

MR. NOSE: I just want to make a quick comment. Do you remember me?

MS. REDHORSE: I do remember you. I was going to say hi afterwards.

MR. NOSE: She is the result of one of the Department of Education's program. She was an Upward Bound student and went to the University of Colorado, the Native American Upward Bound Program.

She was one of the students there. Very successful. Thank you. Congratulations.

MS. REDHORSE: Thank you. Nice seeing you. MS. STANDS OVERBULL: Hello. Donna Stands Overbull. I am from the Crow Nation up in Montana. I grew up on the Indian reservation for part of my life, and then I moved down here in 1987, down to Colorado where my husband attended the Colorado School of Mines.

But I have been working with the Indian Education Program for two years now, and I feel very fortunate to be able to be part of this staff and to learn so much from Rose Marie McGuire. For the past two years I have learned so much and I just count it as an honor.

I work with the high school and the elementary students. And, well, last year I worked just with the high school, and this is my first time working with high school and this year I worked with the high school and also elementary.

I have worked at Kennedy High School which is a focus school and Field which is an elementary focus school. I received my Bachelor of Science in education degree in elementary education.

So part of my day I begin at Kennedy and I work with, I think, 22 students at Kennedy. And my role there is mainly as a mentor. And I try to meet with the students weekly. And I think last year my first year was kind of difficult because I never worked with high school students before.

And in working with high school students I have come to realize that we have to build those relationships. I work very hard to work on those relationships, not only with the high school students, but also the faculty at Kennedy High School. Because when I first got there, you know, nobody knew of the Indian Focus Program. I tried to make myself as visible as possible.

And one of the things that we did last year was we put on a cultural exhibition and, you know, the natives were involved in that, the native students.

The thing that I found in doing that was, you know, they were very proud to share their traditions and their culture with this school community. They performed and they did storytelling, and we brought in people from the community to help with that. And they got to get in touch with who they are.

So that was kind of our big thing last year. And, again, we are doing that this year, but this time we are going to be part of the school, the whole school.

But, you know, one of the things that I found in working with the high school students that I am in a sense a surrogate mother to all of my students because a lot of the students do not have the home support that they need. And some days it gets very difficult because I have to deal with all kinds of issues with them, not only in academics, but social and just every area of their life.

Some days I think if I was not in that school, you know, some of the issues that they have to deal with, you know, I just do not want to think where my students would be if I was not in that school.

And now I work at the elementary and I am over there and I have my groups with my students. And I meet with them twice a week. And one of the activities that we do over there is a talking circle. And we do that like every other month.

And the principal there is very supportive of us being there and encourages our students to meet together as a whole group every other month, and the kids are so excited at the elementary school.

And one of the comments that one of the other teachers made for our last talking circle was she works with the Somalian kids and I guess they were real upset as to why they did not get to meet as a group.

So, you know, my kids feel special and very -- they feel proud to be American Indians. And then when other kids come into my group, they get real upset saying, why are they joining our group? We are Indians and they are not.

I always tell them that, you know, there is just so few of us that we want them to be part of who we are. So there is a sense of being proud, being a Native American.

And, again, over there I worked on academics but also worked on attendance and tried to involve the parents as much as I can.

But, again, I think back and if I was not there, you know, not that I can change the whole world or anything, but just to have me there, you know, the kids when I walk down the hall, you know, they are always saying, when are you going to come and get me, Mrs. Stands? When are we going to meet?

I enjoy being over there and sharing not only my culture, traditions and my language with them, but to learn about each of my students and to learn from each other. So thank you. Any questions?

MR. MENDOZA: William Mendoza. I have a question.

How do you guys handle that in your various roles in terms of addressing why American Indians are unique and why the programs that do exist are the way that they are?

MS. MCGUIRE: With the students or are you asking with the faculty or both?

MR. MENDOZA: For everybody. When your Somalian students say, why do they get to meet? When the English department or whoever says, why does American Indians have this program in place for them and not for other demographics, what is part of your process?

MS. MCGUIRE: When I am dealing with administration, teachers, the school board, usually what I do is present the Title 7 Act to justify what we are doing with our students. And I say we are a different -- we have a relationship with the Federal Government that no other people have. That is how I address it with the administration.

And, Donna, you might comment on how you address that with the students, but that is part of my role, is to do that.

Many times it is just that the administration does not know about Title 7, our relationship with the Federal Government as well. So that is how I deal with it. Usually it is just a matter of okay. I understand now. Does that make sense?

MR. MENDOZA: That does. The reason why I ask is, you know, to varying levels we do that on a continual basis. So I am very interested genuinely in your guys' experience with that same process that everybody at this table goes through with people who are uninformed, uneducated about why that relationship, unique relationship exists.

MS. MCGUIRE: Also, I think with the Lakota class at East High School, Serena, I think the non-Indians that are in that class, they have all been wanting to learn about our culture. Particularly, I think they are very enthused about it. I think -- are there any comments in that class that you hear regarding this?

MS. ROY: Yes, there are like a few Caucasian kids in the class. One is Andrew, and he was supposed to be here today to come and speak, but he is not here. I don't know why. And there is Alex and then Kimberly. Kimberly is really good. She has embraced the language and she is really good at embracing the language and like the culture and everything. You can tell that she really wants to learn about us. She wants to learn about the Lakota people and learn the language.

Ms. Grace, when she was teaching, I guess, because I just transferred there last semester, I guess Ms. Grace did a lot of Lakota philosophy. Like she taught them the Lakota philosophy and the way like how we are people and a lot of them embraced that. They take it home with them and they talk to

their parents and they teach their parents the language. They interact with their families like how we would.

I guess, like, they are really like -- some of them are really like yeah, Lakota language class. And then some of them are just like, oh, Lakota language class.

Yes, there is like -- you can tell that some of them Caucasian kids, like Andrew and Kimberly, those two are really -- you can tell that they want to learn about it and it is very cool.

MR. KIPPEN: For the record, I am Colin Kippen. I am the Executive Director for the National Indian Education Association.

I wanted to just take a moment, because we are talking about this essential thing, this essential key thing which is, you know, respect for native people that is embedded in this legal relationship with the United States of America.

And I would just ask all of you if you have not seen it and if you don't have one, please pick up this little red book. And what this little red book is, is it is just a summary of the legal principles that govern this relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes and Indian people.

So this is a good book. And it is a good book because sometimes you have to get people to even understand these questions, these things because they do not.

And so we put this into a book and if any of you in your classes want these books, please just e-mail me and we will send them to you so that you have them. It is not all the books that you need, but it is a really good start. It tells you where all the important things are in the constitution, in the various studies that have been done over time. And it really can be useful, especially when you folks are building your programs and you are trying to get people to understand what this relationship is about.

Everybody here understands this. All of the people that have come today, they all understand it. But some of the people that we deal with in our state schools and in our local schools, they just do not understand and so we want them to understand.

So, please, if you need these in your classes or in your working groups, please just call us and we will provide them to you. And there are some more up there if you have not picked one up.

Thank you for your comments.

MS. MCGUIRE: The last person that I think that we need to hear from is Jerry Lassos and his students.

MS. BERRY: Good morning. Carol Berry. I am a member of the Denver Indian Commission and some other groups locally. I do not know how to handle some of the kind of various information that is coming out today, some of which I am having trouble hearing. I don't know if it is just me or what. It is not just me. We are having trouble hearing some of the speakers.

I know that cultural resilience is important. I know that academics are important. I know that a lot of information applies to some students but not all.

For example, here in Westwood I know there is a high drop-out rate, and I know that many of the people that drop out go directly to jail or prison. I cannot help but feel that the eloquent in the room so to speak is sometimes an overused phrase called intergenerational trauma. I do not know if our particular school system programs are addressing the issues that are driven by intergenerational trauma.

I have heard some of the things that people deal with every day when they are trying to counsel students or help them get their academic training. I wish there were a way to factor in how that manifests in students and what the special needs are and how they can be addressed more individually than perhaps they are at the moment.

I mean, dance class is great. It is all good. It is all good. I should not use that word here, but, anyway, it is all good. But sometimes it takes more, and I think it takes a more particularized approach. This group of students needs this and this one needs this. In other words, one size does not fit all.

Anyway, I guess that is not a question. I guess that is a comment.

Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Jerry, Please.

MR. LASSOS: Good morning. It is really nice to have an opportunity to speak to you.

My name is Jerry Lassos, and I am Tuscarora. We are the original indigenous people of Los Angeles. If you visited anywhere from Santa Barbara down to Orange County, you have visited our home land.

I wear many hats. I did want to mention that I am on the board of West Denver Prep Charter School. Antonio was going to be here, but we have a variety of things that we established at West Denver Prep. We are the number one performing middle school in Denver Public Schools. We now have four campuses, and we will have a high school starting next year, and we are making tremendous impact in the Denver community.

I am also a half-time gifted and talented teacher, and I have had the opportunity over the last ten years to work in gifted and talented with the goal of doing everything we can to make sure that our population is represented also in gifted and talented. We have a long way to go as far as that effort is concerned, but the tier one goal of the gifted and talented department is to cast a wider net and make sure that we are identifying kids of color, Native American students. That is the main reason that I am in gifted and talented.

But my true passion has really come to light over this past year. I work at the Indian -- at Merrill Indian Middle School. I have had some amazing opportunities, and I can come up with some highlights, everything from being greeted and cheered by 5,000 cadets at the Air Force Academy when we got down there, along with a colleague that I will introduce shortly, to meeting with Keith Moore in Washington DC. I am excited about the adventures, but it is an honor and it really touches my spirit to work with Native students at Merrill Middle School.

And having heard my colleagues speak earlier, they were the ones who were so nervous, I thought I am the one who is nervous now because they were all so eloquent.

Some of the core beliefs I think that -- and I am going to use a PowerPoint. You do not need to see it. The main reason I hooked this up is I am going to share some of the things that the students are doing.

Some of the core beliefs that I think that we all share are the need for a safe, trusting environment where students can be themselves and feel free to take risks and get in touch with who they are in terms of their culture.

So often I think our kids are exposed to a deficit model programming and they are looking at maybe things that they are not as successful at as what their strengths indicate.

And so we all want to provide strength-based opportunities and through these strength-based opportunities it leads to the development of self-esteem, confidence, self-advocacy so that they can then realize the strengths that they can carry over into other classes, into other important areas.

One of the things that we are doing specifically at Merrill is the combination of culture and technology. I feel that that leads to empowerment. Our kids come with such tech savvy that it only benefits them to give them opportunities.

I am going to share with you -- we do have some students here that will talk a little bit, but I am going to share with you some of the things that we are doing, which includes digital storytelling.

We have some videos that the kids are taking home to interview elders, to keep in touch with their communities, to make sure that their stories are recorded and becomes part of their family unit.

We have a video production unit in which the kids are putting together good quality broadcasts with either live news or features.

I think the bottom line is what we are trying to do is give voice to our students. Opportunities also to see themselves in the roles of professionals. Looking for how to take advantage of their tech savvy and realize that many of those things can lead to careers for the innovation that they are seeking in the future.

I am a firm believer of many of the ideas in the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. If we are going to reach -- well, I actually read it through the lens of a teacher. And if we are going to reach educational equity, issues of access are very important. We need our kids to be able to access advanced placement classes and honors classes and IB classes and to make sure that they feel equipped and comfortable in those classes and in the college setting, understand that they do belong.

We believe in flying to pass on the middle class values of the cultivated company. It is not just about the academics in college, it is about how to advocate for yourself. How to seek out others who are like you and the programs that are available for you at these colleges. How to be confident and look someone in the eye and shake their hand and identify who you are and stand up and be a proud native. We believe in establishing a cultural legacy of access and again building that self-esteem and that self-advocacy. *Outliers* are really outliers.

One of the themes that I am using in the classroom is really the idea that comes from reclaiming our youth, and the idea of the circle of courage and the spirit of belonging, developing a sense that you belong where you are in Indian Ed. You belong among your people. You belong here at school, and leading to a spirit of the mastering. Identifying what you are good at and really gaining that sense of mastery leading to a spirit of independence and finally to a spirit of generosity.

We are going to share -- we are going to have some of the students share a little bit, but one of the key things that I think that I teach comes from what I call the four R's. And the first one being relationships. I think very little gets done without establishing relationships with students and among themselves.

Rigor, offering rigorous, challenging activities and not teaching down to students.

Relevance, making things relevant to their lives and seeing the connectedness between all subject areas and all things that they experience in connecting them to their lives.

And the final R being resilience. You can make a difference in your lives and your families. You can break a cycle of -- we have talked a little bit about this. I think one of the things that we had some key breakthroughs I feel in the relationship with students is when we begin to talk about our own experiences. I think sometimes our students look at us who have some level of education and feel like we had something different in our lives, and that is not really true. We have had some of the same disadvantages and what I label as dysfunction.

And from the social dysfunction that started way back to the time of conquest and colonization it is still brought down through our families. It has filtered down to us individually.

So I do share with them that I carry a lot of the dysfunction within myself, and to let them know that they can overcome that dysfunction and they can be the ones to break the cycle and to offer -- open those doors for future generations.

And on that topic I am very proud that recently my daughter graduated from the University of Colorado. She was president of ASIS at CU and she currently works in the field of biomechanical engineering.

I firmly believe that I can offer an example of what can happen through accessing education through opening doors for future generations.

I do have some students here who very bravely volunteered to be here. I would love to give them that opportunity. I would like to see if you would like to ask me questions first or would you like to hear from the students?

MR. GRIMM: Any questions for Jerry before we bring the students up?
Thank you, Jerry, for all of your work.

MR. LASSOS: Let us hear from Demetre.

MR. CHAVEZ: I am Demetre Chavez and I go to Merrill Middle School. I am in eighth grade. I am getting ready to make the transition from middle school to high school, and my great strength is probably math. I do have a big strength. I am pretty good at basically everything. I like to learn about new things. I like to learn about my culture. I have not got to the language part yet. I have learned a lot about where we come from and how we are as people.

MR. MURRAY: I am Michael Murray. I am in eighth grade. I plan on going to another Indian focus school. I don't know which though, but still. My biggest strength is probably writing. Yes. That is pretty much me.

MS. WILSON: I am Lauren Wilson, and I am a 7th grader at Merrill Middle School. We are in the Indian focus classes at Merrill. And when I go to high school I plan to go to an Indian focus school too.

MR. MURRAY: What we are doing in the Indian focus is our class project is like digital storytelling, to come up with our travel history, what happened and special things like that. So that is pretty much what our projects are doing right now.

MR. CHAVEZ: Yes, me and Michael are working on a project to prove that Bigfoot exists, because Bigfoot to us, I think, is like our guardian and protective nature and stuff like that, and it is going quite well. We have a little comment part. It is pretty cool. We have things like how Big Foot is rising in the U.S. and how he is becoming very popular.

What I think was pretty funny is that we printed off a picture of a guitar and the part where you play is in the shape of Big Foot's foot, and I thought that was pretty funny.

MS. WILSON: When we are in the Indian focus classroom we do a lot of stuff and when you are in the classroom you are able to talk to other students that are Native American so you know you always have someone to talk to. We work on a lot of different projects like researching the conflicts with our tribes and like how they made it to the reservation and stuff like that.

MR. MURRAY: And there is another thing that we usually have, we have multi-tribes instead of just having one. We have Navajo, Apache and whatnot, Shawnee. So we all have each other. We are a big family.

MR. CHAVEZ: We pretty much call ourselves brothers and sisters, cousins in the eighth grade class. I don't know about the 7th and 6th grade. 8th grade we go around and we are family. We have that connection. We have that bond. It is quite good to have that bond because we can go around and you can get help from other Native Americans that are basically your brothers and sisters. They will teach you about their nation and their tribes, how they are doing. It is nice to talk to someone that is your own age, and yes.

MR. LASSOS: We would like to show one of the examples of the kinds of things that students are working on. It is digital storytelling, and I think it speaks for itself. So I will go ahead and get it started.

(Video played.)

MR. LASSOS: All of the students will be doing digital storytelling and this is -- this was Lauren's first effort. So she did all of the music to it and the graphics and everything.

So, I think, you know, what an honor that she has given to her grandmother and what a tool that she has given to her family through the use of technology.

I am very proud of the fact that they all showed up today and they did such a nice job.

I would like to say one other thing, and maybe it leads to the next person. We are very lucky to have in our classroom through the University of Colorado a project ECSTE, Engaging Computer Science and Traditional Education. And we have a Ph.D. student who comes to our classroom once a week. And Calvin provides such a inspiration to our students. He is such a role model for them to be thinking of in terms of future education.

But it was kind of funny, you know, the first time he came in and he asked, do you know what a Ph.D. is? There was a lot of head scratching and no, no, not really. I know someone who has a GED, but now these students can talk about a Ph.D. They can talk about what majors they plan to focus on in school. They can talk about levels of degrees from a bachelor's to a master's to Ph.D.

So if there are questions, we will be perfectly willing to answer.

Demetre, or do any of you want to say something?

MR. GRIMM: Any questions for our young guests?

MR. MENDOZA: So I am curious, you are guys in the transition and maybe somebody can talk more about that, and you are talking Indian focus classes and all of you kind of communicated that you wanted to go to Indian focus schools.

I am curious about your friends, those who are in it with you now and then also those who are not, maybe across the city, and what they hear about your guys' experience and what their thoughts are as well.

