



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

June 21, 2010

Dear Tribal Leader:

U.S. Department of Education officials recently collaborated with tribal representatives throughout Indian Country to plan and carry out four regional tribal consultations under Executive Order 13175. Specifically, in the first half of 2010, the Department held consultations in Anchorage, Alaska; Shawnee, Oklahoma; Pine Ridge, South Dakota; and Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico. At each of these meetings, senior policymakers from the Department joined with regional tribal leaders to discuss the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the role of higher education, children's early learning needs, the development of the Department's consultation policy, the Department's Plan of Actions related to that policy, and a host of other federal education initiatives affecting tribes. As part of the follow-up to those meetings we will convene two additional consultations in Window Rock, Arizona, on June 30 and Puyallup, Washington, on July 15.

Guiding our conversations on ESEA reauthorization with education stakeholders and tribal leaders is *A Blueprint for Reform*, the Department's March 2010 document that lays out our foundation for the reauthorization of the ESEA. To read the Blueprint, please visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>.

We continue to seek your feedback about how best to improve the educational outcomes of K-12 American Indian and Alaska Native students through ESEA reauthorization.

After having consulted with more than 350 tribal members and having collected feedback on an array of issues facing the education of tribal students, the Department would like to respond to these issues through continued collaboration with the tribal community, including tribal departments of education and other tribal entities involved in Indian education. We plan to publish all official transcripts from the consultations on the Department's Web site, create a database that contains all testimony received during the consultations, and consider how best to integrate the feedback we have received into federal education policy.

We still have a long way to go in improving education opportunity for American Indian and Alaska Native students, but we know that working with tribal leaders is a key to success.

Thank you for your continued leadership and tireless efforts on behalf of students in your community.

Sincerely,

Martha Kanter
Under Secretary

Charles P. Rose
General Counsel

Thelma Meléndez
Assistant Secretary
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Education

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