MR. CHAVEZ: Most of us are going to be like separated. Like I am not going to an Indian focus school. I might be, depending on if I get accepted, going to the Denver School of Science and Technology, or then I am going apply to the new Indian focus school that I think just started like a week ago at the Denver Center of International Studies.

But most of us are separating. So that is kind of hard for us because we do have that bond. And it is like you are at home with your brothers and sisters and you get sent away to a different school for some odd reason. But, no, it is pretty solid.

MR. GRIMM: Any other questions? Demetre, you started out by talking about your love to learn. Where did you get that love to learn and how do we help other students get that?

MR. CHAVEZ: Well, it started in elementary. I started to see kids just slacking off, and I got excited to learn about math and stuff because I thought it was really cool. That is why math is one of my greatest strengths, because I like numbers. I am one of the tops in my math class. I am first and second place usually on the tests.

But, yes, I got that love for learning, and I try to teach my fellow native students in my classroom more about what I learned. Like I will come to class and try to teach them or try to help them -- like

sometimes they will not finish their homework, and I will help them do their homework and help them understand what is going on in the class. I will help them just with anything that they need because I am there also as part of the others.

But it is a great experience to help somebody else. It feels really good. I like the feeling of it. I think that could also be a passion that I can have.

MR. GRIMM: That is fantastic. Thank you for continuing to be a tremendous role model for our youth and helping others.

MS. BOWERS: I just have a quick question for you. You said that you love math and that you are doing really well on your tests.

How have the native community and some of the cultural activities that you do within your school helped you be successful in math?

MR. CHAVEZ: They allow me to do my homework and stuff. They allow me to go to other students and practice my math skills with other students. And it also allows me to have the time to study for math tests and study my math and other subjects. So it is pretty good.

MR. ROSE: Well, thank you very much for being here, all three of you. That video is tremendous. Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Thank you very much. We so often forget that there are two histories to our people. One is that tribal history that we hold up and learn so much about, but also this urban experience. So it is very important that we talk to our grandmas and document that story because that is a story that a lot of people do not know.

Carol, did you have a question?

MS. HARVEY: I had not learned this term before I started with the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs and to me it is very important now, but it is ALP, the Alternative Licensure Program where almost all states have different programs for where people can become teachers even if they have not gone through a traditional educational curriculum.

And I see it as a real way for Native Americans to be able to enter the classroom as teachers. And I think today we have had such a tremendous and wonderful enriching example of what American Indian teachers can do for American Indian students.

And so if there is any way that the Department of Education can get information out to Indian communities about alternative licensure programs and put funding into that effort so that we could have more Native American teachers.

Because I think today we have seen the care and the concern, the compassion, the love and the passion that these native American educators have for their students, and that is one way we are going to have successful students. And so I really would like to see support for that program. Thanks.

MR. ROSE: If I can comment on that. Secretary Duncan and the administration generally has been very active in supporting alternative teaching certification programs. And we have incorporated that element into a variety of our discretionary grant programs. And that is not from a commitment that we have here in Washington, but I can tell you that when the Secretary, when I was superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, he was very supportive of alternative certification programs that existed in Chicago and recruited and hired many people who are alternatively certified.

We agree with you that alternative certification is important, particularly for Native American language cultural acquisition.

You know, many of the elders who are gifted and passing on the language and culture are not trained in the traditional way in which teachers are trained in this country, and the certification laws preclude them in so many instances from giving back in the traditional public school settings in the way in which they should be able to.

So to the extent that we can use the re-authorization of No Child Left Behind and use our grant programs to incentivize states to enact alternative certification programs, we want to do that.

MR. GRIMM: Jenelle.

MS. LEONARD: Rose Marie, before you get away, I wanted to, first of all, commend you on sharing all of the activities that you are implementing under the program and the Denver Public Schools.

But I want to ask you -- it is really a three-prong question. So I know it is going to be a lot coming at you at one time.

But the first one is, can you share with us any challenges that you are facing in the Denver Public Schools in implementing the Title 7 programs, things that the Department of Education needs to hear and know and try to address in finding some solution, either legislatively or policy based, to help you as a coordinator or a program director for Title 7 to really seamlessly implement the program in the public schools? That is one thing to think about.

Should I repeat it?

MS. MCGUIRE: No, I have it.

MS. LEONARD: Okay. The other one is, as you work in the Denver Public Schools, can you speak to us about the ease in which there is -- well, I will put it this way: There may be ease and there may be difficulty in cross-program collaboration, cross-program collaboration with other federal programs, okay?

And then the last one I would like for you to address is technical assistance. How can the Department of Education provide or even if you would identify any of the technical assistance needs so that we could better help support you in terms of the work that you are doing here at the Denver Public Schools.

MS. MCGUIRE: Thank you. As far as implementing the Title 7 program within our district, I think some of the issues that I have is not particularly implementing but being in a system in a federal project and the collaboration and the time it takes to implement anything in the program or in the district I mean.

As far as, I don't know, maybe we are unique in Denver Public Schools, but we have the accountability or the responsibility to do our own budget and do our own according to what our objectives are.

One thing that I do have issues with, which has been discussed over the years, is our IC, which is our program that identifies our students in the Denver Public Schools, but we are trying to work through that issue as far as identifying students since the new federal government guidelines as far as being using one ethnicity.

So many times our students are not identified as American Indian, but I am working or we as a group here are working with the district to try to rectify that. That if a parent puts down maybe at the very end my child is also a Native student, part Native as well, that that will be counted, but right now it is not. They take the first ethnicity which might be Hispanic, African-American or White or Asian. So

that is an issue that I have had to deal with in the last couple of years, is identifying our students within the district.

But I am meeting with the technology department and also with the person who is constructing the registration form to make it -- to bold it out, if you are American Indian, check this or do this or that, whatever that might be. I may have to collaborate with other districts on that as well.

The other, in the past I think, but not recently, which I think we resolved this pretty much, we have established ourselves as an Indian Education program within the district and the district has supported us, resources and finances as well, but that has not always been in the past. We are not, particularly under the federal projects, within the district. We are separated as a different program. Not a different program, but a program under a cabinet member who makes a decision so we don't have to go through the whole realm of, you know, going to this person and that person and that person to get something done.

Does that answer that question?

MS. LEONARD: Yes.

MS. McGUIRE: Okay. The second question is cross-collaboration with other federal projects. I work closely with the McGinty Act with the homeless and with the migrant program and with Title 1 as far as the supplemental services. And that is how we were able to get the supplemental services tutoring at the Indian Center, available to the Indian Center, but also Jay was instrumental in that as well.

But as far as working closely or collaborating, no, I do not. We do not at this point. I would like to, as I mentioned, have Title 1 monies delegated specifically for Indian students. That has not ever happened in the district. I am not even sure if it is possible.

Our parents and our students -- not parents, but our students really do not benefit too much unless we advocate for them to seek the program out within the district. Does that make sense?

The other one is technical assistance. With Title 7, Washington office, some of the needs of our students are not met, particularly transportation. And I know that is not a line item, but many of our students that go to the charter schools and a lot of the high-performing schools transportation is not provided by the district to those charter schools, high-performing schools.

I would like to see part of our Title 7 monies utilized for transportation in some way. I have researched and written grants but have not had money to do that.

The focus schools are funded, the transportation is funded. That is one proposal that we had written to the board and they agreed.

Any other new focus schools that have come up the board has not agreed to provide transportation because of their lack of funds, as well or restriction of funds.

So I would like to see Title 7 loosen their grips on transportation so we can provide transportation to students that go to these high-performing schools.

I would, I would also like to, I guess -- see, when I send in the budget, many times we can supplement our budget and provide supplies, books through outside donors or other small grants, and so we can utilize much of our budget for our qualified staff and that would not be locked up as well.

What are you spending on supplies? Many times I can get supplies in those other supplemental services and supplies for our students outside the budget.

MR. ROSE: Bernard wants to ask a question or make a comment. I just want to check in on our court reporter. I think we are going to take a break in about 15 minutes or so for an hour.

MR. GARCIA: Rose, does it feel like you are being monitored with all the questions?

MS. MCGUIRE: At my age, no.

MR. GARCIA: I think you have answered some pretty good questions. I have to commend you on all the efforts of Denver Public Schools Title 7 Program, that it implements the program throughout these years. Your students that have presented and really it does show some outcomes that we are looking at. So we continue to encourage you to keep the students pretty much engaged and involved so we can see more outcomes as we see projects being implemented so your programs would be well supported.

The parents' commitment under Title 7, their role and responsibility is so important. So I am encouraged to hear the commitment of parents coming to Title 7 activities and supporting that and that really shows their commitment to the program.

The other one is your role as a project director implemented throughout the school district. We continue to encourage you to work with the entire district, especially to implement the native language. So that way it is through the district and that we are not a standalone program, but the district recognizes and acknowledges.

And I am glad to hear the district does provide additional support for the program. So that is good. So a commendation for you.

Thank you very much.

MR. GRIMM: We will invite you to come on up now, but after lunch we will go ahead and I believe we will have public comment in order as listed, but you can comment now.

MR. HART: I apologize. I did not know exactly how that process was going to work. My name is Niabi Hart. I am a tribal member of the Sac and Fox Nation. I have four children, three children who are in the DPS system who fall under Title 7.

I have been listening to all the conversations and the questions. And so I want to try to stay focused on some of my responses and some of the things that I would like to address with the U.S. Department of Education.

I already let you know that I am a tribal member of the Sac and Fox Nation. I also serve as youth treatment counselor at the Tender Soul Center for Youth which is a residential treatment facility for abused and neglected children. So a lot of the issues I deal with.

I believe very strongly in intervention. With intervention comes education. I believe it is really hard to address Indian education when I feel that American society does not have a solid education about the relations of the first people here.

And coming -- as a young child my grandmother passed away after she relocated out here in Denver from Oklahoma, and I became a ward of the state. I did not go to high school. I obtained my GED and it was court ordered. I started in higher education when I was 17. I was so overwhelmed I did not know anything about any type of Indian services and walked out of the class and did not return back to higher education until seven years later after I already had two children of my own.

So I am now an alumni of UCD. I am also a former recipient of the American Scholars from the Colorado Indian Education Foundation. So, again, I am very passionate about where our young people's future is.

So with that being said, Mr. Rose, I would like to address you. When you were questioning Serena, I believe her name was, one of the main points that Serena brought up about the Indian focus school was I believe the support and the mental health that that gave her, having that kind of support in her school.

And you had asked her if maybe 50 percent of the kids were native population, and I believe that the numbers were 19, 19 students out of a four-story high school.

I am very happy that we took some time to

credit all the staff members like Beulah. I worked with Beulah. My daughter has been one of the students who go to some of the urban high schools to try to do exhibitions and kind of teach other children about Indian students.

But one of the things that are frustrating is the accountability of some of our teachers and some of our administrators. Even with my own students, my own children, I have had a teacher come up to me and say, you know, I took a class on how American Indians learn and I need to talk to you about your son because I see some of these things in him. And that is frustrating for a parent. We don't want to hear those kinds of things because it comes off very discriminatory, you know.

And it is hard for our kids to go to class during November when it is American Indian history month and there are native students sitting in there learning about Indians, and you have a teacher teaching you about your people and some of it is not accurate. A lot or much of it is not very accurate, and that is frustrating for our students. It is very discouraging. It gives them an idea of what education is.

And so there needs to be some accountability when it comes to curriculum and what our teachers are actually teaching our students.

And with that, that is why our Indian focus schools have been important. However, just like this gentleman said, Demetre, this young man, he has his goals set on a school of science and that is not necessarily an Indian focus school. He is separated from some of his other students.

Title 7 is stretched thin in DPS. It is stretched so thin that a lot of the efforts go straight to the Indian focus schools. What about the other 75 percent of our students that are not in Indian focus schools?

I am pleased to see the presentation -- I forgot his name. I apologize. Jerry. I am pleased to see the presentation and some of the focus on the education they have in the classroom, that ties the education to the belief system of indigenous people because that is how our children are going to take in a lot of academia and knowledge.

However, a lot of our students are not receiving that. They don't have some of that same tailored curriculum. And so there is just not enough staff to reach out to all of our DPS students.

I have had the privilege of working with Beulah because my daughter was a part of the DPS young LEO group that Jay facilitates here at the Indian Center.

Like Jay had mentioned earlier, some of these sponsors add an extra layer to these programs like an onion and, you know, it makes it very hard to keep our programs for our youth consistent because every layer that is added creates another barrier.

We have come across those barriers here in the community. You may be a parent that is trying their hardest to be involved. For example, I work graveyards. So as a parent it is very, very hard to come to the parent meetings outside of the classroom or just come to other things.

And when you have these barriers created, what ends up happening is that in the urban community we see a lot of these programs for our youth start and they may last for a while and then they fall apart or they may go on to something else.

And in talking to a lot of the youth they become discouraged by this. So the next time you talk about, oh, there is this school and this is going on, come join us; and, you know, as they get older, middle school into high school, they are kind of, you know, yeah, I heard that one before. And so there is less participation from the youth, less motivation.

And so that is something that I think that when we address some of these issues with the Department of Education and we want to see how we can directly help our Title 7, that is one thing that I definitely encourage. We do not need to include in another layer. We need direct assistance.

That is pretty much what I have for right now. Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Thank you very much for sharing those comments and those suggestions, and we certainly

will take those to heart.

One thing that I am wondering is in your -- you indicated that you work in a treatment center, right, for neglected and abused youth?

One of the issues that we have been struggling with at the federal level is how we can better coordinate our efforts?

The Department of Education is working with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Interior and the like, and the Department of Justice too, but if you would not mind, I would like you to perhaps, if you can, share some larger suggestions that you might have based on your position at the treatment center, because you must interact with other federal agencies besides just the Department of Education.

MR. HART: Okay. Let me take a step back. As a youth treatment counselor I see many children that come in and, again, there is a unique relationship with Indian children who come in.

But the one thing that I noticed the most, especially with mental health services, is that many of the people who are trained in mental health, who have their Ph.D. in mental health, again, it goes back to that issue of education, when that even if you are educated in a specific area, that education does not encompass the cultural education of American Indians and its relationship to the United States.

So the degree I received was in psychology with a minor in ethnic studies. And it is very frustrating sitting in a class of peers, younger, my age, and even older, who do not know what the trail of tears are, who do not know about boarding schools, who are sitting in a college course learning about mental health and how to deal with, you know, the trauma suffered, that was suffered in those areas and passed down into generations from a perspective that is not that of native people.

How do you address native issues when you -- when everything that you have learned about psychology and development and learning comes from one perspective, the dominant perspective of the history of America? You cannot. You cannot. It kind of goes back to the nature versus nurture argument.

Just now we are in a transitional time in psychology where there is not so much of a gap between the medical profession, you know, and the biological stands on it versus the psychological stands on it.

As indigenous people we have always embraced everything, including the environment, and we address these issues. You need to address them as they are all connected. You cannot address alcohol and substance and mental health issues and behavioral issues from just one perspective.

So the professionals who are working with our kids, let us say, for instance, some of the behavior issues that we are seeing in DPS, you cannot address those issues looking at it just from a behavior science.

And I think that when we are talking about -- when Mrs. Harvey brought up the ALP license or things with the teachers, I believe right now, and I could be wrong, Title 7 DPS, the school psychologist for Title 7 is Ms. Buelah. How is she going to service all the mental health students of our Title 7 students?

We need those professionals who come -- who are educated and come from our backgrounds, the native professionals to have that support system. I am not sure if it necessarily needs to fall under Title 7 or if it needs to be something else, but there needs to be more, there needs to be more staff. There is not enough people.

Mrs. McGuire and Mr. Firestone, who unfortunately is not here today, I just now met the coordinator for our Title 7, and unfortunately we cannot -- we don't always see all of these people to be able to come together and collaborate with each other in the community, because they are stretched so thin that what time do they have left to collaborate with each other or even go home to their families? There is not enough.

And so from a broader perspective we need the support. We need the staff, but they need to be coming from a particular perspective.

If you are going to service indigenous children, then they need to have that background as well. I hope that I am answering your question?

MR. ROSE: Yes.

MR. HART: One of the things that really touched me last week is I had a young child -- well, I work graveyards so there is a certain time when the children are waking up. And I put on some prayer songs and I have it down low because the kids are waking up.

And one of the children came running up and he recognized this Coyote song and -- excuse me. He said, Mr. Niabi, Mr. Niabi, he said, I know this song. I know this song. My grandma sings this song. I said yeah. Yeah. And it changed his whole day.

You know, I come back that evening and I go to do the evening notes and I find out that this client here went to go meet with his therapist that day, had problems in school. Well, at Tennison Center we use the PBIS system which is similar to the DPS system as a separate phase program and we try to focus on the children's strength. It is a strength-based program.

And just interactions that happen, the lack of cultural awareness with teachers dealing with this client, the lack of knowledge and then the way that the teachers or even the therapists speak to our children.

Like I had said earlier, when the teacher came to me and said, I had took a class on this, this is what -- you know, this is what I am seeing. You know, as a pupil, that is why I meant to bring up Serena, she told you at the other school I felt isolated. That is a trickle-down effect. Everything from the way that the teachers may talk to her, where she has to go about things to make that connection from the classroom to home life and, you know, the same thing with that client at my facility. Everything from how those teachers at that school talk to that student, to how they are trying to teach him, how they are trying to take that curriculum and teach him with it.

These are things that need to change, you know, because to me that is one of the reasons why our dropout rates are high. They need to make that connection. They need to not feel isolated. They need that extra support like Desirea provides so that they can take that classroom curriculum and, you know, make that connection between the home life and what they are learning and at the same time deal with that, in some instances, in the dysfunctional situations that are going on.

I am sorry. I spun that around a little bit.

MR. ROSE: Thank you. I want to thank you for being here and being so open and sharing your experiences. I also want to thank you for being so blunt and candid in your advice to us on what we need to do. I appreciate it.

MR. GRIMM: I know we are all getting hungry, especially after seeing our grandma eat all of the fried bread on the TV. We will take a comment from Mr. Martel and we will then break for lunch. We would like to do a blessing of lunch by Mr. Emhoolah and move forward with lunch and then we will reconvene at about one.

MR. MARTEL: We heard some really good positive stories today and we can be happy with them.

My concern more is though with those we are not hearing. Those are who are dropping out, why is that? What Beulah touched on is the peripheral issues. Beulah talked about social, emotional issues that students are bringing to school. She talked about the positive effects that parent advocacy training has.

Donna talked about kids need someone to talk to. Both of them talked about not having enough time to do as much as that as needed.

Carol spoke of intergenerational trauma. These are not really exactly part of education, but they have a profound effect on it, and that is what I think we really need to address. That is a topic that we need to address.

Jerry talked about deficit model programming. Certainly that has an effect. And he also spoke of how you have to be an advocate for yourself.

Some of these peripheral issues -- I work for the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. Richard Martel. I am also a member and former chair of the Denver American Indian Commission along with Carol there.

People are approaching me in both those roles all of the time about these peripheral issues that are having such a profound effect.

That 11-year-old boy who comes into my office, yes, he is having problems in school, but that is because him and his mom slept in the park last night. How can we expect him to do well, to thrive in that educational environment when he has this huge thing happening in his life?

All of these other issues, they are not exactly related to education, but they sure do have an effect on it. I think that is where we have to go. There is just not enough support in those areas.

If we want our students to approach the level of achievement that the larger culture is enduring right now, we have to give them support in those areas that they are so lacking.

This intergenerational trauma that is mentioned, it is going on today. This young lady talked about how she was learning not just the language, but elements of the culture and how meaningful they were to her. She talked about how Ms. Grace was doing that. I think what we need to look at is why Ms. Grace is no longer in that position.

I continue to work closely with this individual, and she tells me that the culture there was just too difficult for her to keep on. So if someone who is a high-level achiever, who has her master's degree cannot function in that culture, how can our students? The answer is, they are not.

We are having too many who are just butting up against the system. Sure they bring things from home, many of them do, but others are still facing that difficulty in the system and it does not have to be, but there are not enough of us to advocate. There are not enough of us to teach parents how to advocate for the children. And those -- we have heard it from everyone, we are stretched thin. There just is not enough. So, yes, for a time we need to put more support around the issue.

Imagine, if you will, a car with four flat tires and an empty gas tank and missing spark plugs. We can put tires on it. Say the tires are education. We upgrade from low cost Generals to some high-end Michelin, but that car is not going to go very far. It will go a little bit, but until we address the other issues, until we fill that gas tank, until we put all the plugs in, that car is not going to achieve its full potential.

So I think we have to find ways to combine, find ways to integrate services. And it has been talked about today, but I think we need to do more than talk. We need to actually do it. That is my comment.

MR. ROSE: Thank you. Let me just ask you, you know, the focus of this consultation obviously is more urban than rural, and I am curious from your perspective, based on your experiences and the issues that you have identified and we talked about here this morning, what are the, you know, unique challenges to Native American youth in an urban center like this as opposed to the challenges in a rural setting such as some of the reservations and the like in facing the issues that you just so eloquently talked about with us?

MR. HART: That is a pretty broad question.

MR. ROSE: It is probably not a two-minute answer.

MR. HART: It is really not. Some of them are -- the facts are some of them our kids bring to the table and some of them our kids face when they get to the table. So some of them are cultural.

For one thing, we come from a family culture. Our families are our unit, and we all walk together. A lot of teachers do not see that. A lot of teachers are from an individualistic culture who think everyone can stand alone. That alone poses great barriers in the classroom.

I have had -- when I was working for Jeffco schools I had a teacher come to me and say, well, this kid, he is not doing good at math. Did he say why? He said because his family is not good in math. I said, what do you think of that? She said, well, that is ridiculous.

From her perspective it was, but from that child's perspective he could not go beyond his family because as soon as he did that, he would be putting himself out of his support group.

So both of them needed to look at that issue from different eyes, from a different perspective. That teacher needed to understand what was happening in the family. That young individual needed to know that he had the ability to blaze a new trail that his family had not before him.

So that is part of it on both sides. But we don't have enough resources, people to help build these bridges that is so essential today. That is what we need. Let us eat.

MR. ROSE: Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: At this time we would like to invite Mr. John Emhoolah to come back up to provide a blessing. Mr. Emhoolah is a member of the Kiowa Nation and a well-respected member of our community.

(Blessing made by John Emhoolah.)

(Lunch recess was taken.)

OPEN FORUM PART II

MR. YUDIN: Good afternoon, everyone.

MR. ROSE: All right. Good afternoon. Thank you all for reconvening. I want to thank the Denver Indian Center for that lovely lunch. Thank you very much.

And I'd also like to thank Mr. Emhoolah again for the blessing that he gave us this morning, the blessing that he gave us before we had lunch, as well as sharing the flag song with us at the outset.

I also want to remind folks that we do have our court reporter with us, and that if you could please state your name, and spell your name, and state where you're from, that would be really helpful.

And I also want to mention to you the same thing that I mentioned to Michelle. If, for any reason, you need us to stop, or you can't hear or something, just let us know, okay?

THE REPORTER: Okay.

MR. ROSE: So, let me turn it over to Jay and Michael and Bill.

MR. GRIMM: Thank you, Charlie. We will reconvene here and begin our discussion regarding elementary and secondary education and post-secondary education.

And we'd like to have Michael Yudin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, to go ahead and provide a brief introduction to this session.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. Thank you all for -- for -- for being here. It was a great morning. It was really, really informative.

What I -- I would like to do is just talk for a couple minutes and try to kind of frame what I think is going to be most relevant for us and useful for us, as we move forward in -- in developing and administering federal education programs and -- and -- and the like.

As folks know, the President -- President Obama has -- has set this goal that, by the year 2020, the United States will lead the world in college completion, we'll be first in the world in college completion. Today we are ninth.

So, how do we get there? How do we get to leading the world in college completion by 2020?

There's a lot that needs to happen. But first and foremost, we need to make sure that our kids graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and a career.

The administration has a cradle to career strategy. I'm going to talk a little bit about the P through -- through 12 side of it, Bill is going to talk a little bit about the higher ed side.

But if -- if we want to reach the President's goal, we need to make sure that all of our kids graduate from high school ready to succeed in college or a career.

We know that too many of our kids -- too many Native American kids are not graduating from high school. You know, some folks talked about it a little bit this morning, the graduation rates are unacceptably low for Native American students, the four-year graduation. And if they do graduate, too many are not prepared academically to succeed in college.

So, what I'd like to know is how you -- how -- how we can, at the federal -- at the U.S. Department of Education, what -- I -- we want to hear from you. How do we help ensure that more kids -- that all kids graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and a career?

And I also would love to hear from you guys -- you know, we -- we -- one thing we heard this morning is the Title VII program is stretched too thin. And we know that. You know what, Title VII program is a \$127 million program in the federal government. It is designed to supplement -- to provide supplemental educational services to meet the unique educational needs of Native American/Alaska Native American kids.

Title I is \$14.5 billion, which is -- which is generated by -- by kids from low income families. And it is -- and it is, by law, designed to serve educationally disadvantaged kids. Those are -- the \$14.5 billion is the leverage, all right? That's the money. Those are the -- those are the -- those are the provisions that -- that hold states and school districts accountable.

So, I'd love to talk about is, how do we leverage Title I to improve outcomes for kids?

Title II is Teacher Quality. We have thrown almost \$3 billion in federal money going out to improve teacher quality.

Somebody earlier said today -- and -- and I agree -- one of the most important factors in kids succeeding is the quality of their teachers.

How do we leverage -- how do you guys -- how do we help you leverage almost \$3 billion in teacher quality money to improve outcomes for kids in your community?

Title III provides a billion dollars for English learners. Many -- many Native American kids are not proficient in English. How do we ensure that they have services to help them ensure that they are proficient in English?

Early learning, how do you -- you know, Rosemary talked earlier about, you know, one of her first recommendations was sharing, you know, and talking about Head Start. How do we coordinate early learning programs to be sure that kids actually enter kindergarten ready to learn?

All this to say, how do we improve outcomes for Native American kids and particularly focus on kids in urban centers?

So -- I mean, that's what I -- you know, and our folks would love to hear about. I'm going to turn it over to Bill and -- for a few minutes, to kind of frame the higher ed conversation.

MR. MENDOZA: (Speaking Native American.)

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. I don't -- I don't know how to write your language, so -- MR. MENDOZA: I can provide you with documentation of that.

THE REPORTER: Okay.

MR. MENDOZA: I appreciate that.

THE REPORTER: Thank you.

MR. MENDOZA: Thank you. (Speaking Native American.)...Bill Mendoza. I'm deputy director of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges. (Speaking Native American.) I'm an Oglala, Sicangu Oglala. There's relatives in the room, so I need to make sure and -- and address them appropriately, providing it for the public record a translation of my comments and appropriate documentation of that.

My current role is deputy director of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges. I'm also acting director assuming those duties.

And the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges operates under Executive Orders.

And Mr. Rose already talked about one, 132-70. And what our office does is we serve as a -- the liaison between tribally controlled colleges and universities and the federal agencies at the -- the behest of the -- of the -- the White House, the President's office. And we are housed within the Department of Education.

So, we kind of have a -- a dual role in terms of partnering with the -- the Department of Education, but also looking to how best we can improve the capacity and the -- the administration of tribal colleges and the role that the federal agencies play in that, and that's all of the agencies.

And so we look at, you know, all of the grant programs, we -- we provide an annual report. And the agencies provide performance indicators for how they are addressing three-year plans. And -- and -- and we -- we communicate that throughout the agency. We serve as the primary entrance, you know, for tribal colleges to the federal agencies and the executive. So, in general, that's -- that's our role.

How tribal colleges impact the broader American Indian Country is -- is -- is yet to be determined. Right now, you know, the statistics are there, 92 percent of our K through 12 students are serviced in public, you know, K-through-12 institutions; 87 percent of our students who -- who are graduating from those schools, as well as tribal controlled schools, are -- are going into other institutions of higher education, mainstream institutions, not tribally controlled colleges.

I saw a number recently from AIHEC that talked about they service 61,000 students. I'm not sure yet if that's annual. And so, on its -- just those statistics alone tell us that we have some very complex dynamics in terms of how we think about this picture of Indian education.

And so, it's the hopes -- and Mr. Rose already alluded to some of that -- that, you know, President Obama looks at this from cradle to career, and how best Indian Country can meet those objectives, do our part to meet those objectives as well.

We have 36 tribally controlled colleges and universities in 18 states. We service, you know, approximately 80 percent of Indian Country with just those colleges alone. Surprisingly, it's less than 1

percent of Indian Country that we have tribally controlled colleges in. So, the area for growth is -- is tremendous, when you think about the -- the areas that we have not yet tapped into.

I heard a lot of comments today talking about, you know, how culture and identity are important parts of that. And I've had conversations with Mr. Kippen, who's here with us today, and he shares a -- a -- very wisely the analogy of -- of a wheel, and how tribal colleges are the hub of that wheel, and our extensions outside of that are -- are the foundation of how we move Indian Country.

I think that grandma in that video earlier that the student shared was profound. We are still here. I look at Denver, I look at Los Angeles, I look at Seattle, I look at Minneapolis, those are still Indian Country. And you good people here and -- and all of your families represent how much United States -- as much as we have to be proud of -- is still Indian Country.

And so, we're looking at how to take that into the future, how best to meet those needs going on. And that's the work of our, you know, executive order, who many people in here are -- are people who are deeply involved in those conversations. And we're here to hear more about what that executive order looks like, when we think about things from cradle to career.

I was visiting with individuals from -- from DPS, and -- and other partnering agencies, about, you know, why, if there's a Lakota population here -- and I'm Oglala Lakota, and so I'm -- I'm a bit biased there. You know, I've heard some of our Cheyenne brethren say, "This is Cheyenne country." I think it was Oglala country when we traveled through, but we'll -- we'll -- we'll share.

But, you know, why -- why not have an OLC satellite college here? There is -- Oglala Lakota College has twelve satellites in the southwestern South Dakota, you know, part of our homelands. You know, why not have a -- Chief Dull Knife have a satellite college here? We have enough intellectual capacity, we have enough resources in terms of all of our supporters, that those kinds of things can be a reality sooner than later. We already have good demonstration of -- of how technology has made Indian Country, and the world, in terms of indigenous nations, smaller and more relevant to where we are here and now.

And so those are just some of my initial thoughts and inspiring thoughts that -- that all of Indian Country have -- have, kind of, injected into President Obama's Administration and the work that -- that I hope to accomplish with the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and all of the good people in this room from federal agencies.

Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Mr. Quinton Roman Nose would like to provide some remarks.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Thank you. I have a written statement here that I'll provide to the court reporter.

My name is Quinton Roman Nose, R-o-m-a-n N-o-s-e. It's actually two words. I'm a member of the Cheyenne Arapaho Tribe, although I'm just Cheyenne.

And I -- I have to rebut this here, that the first treaty of the United States Government recognized for Cheyenne Arapaho, is we did own most of Colorado, most of Eastern Colorado, federal government said that. But we all know the story of the treaty, so we won't talk more about that.

I am here today representing TEDNA, Tribal Education Departments National Assembly.

TEDNA is a national non-profit advocacy organization that represents Tribal Ed Departments, known as TEDs, Tribal Education Departments, or TEAs, which is Tribal Education Agencies. A "TEA" is similar to like an SEA, and -- and it works with LEAs, so.... TEDNA, basically -- if you understand tribal sovereignty in education, then you basically can understand the need for an organization like TEDNA.

Currently there are over 200 TEDs in some type of form and name. They're all not known as education departments but they have an education function, located in 32 states. TEDs are a major untapped resource within Indian education, and this administration needs to change that and here's why.

In 2008, approximately 23,000 tribal students between the ages of 16 and 19 dropped out of high school. These students will make \$10,000 less annually than their peers who graduated from high school. Those students represent a loss of \$221 million in annual income. That's income, that's -- that's not money going out.

Actually, it's going to cost more, because we are now paying for dropouts. Now, I'm not going to tell you more about that, we all know that. In a time of budget crisis, we owe it to students, parents, and indeed the Nation to provide a quality education to tribal students. We can no longer accept status quo. We can't -- we can't continue to do the same things over and over again. We must be brave enough to change law and policy to improve Indian education.

Currently, about 92 percent of the tribal students attend public schools, the majority of these students are located off reservation, in rural, suburban and urban schools. Tribal governments working through TEDs are uniquely situated to help tribal students succeed in schools located on or near reservations and in rural and urban areas. Yet, few tribes, states, and LEAs, including urban LEAs, meet or even communicate with their tribe's education departments. The few that do, have developed innovative and efficient programs and policies to better serve students.

As an example, in the state of New York, the Saint Regis Band of Mohawk Indians provided almost \$120,000 and an officer from the tribal police force to be a school resource officer to the Salmon River School District near the tribe's territory.

In California, the State and the Hoopa Valley Tribe jointly funded the Hoopa Learning Center that serves 180 at-risk students.

In Oklahoma, the Chickasaw Nation provides professional development, tribal -- and teacher education for state public employees.

Federal law should encourage and provide more incentives to promote relationships between tribes and states. Tribes should be major players in the development and implementation of national education policy, such as college and career readiness and increase local control of education.

College and career readiness, the National Indian Education study -- there's been three of them - in each of those studies there's been approximately 80 percent of the Native American students surveyed in the eighth grade, all of them have indicated their desire to go to post-secondary education. So, you know, what happens between eighth grade until the time they're supposed to graduate, you know, what happens to them? I think that's the reason that we are here today.

TEDNA has five recommendations. It's been emphasized here that, you know, these recommendations are supported by the need that tribes need to understand how all the title programs affects Indian education, not just Title VII Indian Education, or Johnson-O'Malley, or impact aid.

The first recommendation -- and this is a very important one -- is the need of data on tribal students. There's a significant unmet need for accurate and comprehensive electronic data on K-through-12 tribal students. At present, there's no definitive data-based report on tribal students. The hundred -- hundreds of thousands of students are spread among urban, suburban, and rural areas nationally. Tribal student migration between the reservation and off-reservation public schools is extremely common. These students retain tribal membership despite their residency, and only TEDs/TEAs can capture the data from all school systems, federal, state, and tribal, that serve these students, especially the students that migrate often from various school systems.

State and the LEA data systems do not, and cannot, account for almost 10 percent of the tribal students who attend the federal or tribal schools. Federal education reporting requirements often omit tribal students, due to their small numbers. And unlike states, tribes currently are not eligible for federal funding for student data systems as authorized by Title II of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, under which, in FY2009, states received \$150 million for their Longitudinal Data Systems.

TEDs/TEAs can also capture data from many educational programs, like ESEA, Titles III, V, VII, VIII, Johnson O'Malley, and all these programs that serve tribal students, but which are being

administered by different federal agencies or offices, are not required to report to each other. With the proper data systems, TEDs and TEAs can collect, sort, and report all critical data on tribal K-12 students. TEDs/TEAs can then share this data for analysis for -- to -- to communities, educators, and policymakers. Together, tribal, state, and federal stakeholders can make sound decisions and make improvements for tribal students. State-of-the-art tribal student data systems will catalyze national secondary school graduation, dropout prevention, and help prepare college and career ready students.

I do know that the National Governor's Association has put forth a uniform system of reporting dropouts. And I think that there's really -- I don't know of very few tribes that can really tell you the actual dropout rate of their particular tribal membership. If they can, it's probably because they're a smaller tribe.

For the data roles of TEDs and TEAs to reach their full potential, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, also known as "FERPA," needs to clarify -- needs to be clarified by an amendment that includes tribes, that is TEDs/TEAs, as being among the educational agencies, authorities, and officials to which protected student records and information can be released without the advance consent of parents or students. Such an amendment to FERPA would be consistent with the TED/TEA programs authorized by Congress since the ESEA reauthorization of 1988 and 1994, and thus would bring FERPA up to date in accord with the ESEA.

I might add, before I leave this data recommendation, that in the last NIEA convention in San Diego, the Office of Indian Education, thanks to -- to the fine lady sitting next to me, Jenelle Leonard, put forth a data workshop. And I was amazed at all -- the amount of information that's being collected on Native American students that we, you know, really don't have access to and don't, you know, know how to use it if we did. And so I -- but I really think it was a very good start, and I thank Jenelle for doing that.

Our second recommendation regards Title I of the ESEA. Title I is, and always has been, the biggest ESEA program. SEA can get Title I funds if they submit proper plans. In the development of these state plans, which are a prerequisite for Title I funds, there's no specific role for TEDs or TEAs, which is a serious flaw because it has severely limited or impaired the ability of TEDs or TEAs to work with SEAs.

States with Tribal Education Departments should be required, as a condition of receiving Title I funds, to hold consultations with TEDs and -- and urban Indian educators within their states on a government-to-government basis, develop joint strategies for improving education in schools with tribal students served by Title I funds, and jointly report on the results of such meetings in the United States Education and -- and Interior Departments.

Third recommendation is to encourage states receiving Title I funds that have TEDs in their states to enact state laws that mandate the teaching of tribal sovereignty in their K-through-12 curriculum on a regular basis. Five states -- California, Maine, Montana, Oregon and Wisconsin -- have that law existing today. Tribes could provide tribal specific information, which could be merged into a statewide tribal sovereignty curriculum, of which the state of Washington is now doing that. Currently, very few K-12 textbooks incorporate information on Native Americans. Those that do, treat Native Americans as -- the books that do mention Native Americans, they treat Native Americans as an ethnic group, they do not include information on Native American rights. Few Native American students learn concepts like tribal sovereignty, trust responsibility, or the government-to-government relationship. Tribes, the SEAs, the LEAs could work together to develop curriculum in these areas.

Fourth recommendation is regards to tribal language and the certification of teachers. Thirteen states have laws that address -- and they're listed in this report that I'll be giving to the reporter -- have laws that address tribal language curriculum and the certification of teachers for those curricula in their LEAs. All of these laws acknowledge a role of tribes as sovereigns in the development and implementation of these laws.

The Reauthorized ESEA should require the SEAs and the TEDs/TEAs in these states to jointly track the progress made in implementing these laws and their impacts on students, and to jointly report on these matters the Department of Education and Congress. Furthermore, the ESEA Reauthorization should authorize, at least on a national pilot project basis, other states and tribes to enter into compacts or agreements for tribal language curricula development and teacher certification, and to authorize appropriate funding to implement such compacts or agreements.

And finally, the last recommendation is regards to Title VII. The funding level amount authorized for the TEA/TED appropriations in Title VII should be reinstated and increased to support TEA/TED capacity building. In addition, tribal eligibility to receive Title VII Indian Education Formula Grants should be directly increased.

Currently, there's 21 tribes in the nation who administer Title VII programs. And the reason that they're able to do that is because 50 percent of that particular school, their membership are also a member of that tribe who is administering the grant. And our recommendation is that it should be lowered to 33 percent, so that more tribes can take advantage of that. The amount authorized or appropriated for these programs should be greatly increased to reflect the amount of students served by the program.

As a side note, there's a great potential for TEDs to develop and contribute to distance learning programs regarding tribal history, language, culture, legal rights, and government.

I think the future of our Indian education needs to include digital education. You just saw the presentation this morning. Our students are ready. Us older people may not be ready, but our younger students are ready for that.

TEDNA has submitted to the Department of Education its written recommendations for the ESEA reauthorization, which includes other amendments not mentioned in this speech. We will continue to support those, but do not mention them here in the interests of time. Implementing

TEDNA's recommendations in the ESEA reauthorization will increase tribal student academic performance and close the achievement gap.

TEDNA is very thankful to the Department of Education for its commitment to Tribal Education Departments. We are very, very excited about the administration's support for the Tribal Education Agency pilot initiative, and we look forward to continuing our work on this project.

Thank you very much.

MR. ROSE: Thank you, Quinton. I also want to thank you for your leadership, and perhaps even more importantly, your persistence in raising these issues, and advocating for them at the Department, the administration generally, and also in Congress. So, thank you.

If -- we have approximately twenty people who would like to speak. So, hopefully, we can have our speakers keep their remarks to three to five minutes.

We can also supplement the record with a prepared statement that you may have brought or a statement that you want to e-mail to us.

So, before we go to our first speaker, Rona Wilensky, with the Colorado Department of Education, I just wanted to ask Robert Cook to take two minutes and share with the group what he is doing with Teach For America. It's an important initiative that I think we should have on the record at this urban consultation.

MR. COOK: Well, thank you. Thank you. That was a surprise.

I just want to thank everybody for this opportunity for -- to be here in Denver. And I'm just really glad for -- you know, my wife Daphne and myself and -- and Kevin, of being given the opportunity to -- to come up and share in the community, and to learn more about what some of the issues are facing our relatives in a lot of our urban school districts.

And as Charlie mentioned, I do -- I have a new position. I recently joined the Teach For America organization. Teach For America was founded twenty years ago by a young college student named Wendy Kopp, who really felt that there was an opportunity to bring outstanding teachers into some of our most underserved communities. And for the next several years, Teach For America has really grown into a very credible and very respected organization. And this past year, they launched the Native Achievement Initiative.

And I was hired as the national managing director for the Achievement Initiative. We have teachers who are serving in the -- in four regions right now. We started a region several years ago in New Mexico. I wish Landon Mascarenaz was here. He's -- he's my colleague, Executive Director, down in New Mexico. Landon was actually going to speak a little bit later.

But they launched a -- the Native Achievement Initiative in -- in New Mexico, and working in the Gallup-McKinley School District in the northwest part of New Mexico. And we have just some real exciting news that the students in the BIE schools in the -- in that part of the state working with Teach For America teachers actually had the highest academic gains than any other schools in the whole state of New Mexico. And they were led by our -- our Teach For America teachers. And so we are really proud of that.

We also have our Native Achievement Initiative in South Dakota serving on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; Hawaii, serving the Leeward Coast of Oahu and Waianae, the Big Island. And also, we just opened up an initiative in Oklahoma -- Tulsa area -- Oklahoma City, Tulsa.

And so, one of the -- there's several goals of the Native Achievement Initiative. And one is what we've been talking a lot about is, you know, teacher quality, bringing and recruiting some of our nation's most outstanding leaders and teachers into our native communities, but preparing them to be culturally responsive teachers, being able to understand the unique needs of our native children, being able to take on some of the different initiatives that are going on nationally, like the Lets Move Initiative. And also, you know, bridging that academic achievement gap that many of our students do face just because of their -- the location and -- and -- and, really, the -- the difficulty in recruiting and maintaining quality teachers.

We're also -- a part of this initiative is to work with our tribal colleges and universities, and our universities across the country to identify and help to recruit native students or college students into Teach For America. And so we want more of our -- our native students to be able to come and to serve in our native communities and provide an -- an opportunity to provide service to our students, and prepare them to be -- you know, go into college or to transition to a successful career.

So, I'm real excited about this opportunity. And -- and I'm glad that I was given just a few minutes. I don't want to take up a whole lot time. I know people are really anxious to get up and -- and share some of the different issues and concerns with their community here in Denver.

But thank you.

MR. ROSE: Okay. Thank you, Robert --

MR. COOK: Sure.

MR. ROSE: -- for sharing that with us. And we also want to commend you for your leadership and for the initiative that Teach For America is pursuing.

One of the comments that we've received during our tribal consultations last year -- and I think it's something that we're seeing emerge this time -- is that we do need more Native American teachers in front of our Native American students.

But, frankly, I hope that those Native American teachers also have opportunities to be in front of non-native students, to address the fact that our non-native students in this country simply don't have

an opportunity to learn Native American culture, Native American language in the way in which they should.

MR. COOK: We actually do have a Teach For America region here in Denver and have, I think, a couple-hundred core members that work in the Denver area school district, so....

MR. ROSE: Thank you. So, I made a mistake when I indicated that Rona Wilensky was going to speak, from the -- the Colorado Department of Education.

So, why don't we go to the next speaker that's on the list here? And it's just purely a coincidence that it turns out to be Dana -- Dana -- Daphne Richards-Cook.

MS. RICHARDS-COOK: (Speaking Native American.)

My name is Daphne Richards-Cook. My name is spelled D-a-p-h-n-e R-i-c-h-a-r-d-s, hyphen, C-o-o-k.

I was thinking I was going to be listening to everybody else, and so I was just sitting there and not coming up front.

I was really impressed to listen to today's conversation, to hear a lot of the issues and some of the things that all the Departments are doing. And it's real exciting to hear that they're all addressing the different issues that we're facing in Indian Country.

I'm an Oglala Sioux, and I come from the (Speaking Native American.) On the Pine Ridge Reservation. And I work with the Oglala Sioux Tribe Empowerment Zone, which is a socioeconomic group that started twelve years ago. And we're working on developing and building a sustainable nation for the Oglala Nation.

But I also work for the -- I volunteer with Alliance, the travel and tourist advocates that work across the state in an interregional -- with all the tribes in South Dakota.

And so I'm real excited to hear that the tribes that I represent, the students that are going to school here in the Denver community, because I think all of our tribes really need to make more of an effort to try to take care and provide resources to the -- our children that are going to urban Indian schools.

I was -- I was on the Rapid City School Board for four years. And last year I ended up getting voted out because I voted on a policy on -- discrimination policy, and it went with sexual orientation, and I was attacked by all these different conservative people.

And -- but I really feel that we have to protect all students. And the voice is really not heard in a lot of our public schools in regard to the native voice. And a lot of times the teacher unions, the associated school boards, all of these other groups, really don't represent the native voice either.

And I think what we need to do is -- like, in South Dakota we never was able to pass enabling legislation for a charter school. So, the Race To The Top legislation, I think, is really needed, to be able to have the BIE and our tribal governments to be involved with it.

But I would also really wish that we would be able to have our tribal governments be a part of the -- the charter school legislation, too, because in South Dakota I really don't know if we'll ever have an opportunity to be able to have a charter school that will be geared for our children.

And the Rapid City School District, it's a huge population of 13,000 kids and we have maybe 10 to 12 percent representation. And yet, we have a push-out phenomena, a school to prison pipeline. We have a lot of things that are happening within our -- our schools, our Indian students there.

We have a Judge talk about there's a thousand kids that are on the streets in Rapid City that just aren't going anywhere, they're not getting their education. And what we see is really -- it's depressing -- and when I was on the school board -- not to see any of our native kids -- just a few in orchestra, the fine

arts, or being on the different achievement levels, or the -- the TAG program, gifted and talented, because they're not even perceived in regard to their talents that they really do have.

They could be on a TAG program on the reservations, but never get on in the school district. And I just see that we don't have an opportunity to use our cultural arts and things of how we used to teach our children traditional knowledge sharing. And you can never do it in a system that's so huge and we have one Indian voice on there. There's no more Indian voices on the school board anymore where they're not able to really learn and educate.

But listening to what you guys are doing on a national level and a federal level, it's going to help us with toolkits to better educate the school board members, to be able to look at the civil rights of our people. Because when you stand up, you're not able to even have a voice, because they demean your voice when you do stand up.

And it was really hard. I don't know if I want to ever go through that again, in regard to being on a school board in that type of environment. But I think it made me more stronger to step up and have a voice for our children.

And one of the things I think is that we look at the -- this gentleman and different people here talking about that, how do you handle the subtle things that happen to our children, the behaviors, the things that are intangible? Because what I found out, being on a school board, was the intangible things is what pushes out our staff, pushes out our students. It's the behavior of the administration, it's the behavior of the teachers.

And I talked about it. And we did find out, through the security officers at our schools, that they were doing things. And we did -- after three years later, they end ended up getting rid of some of them because they were treating our children -- they didn't know how to treat our children. They would come in and go against cultural protocol, and do all these other things. And they went from the school to prison pipeline.

But one of the things that we're doing is that we need to look at the intangible. And I know that they had this 360 evaluation process, where they go out and they evaluate all of everybody -- the staff, the students, everybody -- to look at what's really happening, because then you can touch the intangible behaviors.

But whenever we're not being listened to at the school boards, and the administration will control things, and we can never be a part of that, our own state level. And South Dakota is a big example. So, I think even looking around at other school boards, across the nation and other schools, at Indian issues, that we all face that problem. We create layers and layers of different things.

What I really believe is -- they asked me, "As a school board member, what was your platform?" I said, "I don't really have one linear approach because I look at things in a holistic way, everything impacts each other. It's a whole community, it's a whole child." And if we're not coming in working together -- I see that you're doing that in terms of the national or federal Department of Labor, Department of Congress, the social, the human admin -- the health administration, all of that has to be in conversation, to be able to not create layers, but to put it -- integrate into the curriculum.

We're not putting a special class over here in culture, we're integrating it throughout the whole curriculum. There's a thing called "Prime Math," it's called "Inquiry Math" that they're doing in Rapid City. It was real exciting for me to see that they used our Navajo/Sioux type of designs in our beadwork to show symbolism, geometry, to look at different math type of approaches, the symmetrics of it. And what they did was they did a calendar, and they put in, like, the Lakota months in the Lakota language, like "January." And they did each one. When you have the language being incorporated in math, but you're also looking at every month as a scientific type of thing that was approached to the environment and to that month, you're looking at the star knowledge, you're looking at all kind of different things. So, in that one lesson you have math, you have language, you have science, you have the cultural values, you have the stories. You have all of it in one math thing.

And you have to have creative teachers to do that. So, you talked about Title I, Title VII, all these different groups. Whenever I had my son Lamont Cook -- when Robert had him sit up on a panel when he was talking in New Mexico, he said, "You know, my friend" -- "my friend called and was talking to me, he was really depressed. He said his parents was having problems. And he committed suicide like a month later." And he said that, "I really think that North Middle School needs to have a counselor there, because that was high minority content of Indian kids. And they need to get more counselors."

So, then we talked about Title I, how could we use Title I to offset Title VII to bring more counselors in? But I know you guys have some programs that you're working on, and I'm real excited about it. So, it's just kind of looping around and trying to figure -- we want our voice. But we need help from the federal government whenever you don't have that opportunity, because we don't have a voice. And if you can't have legislation and others don't believing, and just saying, "Let's just put this over here, it's about reading, writing and math, we don't want the culture, and we don't need that, and you just have your little class over here," it's not about that.

It's about integration to kids' teaching. But I think we have a lot of smart kids out there. There's not -- we don't need to dumb down the curriculum, and we need to start working better together. But I think it's a good opportunity. But if we can just -- in South Dakota, I know we really do need help in terms of providing legislation that gets us back to the table.

Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Great. Thanks, Daphne. One of the points that Daphne made that I just want to underscore, and that is the role of the Board of Education. Oftentimes, we don't always think about that as a vehicle for influencing change at the local level, but we have almost 15,000 school districts operated by school boards in this country, which is really one of the most distinguishing features of our system of public education versus the system of public education in other countries.

And the position of an elected school board member, as Daphne was discussing, is a position which allows us, as citizens, to uniquely influence the course of a local government, in this case a public school district. So, it's something that I think, as somebody who represented school boards back in Illinois, we should put more focus on as a -- as an opportunity for influencing change, but also in communities where there's a high percentage of Native American youth in those school districts, to do something from the school board level to address these issues.

The next person that we have signed up to speak is -- and I'm going to mispronounce the last name, and I sincerely apologize for that -- is Calvin Pohawpatchoko (pronouncing) -- is that it? I know that's not it, but....

MR. POHAWPATCHOKO: It's true, it's -- but it is really not my last name anyway. It's been Americanized. And actually, the correct way to pronounce -- the pronunciation of it is Pohawpatchoko. So anyway, last name is P-o-h-a-w-p-a-t-c-h-o-k-o. First name, "Calvin," C-a-l-v-i-n.

Of the three panel members, so far as I resonate the most with right now was Mr. Mendoza, Kippen, and Mr. Roman Nose. And so far as the reason why I resonate with that group, is because I'm a technologist, so far as I have had an opportunity to start studying an area of computer science back in 1969. And I've had a pretty lucrative career as far as that -- in that area. I have worked with some large corporations, both designing systems -- designing systems for both the government and as far as for corporations.

So, in a way, that's kind of my passion in a way right now, as far as I'm kind of semi-retired. For some reason, I had decided to step out and think that I could go for my Ph.D., and that's what I'm currently working on right now, so far as at the University of Colorado.

My road has been pretty diverse and -- through the process. But I know that one thing for me is that looking at -- as far as the mix, that was some of my kids too. And I -- I've been working in the area

of pre-K-12, through the National Science Foundation, and they're funding part of my research. And that's part of my research, so far as I'm working with the kids, so far as their digital storytelling.

But that also kind of showcased -- showcases how technology can end up being integrated, so far as within our native culture. Because what I'm -- what I'm looking at is a question of, how do I integrate technology, culture, education and the arts? And -- but also looking at it in a very, very broad picture.

And one of the things that I ran into, so far as I'm very fortunate also to be able to be involved in a program called ATLAS at the University of Colorado, and that stands for Alliance for Technology, Learning and Society.

One of the things that's unique about that program is that it's a very interdisciplinary program. In other words, I -- most of the programs, so far as on our college campuses, are very silent, and there's very much -- and there's not that much communication between the different departments, whether the Department headed -- Department of Computer Science, Engineering, Business, all the other departments out there. So, I chose that program because it ended up allowing me to cover all those subjects.

And basically, so far as for me, is that recommendations wise, so far as -- I know I only have a few minutes so far as -- but digital education, as Mr. Roman Nose brought up, I think that's very important. We're in a digital age, insofar as there's a lot of opportunities for our -- our kids are really there. And it's a matter of getting our teachers up to where our kids are. And they're utilizing that resource very, very much, so far as a day-to-day basis.

So, if we end up having some kind of interdisciplinary type program, so far as to be able to meld together -- really -- really give our native people, even in our tribal universities too, and tribal colleges, how to develop how we can bring all that together.

And I was talking with Mr. Mendoza, so far as some of his ideas about, you know, why can't all of our tribal colleges come together underneath an umbrella and be able to offer education, as far as throughout, as far as -- or even for the urban communities, and get credit -- you know, take college credit classes, whether it's in your senior -- you're a high school senior year or in the university that are around throughout the United States.

I also had an opportunity to work with UNC, as far as -- there's a couple representatives here, as far as from UNC, that -- I think that they ended up having a program called the mail program, and I was a part of the initial initiation of that program, which ended up -- it was an online program that offered a -- as far as a master's in -- in two disciplines, in special education and also in educational leadership, because there's a need for leadership out there but also a need in special education. Programs like that could be an exemplary program, so far as for reaching out.

One of the things that they did talk about, so far as maybe we need maybe some kind of Title VII type funding for post-secondary education too, as far as how we can end up moving into those areas of being able to provide funding for furthering the education of native students, and as well as a support system? Because a support system -- one of the things that we -- that we -- a lot of other people want to talk about is that, as native people, as indigenous people, which then branched out to people of Australia, New Zealand, people in South America, people up in Canada, things like that, is that we look at things in a holistic manner. And that's -- again, that's kind of the reason why I chose the program, as far as through the University of Colorado, as far as there's a great need to be -- you know, for the program to be more holistic in its approach.

So, anyway, I could talk on and on about a lot of -- a lot of different things, but I know my time is going limited. But anyway, you know, again, to showcase what some of this -- you know, what can be done with technology, how -- how we can go through, and we talked about many things, about high job rates, we talked about so far as, you know, science, we talked about leadership, suicide rates, identity, voice, you know, we talked about drugs and alcohol. Some of those stories can end be being captured,

some of those things could be to try to, you know, brought into this actual media technology stories and be able to tell the stories. And that's one of the things about kids learning by seeing other people like themselves going through the same struggles on that.

And I think that the most important thing is that, as we're -- as, you know, myself -- and I know that Jerry, he left already -- but working with Jerry, as far as in the classroom, is that identifying with the students allowed them to help them work through the system, too. And talking with them about how we ended up, kind of, trying to balance out that -- that system. Because we do walk in two worlds, between -- especially in the academic societies, so far as -- for me, is that I'm also a technologist, so I actually walk in four worlds. I walk in a world as far as how do I satisfy the academic requirements as far as for the university? But also, how do I satisfy my people, as well, and bring -- and making sure that what I do, as far as in my studies and everything else, satisfies the relationships of the whole -- the wholeness of the other people? But also, on a technical side I also have to end up satisfying the technical arena, as well as how can technology be used in our -- in our society as well.

And I think it's very important, as far as looking at education and furthering education, not only in native education, but I also look from a larger global perspective of all education, because I know that, as an educational institution, as far as working in the United States, computer science and engineering, all of that kind of gets relegated to vocational-type studies, and that's not integrated into -- and my program, as far as through the inner staff, I am involved in a specialized program called Integrated Computer Science into traditional subjects. So, we go out into the classroom showing how, really, technology has furthered the research in science, but also, though, can further research as far as our native cultures and our native colleges and as far as native universities, and so -- and as well as our communities.

You know, I'm hearing about, you know, there's a great need as far as building computer systems where we can end up, you know, tracking our data, tracking our students. And I know there's a lot of other problems between state IDs, district IDs, national IDs. And so that all kind of is intermixed, so it's hard for them to track down our students, so....

But anyway, I just want to just mention that, you know, how -- how viable it is, I guess, as we're moving into this new digital world, of now how that can be applied, but also just that it's very important for us, as native peoples, as far as speak my mind and hear how we can end up using it, as far as us seeing it, as far as how powerful that is to be able to capture a lot of that information, but also to hear it from the students words. And that's really the three things that I end up seeing as far as being part of this, is that -- the talks about our culture, talks about identity, but also it gives us a voice and a much different media.

Thank you.

MR. ROSE: Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. And we've heard a lot about how technology can really be used to improve avenues for kids, but to really address some of the challenges in urban areas, right, about -- you know, about making sure that -- that kids understand their -- their cultural ties and stuff. So, thank you for that.

Next speaker is Jennifer Attocknie, from Lawrence Public schools.

MS. ATTOCKNIE: (Speaking Native American.)

Hello, everybody here. My name is Jennifer Attocknie. I'm a member of the Comanche Nation, and I'm also a Citizen Band of the Potawatomi on the Shingobee Creek. I live and work in Lawrence, Kansas. I graduated from both Haskell when it was a junior college -- now it's Haskell Indian Nation's University. And I also graduated from the University of Kansas, "Rock chalk, Jayhawk, go KU."

Okay. So, I want to give you a quick snapshot of my community. Lawrence Public Schools has about 10,000 students, and 5 percent are Native American, that's about 550 kids that I serve -- sorry, I'm having allergy issues -- and it's about 365 families, but pre-K through 12.

I'm the Native American student services coordinator. I'm in charge of the Title VII and Johnson-O'Malley programs. We don't get any funding from grants. We beg some money from tribes sometimes to develop school supplies, but that's about it.

From what I can tell, in our community the largest problem that we have is non-Indian teachers understanding the native kids that they serve. They have a great deal of stereotype and misunderstanding, and it comes out in different ways.

Our school publish -- and like I said, it's 5 percent Native American. However, on the east side of town it's -- the elementary schools on that side have, like, maybe 10, 15 percent native, and the elementary on the west side of town has, like, 1 percent native. So, there's a huge disparity in that.

I developed a presentation called "Indian 101," and I train the teachers how to work with the native kids, and I talk about stereotype, and images in the media, and perceptions of Native Americans, and that seems to work pretty well.

Another thing that means -- that seems to be a problem in our community as far as Indian education is the feeling of isolation a lot of our students have. In that 550 or so kids, we have 110 different tribes represented, and that's mostly because of Haskell. Just like any college community, people go to that school, they stick around, they raise their family there. So, we have a large inter-tribal highly diverse population.

So, it's hard for us to connect with tribes to do partnering, because we'll have maybe, like, two or three members of a tribe in our school district. So, it's hard to make a plea to that tribe to come coordinate with us about something specific. It's also difficult for us to do any kind of language programming because of that.

We do have an MOU with Haskell regarding use of their space, and my office becomes an intern site for their American Indian Study students. So, we do have some coordinating things we do with Haskell, and that seems to work pretty well.

One of the things that my community could use some help with is the pre-K and kindergarten population. We tend to -- I want to have sort of a clearinghouse with the kindergarten students. We do this on a smaller level. But it seems that a lot of kids are labeled "special ed" early on and they're really not, and we have to combat that, as they go through the school, and have to re-address their IEP's and they're really not special ed. So, I think if I -- if we had some kind of way to clear that out at the very beginning, that might help down the line.

Those are my big snapshot pictures.

Thank you for letting me talk.

Bye.

MR. ROSE: Thank you. Hey, do you mind if I ask you a couple quick questions?

MS. ATTOCKNIE: Yeah.

MR. ROSE: One is, are there any members of the school board that are native --

MS. ATTOCKNIE: No.

MR. ROSE: -- in Lawrence?

MS. ATTOCKNIE: No.

MR. ROSE: And how about the administration, other than yourself?

MS. ATTOCKNIE: No.

MR. ROSE: The -- the other, I guess, question I had is -- is -- I don't know quite how to phrase this.

But I -- I guess my other question boils down to this: Is the -- does the University of Kansas have an interest or a -- a role to play, particularly with Lawrence Public Schools, in advocating for native issues, or --

MS. ATTOCKNIE: Yeah. There's a -- there's some -- a couple student organizations at KU that do things. And then we have the Global Initiative Nations studies program at KU, which is a graduate level course.

MR. ROSE: Yeah.

MS. ATTOCKNIE: There's also a program that bridges Haskell and KU, they do some kind of coordinating things with their curriculum and with their classes.

MR. ROSE: But -- so, is it all integrated with the Lawrence Public Schools?

MS. ATTOCKNIE: No. No. In fact, most people who I meet with in my own school district think I work at Haskell, because obviously I'm Indian, living in Lawrence, I work at Haskell.

MR. ROSE: Okay. Thanks.

MS. ATTOCKNIE: Yeah.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. Our next speaker is Grant Davis.

MR. GRIMM: Quick process, though, while Grant comes up. You'll find in your envelopes this little half-sheet comment card. Those of you who have provided comments and those of you who may not come up and speak but would like to provide comments, please fill this out and leave it here at the end of the session, and our colleagues here will take these back with them.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you for giving me this time.

My name is Grant Davis. I'm originally from Alaska. I come from -- my ancestors come from Glacier Bay, and I belong to the Eagle Clan, (Speaking Native American.)

I'm here on behalf of the Native Recruitment -- Recruitment Team for Foster Care and Adoption. And there's a really big need for native people in the -- in the community of Denver. There's so many kids in the system. And last time I heard, it was, like, 800 native kids in the state of Colorado.

And a lot of times they -- they need help just to try to get their kids into the -- the school systems. And they go through a lot. And a lot of these kids are moved from house to house. And they go through so much that it's -- it's just hard for them to really want to get that education, and they fall off and don't go any further.

You know, so I'm trying to do, you know, as much as I can. I'm only part-time with Human Services, which has a grant from -- I can't remember where it was from. But, you know, they -- they hired five of us to do the recruiting.

And here in Denver, you know, when I came onboard, before I did, they -- they -- they had a hard time getting native -- native families to adopt children. And so when I came aboard, they were pleased because I was able to reach out to the native community and really get in there, like coming here to this place here.

And it's -- and it's really -- really helped me to become stronger, too, you know. So, I'm -- I'm trying to do whatever I can to reach out to the community. If you can help in any way -- you know, help me out, because they need homes. You know, not only homes, but they need mentors, they need people that are educated to help them get through school, you know, because I do talk to a lot of kids in the community.

And every time I talk to them, they say, "We'd like to go to college but we just don't know how to do it." You know, if there's some way we can reach out to them. You know, it's hard when they don't know where to go. You know, because I -- I see a lot of kids. You know, everywhere I go, they're -- they're just -- they're lost, it's just hard for them to keep moving on. You know, they get out of high school, and that's it, if they're lucky.

But also, I want to bring to your attention that my wife, Susan Yellow Horse, she passed away in May. And I wanted to start a healing center here in Denver, you know. And May 1st is going to be the opening day. And we need your help, because we're looking for grant money, any way we can get something going for our native people in the process.

She -- she brought a group of native professionals in the field to run this program. Because even though there's some programs here in Denver, but they're not culturally sensitive to our native people, and it's hard for them to get through the process, a lot of times they get out of that system. And this is what we're trying to bring.

You know, I know she had -- she had the love for her people. And -- and she said, "I want to do this so our people can heal," you know. And so it's a -- it's a great need in Denver, because we don't have a native treatment program. And it's -- you know, it's something we're all looking for, you know, for our people. Our own kids that are getting in trouble, they have nowhere to go. Sometimes they go to programs, but it's -- it's not sensitive to their -- to their needs, so -- so they get discouraged, and it's hard for them to get through the system.

So, I just want to relay that to you, because it's a -- it's a -- it's a need here in Denver, Colorado, you know, because -- if we can't get them out of that system, we're losing our kids, we're losing them because they're not getting the education. You know, and mentors. You know -- you know, I always thought about -- thought about this, you know.

And I'm glad this is here, because I didn't even know it was going on. But something just kept telling me, "Come to the Indian Center," you know. And what I was thinking, you know, is we need to develop -- we got so much technology, we need to develop something that we're -- for each field that there is. We can bring it to your our young people. We can go onto that site and say, "I want to be a teacher, okay, what do I need to do?" You know, "Where do I go?" Any field that they want to go to, they can pull it up on a website.

And that's something that's very important, because we don't that many people in the community that will stand up and show these kids how to do it. It's hard for them. You know, if something like this develops, you know, I think a lot of our kids will go to school, you know, to -- because they don't where to go and sometimes they don't know where to turn.

You know, I have my granddaughter living in California. She makes me very proud because she's been having a 4.0, you know. And that's -- we need to praise our kids. We need to do something. And I have a grandson. And ever since he was three years old, he said, "I want to be an astronaut." So, we got to back him up. To this day, he still talks about he wants to be an astronaut. So, we need to really have some kind of a program where we can, you know, really reach out to our children. It's too bad because we sit back so much that we just don't really reach out to them.

And I do get out there in the community, and I see a lot of this, and I talk to a lot of kids. A lot of families, you know. Right now I'm working with the foster care. But -- do -- I meet with the kinship families. And boy, they have a lot of problems with these kids because they need something, they want something. You know, I wrote some poems, I use them when I talk to these kids, one about hope, one about suicide. You know, some of these people I let them read just to get opinions. So, you know, we need to wake up.

You know, when I -- when my wife and I were trying to pull this together, she would talk to me. She had her doctor's degree from the University of Denver. I told her, "You know, you got your degree, let's" -- "let's figure out something, let's pull" -- "pull our native people together, try to get a" -- "a native program going so we can do something for our people." You know, she did this up through the bitter end, you know, up to her last -- last week on this earth. She pulled together everything, the board, the -- the native professionals.

And I think it's very important that we really step up with one another, even regardless of what field we're in, to back one another. Because it's -- it's not easy to do it by yourself. And one way we can develop these things, we can collaborate with one another, you know, open doors for them. The kids will really look up to us then. Because I -- I do a lot of talk with the kids, I talk with them, you know, in a conference room with native kids because they wanted an elder to speak. And I talked to them.

And it was -- I was surprised, because every one of them were listening. You get young kids together and they're -- sometimes they're so restless. But after I got through talking to them, every one of them jumped off their chair and came and thanked me. That's all they want. They want to hear us. They want us to hear them. So, I just hope we can open the doors for them this way.

And I want to thank you very much.

MR. ROSE: Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you, Mr. Davis. And thank you for your work. And I -- I know a little bit about, you know, some of the outcomes for kids in the foster care system. And I urge anybody to -- to -- to hear what he said. Because the outcomes for kids in foster care system, the educational outcomes for kids, it is heartbreaking to see what these kids have to go through. So, thank you, sir.

I just wanted to mention one quick thing. We had a lot of talk about teachers and recruiting and alternative routes to certification, and we've already talked about Teach For America.

The Department of Education has an initiative, it's called "teach.gov." And it's a campaign designed to get -- to recruit new teachers, to get folks to teach particularly in under-represented communities. So, it's a really exciting effort. And I -- and I -- the website is "www.teach.gov" -- "teach.gov." So, I urge you to -- to go and check it out if -- if you're interested.

The next speaker is Chuck Mills.

MR. MILLS: Thank you. My name is Chuck Mills. I'm a retired school teacher from Aurora, Colorado, 36 years working with special needs students. I am a Lakota Oglala, born in Pine Ridge Reservation.

I'd like to give a little perspective on what I see as natives coming into the non-native world, especially the urban world, off the reservations, and some of the things that they face. I'd like to break it up into maybe a couple of areas.

The first area is the ones that are closer to our hearts, and that's in any kind of activities, such as sports or after-school activities that the -- the native kids can get involved in. Those same activities on the reservation are usually free. Football uniforms, basketball uniforms, shoes, clothes, those are free. The book that you use, the script that you read for a play, free.

Those things, when they come to an urban setting or a suburban setting, now is a cost. Now what was a free football uniform is now a \$500 investment. And if you're looking at little league, you're

going to have to reinvest about every two years, as your child grows. These are some of the costs that are incurred when they move off the reservation, onto the urban and suburban setting, that tends to keep our youth from participating in those kind of venues.

Now, in the academy end of it. A young lad or lady coming off the reservation, whether it's an elementary school, middle school, or high school, when they get to that setting, they face a lot of subtle issues that are never addressed. One is the size of the school, two is the -- the pace of the school. And three, more importantly I think, is the demographics of the school dictate the direction in which the education is going. And a lot of times our native youth are left out because the population is so small.

What I've always looked to in the Aurora Public Schools was our department, Indian Education, and what was a master's level program serving all the natives in the district is now a 12 or \$13 an hour clerical position pushing governmental papers.

What was first planned for Aurora Public Schools was to hire a person that was able to counsel youth. Because of the number of natives we had in the district, we figured that a good case load would be about fifty. That's approximately half what a high school counselor would have. But with fifty, for every fifty natives in the -- the school district, there would be a qualified native background counselor to work with them. So that they would have an individual who would come in the building, and know their particular educational needs, and work with the teachers in that capacity.

That's what I think is needed more for the success of our native students in the school districts now, is to actually have the Department of Indian Education taking a grassroots level with our students. They could set up mentoring, they could be mentors themselves. We have -- just the gentleman that just spoke with before us, we have an abundance of elders, with tons of experience, who would be willing to volunteer time and come in and run a reading group after school at some location for a group of fifth graders, to help them with their reading, or their math, or their language.

We have a lot of native professionals out there who need to volunteer their time to come into the school district. But more importantly, we need within the school districts, not a figure head department, but a department that actually is going to put together such programs and coordinate these people at a grassroots level.

Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Can I actually ask you a question, because you said you're a special needs teacher, is that what you --

MR. MILLS: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: So, I was wondering if you could just really briefly kind of talk about some of the challenges that Native American kids with special needs face in accessing services, or whether they are over-represented, or mis- -- mis-identified, or....

MR. MILLS: A Native American youth with special needs, probably only in that venue is there equality, and that's the equality of disability. And so their needs are addressed and met.

But we do have young people who are off the reservation and whose parents aren't familiar with the edu-babble that education can -- special education can throw upon a parent in an IEP meeting; that's where a familiar face, somebody that they're familiar with within the district -- a counselor, the Department of Education -- that's where that piece would fit in perfectly for them.

Special needs students, if done well, they are probably the most helped group of students we have right now. But it's mandated by law and the number of your class size and your caseload.

MR. GRIMM: Chuck, real quick.

MR. MILLS: Yes.

MR. GRIMM: You talked about working with these families and getting them involved. How important is it that your staff -- or the staff of the school is offering this culturally appropriate sort of relationship with the parents mainly so the parents trust the -- the services being provided? Do you think trust is a main barrier with parents giving their kids access to special ed services?

MR. MILLS: Without bringing a school teacher and me and going into a historical scenario here, there's people here now who were very part -- major part of the assimilation process of the teens and 1920s. That process to assimilate our people into the white culture fostered a generation of mistrust, and so it's naturally inherited there.

I never experience that. My father moved off the reservation when I was very young, and I was raised in a suburban setting, so I'm a suburban native.

But that mistrust, it must be in my DNA. And so there is that kind of authoritative mistrust, and especially when you get into an educational setting, when you have everybody representative that can possibly represent the school district and you're sitting there alone.

And definitely, they need -- a native family needs a representative, somebody that can give them ground, and somebody that can interpret what's going on in those meetings, or else it's like sitting in a meeting with a foreign language.

MR. GRIMM: Carol?

MS. HARVEY: I just wanted to make a real brief comment.

For people in the field of education that are interested in learning about the mistrust and why it developed, there are two excellent videos. You know, one is a PBS documentary, which probably most of you have seen, called "In The White Man's Image." The other one that's even more compelling and even more painful to watch is called "Healing The Hurts." And those are contemporary boarding school survivors who are going through a week-long program of therapy, and who talk about what it was like for them to go through the boarding school system, to be separated from their families, to be separated from their siblings, and what they experienced during that time process.

So, I think it's something that we all always need to be cognizant of, that that's part of our heritage, is, you know, this mistrust of the school system.

MR. GRIMM: And following up on that, what we see here in metro Denver, specifically, is a lack of trust of parents to put especially their young children into an institution or an early education system, where they don't have any feeling that there is Indian support there.

So, what we see is American Indians participating in early education less than any other counterpart in metro Denver, which means our youth then end up starting kindergarten well behind their peers. When our youths start kindergarten and their peers know they're ABC's, our youth, at a very young age, realize they're behind, and that perpetuates over time. So, by the time our kids are in eighth grade, they think different the entire school/career up to that point.

And a big part of what we're trying to do here is to make sure that there's equal access and appropriate access to early education for our youth. Because, right now we see a lot of parents don't trust the system, they don't trust the system with their three-year-old, and that's based on a lot of these historical traumas that Carol and Chuck have said. So, I just wanted to reiterate that.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. Let's get moving. We got a lot of folks that still want to actually talk. Bruce

LeClaire.

MR. LeCLAIRE: (Speaking Native American.) Hello, my relatives. My Lakota name is Eagle Tail. I'm a Rosebud Sioux. On this day, I speak to you from my heart and offer you my hand.

I'm a Title VII coordinator for Durango School District 9-R, southwestern Colorado. And out of a population of about 4,000 students, we have 200 native students representing 27 different tribes, 60 percent are Navajo, 25 percent are Ute, and the rest of the 25 tribes make up the remaining percentage.

Durango School District has never had anything specifically for Native American students, any programs whatsoever. And throughout its history as a district, Native American students have achieved at a lower rate than their counterparts, the achievement gap.

And in my three years now under this program, I've seen a lot of needs for our native students, and a lot of the stuff has been mentioned here already. The things that I see is that our students need a -- a community, a sense of belonging. And when I watch my native students walk down that hall, where they represent just a real number of the population -- a real small number, they look like they don't belong there. They look like they don't feel like they fit in. A lot of them walk with their heads down, and just go right to their class.

And I know that when they participate in Native American Club at the high school, they have that sense of belonging. I have Title VII groups at middle school level. When they come to my class, they are no longer the -- the minority in their -- in that class, they're actually the majority. There's comfort in there, there's a sense of belonging. So, they need that.

And one of the things that I would like, you know, in terms of the federal level, is that my school district receives Title VII funding. The majority of that money goes to pay for my position, and the school district itself doesn't put anything towards the program. And I'm -- I'm dealing with that battle on -- as much as I can from my -- my position.

My recommendation would be that, on a federal level, any school district that receives Title VII funding, might want to consider requiring that school district to show that they have a commitment for our native students through their budget dollars. Because we have a problem yet. I think we have the hesitation to provide funding to provide all the support financially that is needed. Title VII funding has rules and regulations, just like any other dollars, tied to it. And I know that a lot of programs -- you hear "culturally sensitive programming," "culturally appropriate programming," well, what is that?

You know, I've worked for twenty years with Native American students in a residential child care facility. I was a director of a behavioral treatment program. And I -- we got a contract from the -- the State of New Mexico to provide culturally appropriate program. And they said, "Here's your" -- "Here's what we want you to do. We want you to go to these Native Americans homes and we want you to ask all these intrusive, personal questions within your first meeting. And we want you to do all these things without establishing a relationship or a rapport with these families."

To me, that's not culturally appropriate. And so I see a lot of bureaucracies that say, "Yeah, we want to be sensitive," and all this stuff, "but here's how you do it." Well, it takes time to develop the relationships with Native American parents. I've been trying for -- it's my third year now. I get parents that are recognizing me, they're feeling a little more comfortable. Because the parents, when they come into an urban setting and they come to those schools, they look around, and chances are they don't see anything that represents their culture in the environment, no pictures, no nothing. And they walk in there, and they look around at the staff, the faculty, the administration. Again, there's no familiar faces, no familiar culture representation there.

And if they walk into the that school and they receive treatment that is viewed as being disrespectful or being ignored, that's a bad experience. Basic behavioralism tells you, if I do something and I don't like the consequences, I'm not going to do it again. Native American parent participation is

real low, and I'm trying to increase that step by step. I'm only one -- one person, you know, I work in the whole school district, only got one person doing the -- doing the work that I do.

So, I look around at the Denver community here and I see that they got personnel, they got a district with matching dollars and stuff. I say, "Man, that must be great," because I -- that's -- that's just foreign to me. You know, I feel like I'm swimming upriver, you know, against the current, and I'm getting tired. It's really hard.

So, as far as federal level, like I said, the dollars, I would just say considering requiring school districts to provide some sort of funding. And I don't know what it would be. I'm not here to -- to hash that out. I'm just saying some sort of funding.

Another idea that I have is just the -- that when you say, "Let's implement a culturally sensitive or appropriate program," that we all agree on what that means. It's -- it's against protocol to be real intrusive with native families, especially on your first meeting. You're not going to ask them about sexual assault history, alcohol abuse history, you know, all those kinds of things. It's pretty -- it's pretty hard for families to really trust anybody when you first walk in the door, let alone answer all these intimate questions about my family.

So, those are just some of the things I wanted to -- to throw out. And I'd like to thank you for your time.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker is Zoe Goodblanket.

MS. GOODBLANKET: Pardon my surprised expression, but I didn't sign up. The only person I could think of who might have is Rose Marie McGuire. Thank you. Possibly Rose Marie McGuire.

I'm from Colorado Springs. I'm an enrolled member of the Navajo Tribe, and a parent and a grandparent. And I have worked way -- a bazillion years ago, when Title VII was Title IV. Whoa. I'm an early childhood educator and I work with children two to five years old.

And I would definitely encourage the Department of Education to increase the funding for Indian Head Start. Because of my extensive experience with early childhood education, I would concur that it is critical to work with young children as early as possible. Because for those children who come from maybe rural areas, some of them who might be at a disadvantage or are at risk, the discrepancies, the disparities in academic achievement begins in kindergarten. It's huge and it's scary. And from that point on, their education becomes a process of recovery and it's a struggle.

As an early childhood educator, we -- I work with young children's self-esteem, self-advocacy, which can be as simple as a four-year-old telling another four-year-old, "Give me back my toy, you took it from me," rather than crying or just shutting down. And children can arrive at a point, a very simplistic -- you know, in a very simple way of advocating for themselves.

When they have that experience in preschool, it's like, "Aha, you know, I mix red and green and I get a yucky brown color," that's important, that's science, that is prescience, and that is self-discovery. It's -- it's -- it's presenting that child with a little bit of rigor, scaffolding them to do the Vygotskian thing, bumping them up another level. Arranging activities, learning experiences that are hands-on, that will pique their interests, that will stimulate their language.

Working on the socialization skills so they can get along with their peers, with their teachers. Being understanding and nurturing so that, as they proceed through their educational experience, they - they acquire more self-confidence, they acquire the ability to take risk, to take a chance, to try something new, to engage themselves in something that's stimulating, that's challenging.

As an early childhood educator, I work with my students in pre-literacy activities, oral language development, pre-writing, pre-math. These are all very important in preparing a young child to begin and continue their educational experience.

I was looking at some of the NIEA material, and I was astounded. I was very -- quite frankly, I was not aware that in the BIE schools and in the public schools, 18 to 20 percent of students are identified as special education students. And hence, the need for more special education teachers. To me, that's -- that's disturbing. And I would -- right off the top of my mind, I thought a percentage of these students have been mis-identified. You know, I don't know the range of the disabilities. I don't know -- I do know that in some rural areas the accessibility to specialists to meet the needs of these children is lacking. And I even see it in the -- in the city, in the urban areas.

On the part of parents, the parent of a special needs child, working with that -- a family is a very delicate process, because a lot of parents eventually, hopefully -- you hope that they come to terms with accepting their child's disability if it's lifelong. And it's a grieving process. And the parent is hurt. Yet, the parent has to be able to advocate for that child even in an urban center, sometimes more than maybe a rural setting, because they're not going to know their rights under the American With Disabilities Act. For example, to know that they don't have to just go by the schedule of the school, if the school tells them, "You're only allowed one annual review." Not so. That parent has a right to call for a review as frequently as they like. They also have -- should have -- you know, they should be aware that they have -- they have the right to have an advocate. But they need to know where to find this advocate if the school is -- or the district is not forthcoming with this information. They need to know the resources whereby they can get technical assistance and someone to sit in with them. Because I agree with the gentleman, retired special ed teacher, who spoke about how intimidating it can be for one parent, or even two parents, to go into an IEP meeting, and there are six or seven teachers, and administrators, and specialists who are looking across the table at you, and giving you all this information, all this data, and telling you about your child, and it really doesn't make a lot of sense. And they're telling you what their goals -- your child's goals and objectives are, without little or no input on your part.

So, I would definitely -- and with -- advocate for more funding for early childhood education, and as well as more services for children who have special needs.

And I'd also like to say something else. There seems to be a lot said this morning about appropriate enrichment programs, IB is the International Baccalaureate Program, working to get kids -- tracking kids, making sure they get the best opportunity, the right fit for college or university. But my -- I wonder, for native students, as well as non-native students, what's out there? What are we doing for the average student who is not on a college or university track? What is there in Title VII that can supplement -- provide supplemental services for that kind of student?

Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Thank you very much, Zoe, for your work with early youth and reminding us of the importance of early education. It's such a critical thing.

And to mirror your comments, I will say, let's not only expand Native Head Start, but let's also allow urban Indian agencies across the country to access the Head Start bucks. That's something we can't currently do.

And also, as you talked about kids dropping out, what resources are available. This doesn't pertain to DOE. But the Department of Labor, who fund some of our programs here, also has supplemental youth programs.

As an urban agency, we can't compete for those dollars either. Those are set aside specifically for American Indians, but American Indian people who reside on their tribal land.

So, while there's some great dollars out there and there's great programs and ways we can be innovative and offer more supplemental services to our people, we, as urban Indian agencies, cannot access those bucks. So, it's really critical that we not only increase the percentage of funding for these specific programs but we also look at where the allocations are within that program.

Because, as we stated earlier, we're serving four times as many people as we ever have in our history and we're doing it with the same amount of money. So, unless Capitol Hill begins to address these needs and see how -- make sure that the money follows the people, you know, we're really struggling here to -- to -- to address those needs.

So again, thank you, Zoe, for your work in that area.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. Up next, I think it says "Carolena Jackson" and "Glenna Wood."

MS. JACKSON: Hello. My name is Carolena Jackson, and I'm from the Edge Water Clan, born to a Mexican Clan. My maternal family is from Ganado.

A little bit before I start. My direct background and work background is actually healthcare. About five years ago is when I was introduced to Title VII. And I am not a teacher, so my education was really the administrative part of that. And I came into Title VII to do the arts and the cultural part, because they had a bright idea about a native person doing the art. So, that made sense, so that's how I started.

When I came in, there was no coordinator, there was no director of the Grants Department. So, I jumped in because the second part of the grant was due. I didn't know what I was doing. All of the training, the support that I got, was from our Grants Department. They had done it for many years, so they kind of knew the basis of it.

In that five years, I think I've lost count of how many coordinators our school district has had. And I'm from Colorado Springs.

A little bit about Colorado Springs is that we have a mixed population of long-term residents, people -- as well as transient people -- some of that has to do with the United States Air Force, Peterson, Fort Evans. So, a lot of families come in and then they move out.

Not only in Colorado Springs do we have District 11, we have other multiple districts. So, some of those districts are competing with each other. So, one year we'll see some of our students, and the next year they may transfer to another district, and then two years down the way they come back to our district. So, we have some of that, issues there.

Another part of our issues is our enrollment. And the new enrollment form this year really caused a lot of problems, as far as identifying themselves as Native American and Hispanic. Because now it includes Mexican Indian tribes, so kind of differentiating those.

At the beginning of the school year, we get anywhere from 3 to 500 students enrolled are saying that they're Native Americans. Impact aid sheets come out, and that doubles. So, we're almost at 1,000 kids. Out of those 1,000 kids, those that turn in a 506 Form are probably about a third. And each year, I have noticed that it's getting harder and harder to get our parents to fill those out, because they don't want -- one, they don't want to fill that information out -- and I assume that's part of the mistrust that they have -- and also because they don't know about it, and so trying to explain it's just for accounts -- for a grant so that we can help our students. But then we get to the point of where our families aren't registering their kids with their tribe. And when they go down -- three or four generations down, and so then so we can't count those.

Last year in our district we had recognized our students being in 129 different tribes. So, we are very diverse. Not only are we diverse in our tribes, but we're also diverse in traditionally raised children and urban children. So, how do we bring all of that culture in with our -- with our kids in their regular academic teaching?

Our district -- you know, each year there's budget cuts. So, this year one of our problems is that many of our schools are going away from after-school programming. So, how are we getting these programs for their after school? Transportation is a problem. Getting teachers and administrative or even an executive team to be culturally responsive is really hard.

The last couple of years we had a lot of transition, principals moving around. So, one year we can train one school and they're all onboard, and the next year it's a whole different set of team. Our next district, we have over 60 different schools, half of them are elementary schools, we also have charter schools and alternative schools. So, each year is just like we're re-creating education and culturally responsiveness.

The past couple years it's been me only, working part time, trying to address as many kids as I can. This is the first year that we've had three people in this position. But two of us are part time and only one person is full time. So, we're still not able to meet all of the needs of these kids.

When I was in Durango, I was really grateful that there was a group of people who wanted to get together and connect and communicate. Last year I really had a hard time and there was several times where I just wanted to quit. I felt like I didn't have -- I didn't know where to go to get the help. It's sad to know that it is a conflict to try to get culture into our schools, our public schools, but it is there. And so, meeting all these different people, I'm grateful. And what keeps me going is that my own kids are in school. And I was born and raised in Colorado Springs, so I know what it's like to be brought up in -- in urban school and in a public school. And a lot of times that culture is not there.

So -- and with our professional development, with me not being a teacher, my first two years it was like a crash course of K through 12 education. Any type of learning or training that I can do, that's what I did. I wasn't teaching them. The teachers were the ones that were teaching them. I was just coordinating, trying to make sure the administrative part of the grant was there.

So, really, we know we -- we do have native professionals in our school district. But, you know, what can we do to help them to get -- to do higher education for them?

Since then, this year, part of my personal goal is to get that awareness out to the other districts. So, I volunteer with Colorado Springs Indian Center and I bring that awareness to different school districts. There's -- in the school district who didn't even know that they had native kids in their schools. So, that's part of my goals, is to get the rest of Colorado Springs onboard with their population and what the possibilities of working with them are.

Glenna.

MS. WOOD: Hi. I'm Glenna wood. I -- I'm the only full-time paid person for Title VII in Colorado Springs.

I'm -- yeah, I'm the emotional one. She's strong. I always cry, and I -- I'm sorry.

I've only been in my job probably five months, so it's been a very humbling and learning experience. I know one of the gentleman here asked what is it that the urban kids -- what kind of challenges do they get? And I was hoping to hear more from this group here -- because you all are urban -- most of you -- of what those are. But let me just share what I see.

I'm -- oh, I'm sorry. I'm Hualapai and Hopi. I'm far from my home.

But my husband was in the military. And so I kind of call ourselves, you know, transient Air Force gypsies, we've moved here and there. So, my children have been raised in the urban -- in the city, among the white people.

And I know -- I was never aware that there was such things as Title VII monies for kids. I guess my children have been pretty much mainstreamed in American society because I felt I had no other choice. But thanks to my husband being a strong man and a good example, they've done okay.

Like Carolena said, this collaboration, I think, is -- is very, very much needed. We were both very, very grateful to go to Durango and to hear what some of the other districts are doing with Title VII, and how -- what programs are they utilizing to help our children stay motivated, you know, what has been working and what hasn't been working? And I was amazed. I thought, you know, if this program has been here for many, many years, how come they didn't have this before? Why do they keep wanting to re-invent stuff, you know, and -- and making it be harder.

With the urban kids, some of the challenges that I see is -- and this just breaks my heart, I guess -- is there's a lot of homelessness. And that was something I never really thought about. And I've run into some really nice children that are -- that are homeless, and they live in motels with their families. Some kids -- one young lady I met, she said, "This is my seventh high school," and she's trying to graduate. And I hope that we can help her do that.

I feel like it's been my privilege to try to be a mentor and advocate for some of my high school kids because that's who I live with. And I thought -- I was telling my family -- I said, "You know, I feel like sometimes there's just so much work and there's not enough people." I said, "If I feel like I have any personal reward from this," I says, "it happened today." And that was with a young lady at one of the high schools who told me -- she said, "You know, if it weren't for you to come and tell me that there are other options other than going into the service, I would have gone into the service." She says, "Now I don't want to do that." She said, "I want to explore these other" -- "these scholarships and other things that you've told me about."

So, I said, "You know what? Okay, I'm done, I did my thing, I can sleep now." But it is a lot of work. And -- and like I said, it really wasn't like I was waiting for any "thank you's." But boy, that was my -- my big one. We are going to be facing -- Colorado Springs School District is going to be -- this is what I read on my computer from the school district -- is that they're planning a \$13 million budget cut. That's a lot of money.

And for us, a Title VII, I'm told we only get like 57,000. And we do have -- like Carolena was saying, we have a lot of native kids in our -- our area. Plus, it's -- it's going to continue to grow. There's more Indians coming into Colorado Springs, and -- and so it's going to be growing along with the people coming into Denver.

They have started a -- an Indian Center, which I think is just great. They are trying their best to be a community of natives down there, which is really wonderful because they said they hadn't had it for a while. It kind of was off and on. But now it looks like it has some strong people there and they're trying to get it moving.

And I just wanted to share with you real quick -- you guys are kind of talking about your alma maters. Well, I share with Larry Echo Hawk, I'm a Brigham Young University alumnus, and I was there when he played football. But if you'll notice, he has more gray hair than I do.

Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Well, thank you both for your comments, and they're resting on good ears here.

We still have quite a few folks who would like to present, so we just kindly ask you to try to keep your remarks to about three minutes, if you could. So, thanks.

MR. YUDIN: Okay. Michael Brydge.

MR. BRYDGE: Thank you for allowing me to speak. It's Michael "Brydge," B-r-y-d-g-e. I represent Colorado State University.

And as someone was -- brought up earlier today is the concept of indicators and measurements of success in relation to funding, governmental and non-governmental agencies requiring these indicators and tracking data. I think that's so important, and I enjoyed hearing ways in which that's going to continue and -- and become more effective.

The question I have for the -- the native folks and the -- and the elders here at the local level, as well as representatives of the Department of Education, is how do you feel the -- I believe that the -- the academic indicators are strongly important. I'm not saying that they should be diminished at all. But I'm also asking about the culturally appropriate indicators as well. Are there what you would consider culturally appropriate indicators of success and measures in regards to funding? And would the

concerns regarding the current situation of indicators and measures of success in regards to the funding provide insight into one of the ways that the U.S. Department of Education could help equip urban communities in relation to academic preparedness? Did that come across weird? I don't -- do --

Along with academic standards that need to be met, are there also culturally appropriate indicators in relation to receiving funding?

Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. Actually, I'd love to turn it -- turn it over to folks, if there are culturally appropriate indicators that we could be measuring for purposes of funding and accountability.

MR. MENDOZA: Well, one of the -- the things that is the important work of AIHEC, the organization that -- that, you know, represents tribal colleges and American Indian higher education consortium, is looking exactly into that. They have the -- the AIMS systems, and it -- your -- your choice of terminology is very appropriate there. It's the "American Indian Measures for Success."

I'm not fully fluent in -- in what they're looking at with that. But that, it reaches to the -- to, you know, students and what we deal with, you know, all the factors that have been talked about today. And just to give you an example, looking at -- at progress in terms of retention and -- and college completion, you know, that complex dynamic for all institutions of higher education, is hard to articulate in terms of how effective our programs are.

And so, the notion of -- of stopping out, you know, in terms of success, just for that -- that transition for students, is something that they're looking at. How do we better articulate that to demonstrate progress in the way that we define success? So, there are models out there. But they need to be supported, they need to be strengthened, and they also need to be replicated in some of the institutions that -- that we talked about today.

MS. BOWERS: Amy Bowers, Native American Rights Fund.

With respect to cultural academic standards, there is a movement in charter schools on Indian lands. For example, I can think of two schools. The early college of the Redwoods Charter School, located on the Yurok Reservation. And then also, in New Mexico, the Pueblo of Jemez has a culturally based charter school.

And in the -- the charter school context, that school is required to meet the State standards as well as -- I think it's three additional standards of their choice. And in both the school at Yurok and in the Pueblo of Jemez, they have chosen culturally appropriate standards.

In the Yurok case, one of those standards is we have a -- I'm Yurok. And so we have a -- a cultural -- I always call them "cultural covenant," it's sort of a like a cultural belief in giving back to your community. So, the students are required to do community service programs, things like cleaning up an elder's yard, or making sure they fish for the elders, and then giving fish to the elders. And so the students are actually graded on how well and if they're -- they're doing those types of things. So, I would encourage the Department of Education, if they're interested in these culturally type -- or culturally relevant standards, to look to those models in the charter school context. The other thing, though, you have to be cautious about is that some tribal communities -- and members of the audience might be more familiar with this than I am. But some tribal communities aren't comfortable with teaching culture in the schools, or having someone who is not a member of their community teaching that class or developing that curriculum.

So, if you're going to go about developing something related on -- or related to culture, you really have to work with that particular community, you know.

And, Jay, you might have some insight into how the urban centers have been able to -- to merge, sort of pan Indian culture into a particular setting for an educational purpose.

MR. GRIMM: Well, that -- that's true, that remains one of our biggest challenges. And we hear so many schools and teachers are -- are working with groups of a hundred or more different tribal communities. And here in Denver, we're working with more than 220 different tribal communities. So, they seem to pan in and seem to come and go. And it's important that, you know, we recognize one of the biggest challenges, I think, in this urban setting is that, while we are one people, we're extremely diverse amongst our people. The Diegue (phonetic) come from a desert -- a semi-arid desert region, in comparison to our brethren from Oregon.

You know, our cultures and the way that we do things are going to be completely different. And so, you know, we have to be very cognizant. Even in this center, where we feel that we teach the most culturally appropriate program in Denver for American Indians, even within our tribal communities we have to be very cautious about who's teaching what and whose culture it came from. So, it's a difficult thing, and it remains one of our biggest challenges, I would say, so....

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. Next is Casey Lozar.

Mr. LOZAR: Casey Lozar. (Speaking Native American.) My name is Casey Lozar, and I'm an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and I, too, am far away from home.

But I -- I work here in the Denver community at the American Indian College Fund. And I had a -- a couple points that I wanted to bring up today. Recently the American Indian College Fund became an associate member of TEDNA, or Tribal Education Department National Assembly. And I wanted to just say that the American Indian College Fund supports all the things that Mr. Roman Nose brought up in his recommendations, they're good recommendation.

I'm -- I'm a teacher by training. I have taught elementary school, I've taught secondary education at the middle school and the high school level. And those -- those points that Mr. Roman Nose brought up are solid points. And they've got the future of our Indian kids in mind in every single one of those points.

On a different point, I'm here to represent the American Indian College Fund. My boss, Rick Williams, who couldn't make it today, had a number of different things that he believes will make for a better future for -- for Indian Country when it comes to tribal colleges and universities. I have a number of my fellow colleagues and staff members here who -- who are supporting the American Indian College Fund on this one point.

And that point is, tribal colleges and universities, as Bill was saying at the -- at the opening of this session, they're doing amazing things. There are 36 different tribal colleges throughout the country, 76 different campuses throughout the country. And they're fusing tradition and culture into all of the curriculum and -- and the pedagogy -- pedagogy of the way the curriculum is being taught. And what's -- what's happening is it's producing -- it's producing leaders with confidence that they're -- they are native, and that they know their native background and it's something to be proud of.

You know, I -- in the earlier session, I -- I saw a lot of people get really passionate. And they really got passionate when they started talking about their alma maters. And I -- you know, Ms. Desirea said she's a graduate of Dine' College, the student from East High said she wants to go Oglala Lakota College -- and I think it was Mr. Cook who threw his arms up in the air, pretty excited about it. I know Mr. Grimm is a -- went to a tribal college, and I believe Kevin went to a tribal college. This is a legitimate -- these are legitimate institutions and they are successful institutions.

I've -- just thinking back on -- on my reservation, I was born and raised on my reservation. And my father is a councilman. But he spent 32 years at our tribal college teaching as a professor. My mother, who is non-Indian, she graduated from our tribal college, and she's an -- an educator on the

reservation. And actually, she helped to start culture program in the middle of our reservation for one of our school districts.

Other people who have gotten out on the tribal college system -- just I can speak personally on my reservation -- and again, there's 36 other tribal colleges out there. But our tribal chairman is a graduate of a tribal college. The people that run the Natural Resource Department, and do it in a culturally appropriate way, are graduates of the tribal college system on my reservation. I believe Kevin, who's a legislator, is a graduate. I mean, these institutions are producing the leaders now and our future leaders.

And what the American Indian College Fund really wants to drive home is the importance of the continued support of our tribal colleges. You know, they've been around for 42 years, and they're growing more and more every year, because they're legitimate. And the reason they're becoming -- they are so successful -- the reason they are so successful is because of the hard work that's happening by the tribal leaders, by the elders, the people who are putting in way too many hours, because they have the passion and the belief that this is worth it.

And the other reason why these institutions are so successful is because President Clinton, in 1996, he signed an Executive Order for the White House Initiatives on Tribal Colleges and Universities. That directly supports from the highest office in America the advocacy of our tribal colleges, and the ability for tribal colleges to access federal money. And that is -- that is something that is important and something we -- we saw a shift when that happened, we saw a shift in the outcomes, what's happening at the tribal colleges.

And we -- the American Indian College Fund and -- and Rick Williams, our president and CEO, strongly request that Mr. Obama -- President Obama signs the Executive Order to continue the support of tribal colleges and universities.

If you have any questions, let me know.

MR. MENDOZA: I'll make sure he does that -- no. I wish. No.

But the -- the Executive Order is -- is our number one priority at the moment. And, you know, Casey mentioned the -- the good work of -- of AIHEC, you know, which is the -- the -- their -- their organization is chartered from AIHEC. And they're an important part of that.

And you know, I think here, again, in -- in this -- the present company, there is a lot of significance, you know, and there is not a tribal college here in Colorado. But, you know, this area, as I mentioned, there's eighteen states, you know, that we service. And in terms of Indian Country, you know, that's 80 percent.

And so we have to really look at, you know, how we can be successful in terms of Indian Country, and how do we protect that which we are so good at in such a short amount of time? It's only 40 years -- barely even 40 years that these institutions have literally revolutionized Indian education.

One of the -- the -- the most glaring statistics of success that I see, as well -- as many of you know, these institutions are two-year colleges, I believe ten of them have four-year programs and two of them have masters programs. Many of them have partnering degrees with other institutions as well.

And so we have lots of stories of collaboration and success. And so those must be replicated as well. I mentioned a statistic -- and it was -- I think it was one of the AIHEC studies -- the AIHEC study, 76 percent of those students who leave tribal colleges and go onto four-year institutions are successful, they graduate with their four-year degree. So, we see -- and -- and, you know, how, you know, these institutions are providing for the next generation of leadership.

I -- I, too, am proud to say -- I'm not a graduate of -- of a tribal college, but I have attended three of them. I didn't feel so proud at the moment. But -- but I learned valuable lessons from each of those experiences. It provided me with the -- the necessary information at the appropriate time to be in a position where I feel like I am successful. I can provide for my family. I am increasingly taking

responsibility for the future of our people. And so I just want to reiterate that, and -- and thank Casey and all the work that they do for -- for tribal colleges, the Indian College Fund. You know, no questions, but -- but thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. I think the next speaker is a group. They want to go as AIPAC -- is that right -- A-I-P-A-C. The individuals -- I think it's a group or --Leanna, Felicia, Melanie.

MS. KIM: My name is Lana Dawn Kim (phonetic). We are from Adams County, up north, smaller Indian population, least noticed population. And we have no director, no nothing. We're just parents that are volunteering time directing a home program.

I -- and -- and just so you guys know who we are, this is Melanie Phillips, she is our secretary, and she works very, very hard.

And?

MS. ALVAREZ: Felicia Alvarez, F-e-l-i-c-i-a, "Alvarez," A-l-v-a-r-e-z, and I am the chairman of our parent committee.

MS. KIM: All right. The difficulties that we've gone through has grown and grown and grown. And with the budget cuts and federal cuts, yadda, yadda, yadda -- I had the unique experience of growing up on the reservation. So, I'm not native urban born, I grew up in Rosebud, South Dakota. I'm Lakota Sioux. And I moved here ten years ago, hoping for a better life for my children.

The one thing that is missing in an urban setting is -- unless I come to this community center, I don't know there's no Indians here. There is no community in an urban setting. I moved up here, I had friends that I kind of met off and on. But I went to my neighbor's house to go build my community, because I had children and I had to be raised by that community.

A school district is a community. Growing up in South Dakota, I went to a high school called Todd County High School. It wasn't a BIE school, it was a public high school. And the difference is that there was that community and our teachers were part of our community. In an urban setting, you are not -- a teacher does not make the children part of their community.

I was raised by my teachers. I had a single mother who was making ends meet. We never had a car until I left and went to college. I'm a first generation college. I graduated from Sinte Gleska, which is one of your guys's Indian colleges. I got a -- a BS in -- bachelor of science in computers, so -- and from that, that's why I've been here and I'm very successful.

But I want to show the success to my children. My children have my opportunities, but there is no native community. There needs to be some type of program that, if you do relocate -- I don't know how -- maybe the school district can say, "Hey, I have a new Indian student," can the State show these guys these services that are there? There's no state -- you know, unless I go to the pow-wow, I'm not going to know. Honestly, there's no -- there's no representation of Native Americans.

And -- and the school district we're at, we have no director. When they did layoffs, they force retired our liaison, they forced retired our -- our director. So, we have no one, other than parents that are willing to work. And we -- our budget went towards tutoring. So, we do tutoring twice a week. We had to fight to get a native coordinator -- not a native coordinator -- a native teacher to teach native language on our Title VII grant. I think that's wrong.

Don't ask me how they worded it. But the way -- we had to re-write this native guide that teaches you respect, and responsibility, and -- and language, and songs, and visuals. If you come from a reservation and you've lived there -- I used to teach at Sinte, too. We are very visual. And the way I teach is visuospatial. Don't ask me how you do it with technology, but I did it, okay. It's all hands-on, "This is how you do it." I could sit there and write all you want. I can make all my people write. But the

way my people used to write is different. And so that's why there's that distance learning. And then you put those people up here that are lost.

I didn't know there was any Title VII program. I knew Johnson-O'Malley, I knew all these programs back home. I never even knew these -- I lived here for five years before anyone told me, "Oh, here, if you fill out this 506 Form," and then finally somebody got ahold of me. There is five years of nothing, to a point where I wanted to go home. I was lost, sad, no community, disconnected. So, for me, I think it was harder.

If you live here, you've kind of adjusted to a point. I'm not saying I haven't been here. My relatives used to be up here. My grandma is a world soldier. And in the 1950s, they had a Relocation Act, and this is how a lot of the Indians came to the urban areas, is this Relocation Act, trying to get them off of the reservations, because they're like, "No, that's not" -- "If you're going to follow the rules, we don't want Indians in big crowds," you know -- you know, it was a control thing. And part of it was control and part of it relocated the Indians.

And by doing that, there is dislocation. And by doing all this kind of things like this, is that they lived up here until they couldn't handle it no more, and they went back to the reservation. And I got to be honest. I was happier living on the reservation, but hoping for opportunities for my children here. Because the reservation is not a place to live right now, high suicide rates -- high -- there's -- everything is really, really bad there, okay, there's suicide and things like that.

And our district -- in our Adams 12 there has not been any suicides. So, they're doing something right on the counseling end there. They're lacking -- in our area, they're lacking in furthering education to our children. I never had anyone go to my son, who graduated last year, and said, "Here, here's your opportunities." "Here, you're Native American, why don't you try for this, this and this," or, "Hey, this kid is Mexican, why don't they try for this, this and this."

There is no -- all they're trying to do is get them out of high school, at whatever it takes. No kid left behind, let's hurry up and get them out of high school. And in my school district there's no reach-out program to -- okay, maybe Job Corps, maybe education, maybe this. It has to be a parent. So, in my district, they're relying on the parents to teach their children. And if your parents are not educated, you're not going to get that. And so you have a cycle of people using Welfare and all that. I mean, I grew up with all that, and I see that. And I see that more here in the city than I did back on the reservation.

And the cycle is getting worse. If anyone read the papers two weeks ago, we talked that there's -- 50 percent of your -- 50 percent -- and this is nothing to be proud of. As a state, Colorado State only graduates 50 percent of its Native Americans. What's with that? I mean, I come from the reservation. Our kids are required in Rosebud to go to school until they're eighteen or they graduate. And they have an alternative school for those that don't make it, or the college comes in and gets -- helps them get their GED and -- and move forward with learning skills as being a parent or learning skills to get a job.

Colorado, as a state, does not treat its Native Americans peoples well, and it's something that thoroughly needs to be looked at and truly needs to be addressed.

MS. ALVAREZ: Just on a few notes. For our parent committee, we struggle every day too. Just like he said back there, from Durango, it's great DPS has got all these things, but the rest of us don't. We work very hard every day just trying to reach our students. And we can't even do that, because we're not allowed to reach our students because we are parents. So, we have to rely on Alliance and this district to do that for us, who is probably already overworked. And all we really wanted was some help.

So, that's all I have to say.

MS. PHILLIPS: Last year, in Denver we faced a -- was it -- a \$25 million budget cut, this year we're facing it again. Last year, we lost John Emhoolah; Antonio, he's gone; Rochelle, she's not just, you know,

helping our advisory committee, but she's got a lot of other things on her plate. In two years, that's, you know, \$6 million. Right now we have 45,000 students in the Adams County School District, 305 is Native American. We have no counselors, we have no teachers.

We have our parents, that are sitting right here, that are trying to reach our students. But we're always running into the wall, or running with the door closed in our face, you know. And it's -- it's not a nice thing. You know, we're willing to do the work, we just need the help. Or we need -- you know, we need somebody like you sitting up there, Will and those, to know you have to help us out, or, you know, appoint -- appoint us somebody. Show us. Show us the way, that's all we ask.

Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Well, thank you for those comments.

You know, it's a very difficult environment. But I just want to commend the three of you taking actions as parents. And that's what's amazing, to see how parent advocacy, parent involvement can really have some changes.

And, hopefully, the work that you three are doing will snowball into some more resources, and again the awareness not only of the district but of Colorado and the general public to realize that there are great needs of our native students there.

So, thank you three for that there.

MR. YUDIN: Yeah. I -- I just want to echo Jay's remarks. Thank you so much for your advocacy and for your fighting for your kids. The power of -- of parents can't -- can't be denied. Thank you.

MR. MENDOZA: We do take those comments to heart. And -- and for me, personally -- and I think I can share the same sentiments of everybody at this table -- you know, that's -- that's our motivation and inspiration on a daily basis.

And, you know, I just want to give you encouragement too, that your voices are powerful, very powerful, not only in this setting, but, you know, when you -- when you direct those to your -- your elected officials as well; you know, the school boards, the commissions, all of our legislators, they -- they move when -- when you tell them to.

And so, I just you know want to share that, too, as -- as a point for where you guys can continue to express your strong voices. And "Go Falcons." I'm a graduate of Todd County High School, so you're from the right school.

MR. GRIMM: One more comment on what you said, William.

Boards and commissions, they need to listen. But more importantly, we need to be on these boards and commissions, we need to be the voice on these boards and commissions, to make it happen. So, we look to you guys, too, to make sure that there's open outreach to our communities to ensure that you have the right voices on these -- these committees that are making decisions for Indian Country.

And what an example these three have made to have on the Adams County Board of Education, right? So, let's keep working towards that.

Carol?

MS. HARVEY: I'll just make a real -- I'll just make a real quick statement. You know, the State is not that involved, it's -- you know, the -- the school boards. And so they really need to have their input at that level.

But, certainly, I can take back the concern. But because of the way the school system is structured here in Colorado, it's home rule, and it's, you know, your local school board and who's elected to your local school board, and those type of people have that control.

But certainly, I heard what was said. I'm not sure that, you know, I have any role that I can play, other than communicating what I heard. But it really is important that we run, you know, for the school board, and that -- you know, because that -- school districts are so locally controlled and everything else. Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: That's a great point. Thank you.

We only have a few minutes left. Darius.

And we have one other speaker, Jesus, after that.

MR. SMITH: I just want to say thank you. (Speaking Native American.)

I'm Darius Smith. I'm the former director of the Denver Public Schools Indian Education. I am currently working for the City and County of Denver. I'm an American Indian liaison to the mayor of the city. I've learned a lot today.

Just in terms of -- of programming recommendations, I think that -- that, for instance, this can happen at the future listening sessions -- I guess Wisconsin, LA, and then another one. Possibly looking at holding it not just at an Indian facility -- I think that's important. I want to thank Jay and the Indian Center. But this -- this group, it would have been very powerful to -- to actually have this listening session at the Colorado Department of Education, take all these native people into their office.

Because when I was the director of Indian Ed. from '94 to '99, it was -- it was like beating my head against the wall, because I -- my salary, I made \$27,000 for four years straight, I didn't make that much money. But the interesting thing -- it would have been nice if the Colorado Department would have supplemented my income and the entire staff.

Here in Denver, the metro area, because we're over 100 miles removed from the nearest reservation, we don't qualify for Johnson-O'Malley funding. And that -- that is just -- it is really hindering what we could be doing with education in the Denver metro area.

I think that -- so, one other recommendation is U.S. Department of Education work -- have a mandate, have a -- an incentive program to coordinate a -- the possibility of creating a state liaison that would work with not just Denver and JeffCo -- JeffCo, but the smaller Indian education programs, helping them with parent development, helping them with, you know, gathering 506 Forms, on and on and on. And I think that it would be very powerful, not just in the state of Colorado, but in other states that have similar situations.

I think that in terms of -- I heard a couple times about issues -- the woman from South Dakota talked about the lack of representation at the school board level. The Department of -- of Education actually has an OCR, which is an Office of Civil Rights, and they're -- they go and investigate discrimination complaints and -- in Indian Country. Well, part of the problem is sometimes they're sending in investigators and attorneys that don't understand Indian communities.

So, what happens is they go in like a -- you know, they're learning as they go. And then, ultimately, when they -- when they do come up with a decision, or a probable cause finding, whatever, that often, because they don't factor in a lot of that, the result is negative against the Indian community. So, you see what I'm saying is that I think they need a team of Indian investigators, a team of Indian attorneys, Ms. Bowers, that -- that they can actually go in and actually do a culturally appropriate investigation, factor in some of these other things, historical trauma, and so forth and so on.

And so, other than that, I'm cutting my cutting my time off right now.

Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Thank you. And, Jesus -- I can't read the writing -- Escarcega.

MR. ESCARCEGA: You did pretty good. Good afternoon. My name is Jesus Escarcega, and that's J-e-s-u-

s, "Escarcega," E-s-c-a-r-c-e-g-a. And I am a grant coordinator for the Aurora Public Schools, and I oversee about seven grants, of which one of them is the Title VII grant.

And I've been involved with Title VII since 1990. I started out in Arizona, where I'm originally from. And the advantage that I had in Arizona is we had significant Native American population in my school district. It's the largest K8 district in state of Arizona, Washington Elementary. And because of that size of the Native American population, we received enough Title VII funds to do a lot of good programs, and particularly even a higher quality staff.

Since I moved to Colorado, I took over the job in one of the grants -- I guess I inherited the Title VII grant when I came to Aurora, which I had expertise and experience to bring to that. And it was a very small population, because in Aurora less than 1 percent of our student population are Native American. So, roughly about over -- just over 200 students, of which about 40 percent of those children have an actual 506 Form completed, because they have issues with the parents not trusting the system and not willing to send their children to the program. And so our funding is very limited.

But, fortunately for me, I was able to do diversity education. So, I was able to fund half of that person's salary to have a full-time person, because having a full-time person whose key role and responsibility is to work with that population, support the families, advocate for the children, made a significant difference. And that helped us to have quality programs and relationships with our parents.

Well, I made the mistake of going to another district. And the issues we face with the urban school districts is some of these programs are handed onto the next person, who's ever around. Some of those individuals have experience but the majority don't.

So, it's such a small program, small funding source, it's not a priority. So, the gentleman earlier, Mr. Miller, who talked about at one time it went from a coordinator to a -- all the sudden to a 12-an-hour clerk, it's true. Coming back now, I'm now taking the program back again, but now I'm having to build it back up. So, that's a challenge.

So, my question and suggestion for you is just reflect. Adams 12, Aurora Public Schools, even JeffCo, we don't have enough of a population to generate, you know, funding sources, to generate the personnel needed. My recommendation would be, is look at those districts that have a certain number of either 506 Forms or a certain number of -- or less than 5 percent or less than -- of a total population of their students is Native American, is that instead of funding us based on our 506 Forms, fund us on what we think we need to have a quality program.

So, if I know that if I have a full-time person that's going to cost me so much, and he or she is a counselor, or a competent teacher, or he or she has the skills that's going to make an impact on our population and our students, fund us on what we want to have and what we need to have, versus, "This is all you get because this is all your numbers are."

That's why, when districts like Adams 12, when they're looking at cuts, they're going to give this program to the next person who's on the list that says, "You need to pick up this additional program." And it's going to be time consuming, and they may not get the services and the support needed. So, if you can at least use our Title VII funds to fund a person who could be a counselor, or a master teacher, or somebody who who's fairly well educated and knows the system, and can be -- has the skills and personality to communicate with their families, so that our parents are engaged, stay active, there is a person they can talk to or go to, there is a person who, at least, when the budget cuts are being impacted, he or she is not on the chopping block.

Because having quality programs make a difference. But you can't have quality programs when you don't have sufficient funding. And if you're depend on districts to -- either use you to fund -- use other federal funds to fund those positions, then you're in trouble. People say Title I is available, Title III is available, Title II is available. Let's be honest. My district, large percentage of American Indian kids do not live near the entitlement school, so there's that. Almost 99 percent of our kids do not qualify as second language learners, so there's goes Title III. Title II is used for coaching, so there goes that.

So, even though there are other funding sources, the fact that those are committed to address the needs for the whole or for a significant area, a lot of times our Native American students lose out. Rose, what she's been doing at DPS, has been around for ten-plus years, that's rare. What you heard is more common for the urban systems, we're fighting, we're trying to get as much bang for the dollars, and sometimes we don't know where to go.

And so my suggestion would be, if you could, at least for certain schools to have a certain number of Native American students, or a certain percentage of Native American students, is fund them so at least they can have the personnel to do the job well and right. Because it's not going to change, it's not going to get better if we're always trying to do this nickel and dime stuff.

Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Wow, that was great. Thank you.

REVIEW AND NEXT STEPS

MR. YUDIN: We're going to wrap up.

If folks didn't get a chance to speak, as Jay mentioned, there are -- there are comment cards. Urge you -- urge you to -- to please put them forward.

I'm just going to try to wrap up what I -- what my personal takeaway is. We have a transcript, and we will go back and listen.

But first, let me thank you from the bottom of my heart. This was an incredible day. And on behalf of Charlie, who had to leave, and the others in the Department, thank you. Thank you for sharing your concerns, your challenges, your successes with us. They are important, they are meaningful, they matter to us, and we will take them back.

A few things that I -- that I heard, that I, you know, take in my -- my notes is use of technology, how we need to improve access to technology, improve -- and using technology to improve access to culture and language. The coordination of programs and services.

The non-native teachers and the lack of understanding of -- of native kids.

Community, you need to be a part of the community. We heard the student speak -- we heard the students speak earlier today about the needing to be a part of something -- we heard that over -- throughout the course of the day.

The lack of eligibility, the lack of resources, and -- and as the last just speaker said, not enough population to -- to make a meaningful program. So, these are just some of the notes that I had.

I got a note we had 82 participants today. Thank you all for your time, for coming out here. Again, thank you. I can't thank you enough.

Jay.

MR. GRIMM: Well, I'd just like to say thank you to the U.S. Department of Education for, first, coming to Denver, but, B, making the urban agenda a part of your agenda. And so we're grateful for that. We hope that you take this information back, and that you're able to advocate on behalf of our people.

And so, again, thank you very much. And to our other distinguished guests, thank you very much. We'd like to thank you for making the travel, and we wish you all safe travels back home.

And then please, any time please feel free to contact me here at the Denver Indian Center. If you have questions, or -- or need our support on helping to educate more youth -- because that's really at the core of work we do here. So, thank you for that.

And go ahead.

MR. MENDOZA: Just a quick echo on everything. And -- and thank you, Mr. Grimm, for your -- your --

your hospitality. And the Denver community, that was a wonderful meal. Everybody has been delightful.

And -- and I just want to -- I neglected to bring cards today. And I've been apologizing to everybody. But our e-mails are really easy. Mine is william.mendoza@ed.gov, just for anybody who would like to contact me on anything, TCU's, American Indian education, or otherwise.

Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: And as well, michael.yudin@ed.gov. You have all of our names, we're at ed.gov.

MS. HARVEY: Just very quickly. Also, the Colorado Department of Education held a Native American Education Round Table in December to invite all of the Title VII educators to discuss their concerns with the State. We also had one January 28, in Durango, Colorado.

We'll be having follow-up meetings, because, as a Colorado Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I was concerned -- and I have pasted up on my wall -- every time I walk into my office -- the dropout and the graduation rates for American Indian students. And they are dismal.

I think what we heard this morning does not really reflect the situation in terms of what's occurring with the student population. And especially of concern to the state of Colorado was that the female graduation rates used to be below the males. If we follow the trend of female dropouts in Colorado, it is looking -- we are right here and it will just continue straight up.

So, we are talking a very serious concern that we have here in the state. So we did convene the Native American Education Round Table in December and we'll be having a follow up meeting. So, I certainly hope that people will participate because we need your participation in order to address issues.

But again, many of these issues are -- have to be dealt with at the local level, not the state level because of the structure here in the state of Colorado.

Thank you.

MR. GRIMM: Thank you, Carol.

At this time we'd like to ask well respected elder Mr. John Emhoolah to guide us in our closing ceremony, as well as provide a closing blessing.

Thank you, Mr. Emhoolah.

MR. EMHOOLAH: Thank you, once again. And thank you for all of the participants that came, and all the presenters, and the listeners over here. And I want to thank the school representatives that came and made their presentations.

Hopefully everything is recorded, so that there'll be some response and that this will be a beneficial event.

And good luck on the other -- other meetings that you will host throughout the nation here.

So, again, thanks to everybody. And thanks for holding this meeting here at the Indian Center, where we all come together.

And I want to close with a short prayer and a good journey home, I hope. (Speaking Native American.)

Have a safe journey home. And may they see their families, and their folks and all of their relatives, and everything be good. (Speaking Native American.)

Thank you.

(Session concluded at 3:58 p.m., on March 4, 2011)