



Figure 1 Department
of Education Logo

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)

Office of Indian Education

Tribal Leaders Consultation

PUBLIC MEETING

The Tribal Consultation was held at the NCED Conference Center and Hotel, 2801 East State Hwy 9, Norman, Oklahoma on April 15, 2014 at 9:00 a.m., Ray Rogers, Indian Education Director at the Sapulpa Public Schools, presiding.

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PRESENT

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ROBERT BIBLE, President, Muscogee Nation College (Muscogee Nation)

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GOVERNOR EDWINA BUTLER-WOLFE (Absentee Shawnee Tribe)

GOVERNOR EDDIE HAMILTON (Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes)

CHAIRMAN JOHN SHOTTON (Otoe-Missouria Tribe)

CHIEF GEORGE THURMAN (Sac & Fox Tribes)

PRESIDENT TERRY PARTON (Wichita Tribe)

PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME REMARKS

MR. RODGERS: And now, ladies and gentlemen, let's get into our agenda here. We do have opening remarks scheduled. Representing the Oklahoma State Department of Education will be Mr. Jacob Tsotigh; he'll be speaking for Mr. Dwight Pickering.

MR. TSOTIGH: Thank you, Mr. Rodgers. On behalf of Mr. Pickering, who is caught in traffic, I would like to welcome you on behalf of the Oklahoma State Department of Education, our state superintendent, Janet Barresi, and the people of Oklahoma. We are so grateful for the opportunity to be able to provide input during the course of today on the issues that are impacting the lives of our American Indian students here in the State of Oklahoma. We thank you for traveling a great distance to be here to hear that input, to hear the comments, and to reflect on what the significant statements that will be made will be brought to bear in the Beltway, as it were.

So we appreciate your being here, appreciate you, our audience, for taking the time to come and be a part of this process that is so important in connecting our local areas and communities to Washington where the decisions are being made that impact our lives. So I hope, on behalf of the State of Oklahoma and our American Indian student population, we're grateful. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Tsotigh.

And opening statements and welcome from Dr. Belinda Biscoe Boni, from the South Central Comprehensive Center.

We'd like to remind our speakers throughout this morning and this afternoon, if you could please introduce yourself and state your organization that you're with for our records. This is being recorded and will be documented. Thank you.

DR. BISCOE: Well, good morning. I am Belinda Biscoe, associate vice president for outreach at the University of Oklahoma, and so on behalf of the university, I first want to give you a huge Boomer Sooner welcome. I am also director of the South Central Comprehensive Center which is one of the regional technical assistance centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, serving the states of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas. And so on behalf of the South Central Comprehensive

Center, I also want to extend a heartfelt welcome to all of you for joining us this morning for this tribal consultation on education.

We have a lot of different guests here today. I want to welcome all of our sisters and brothers from Washington, D.C., who thought they were coming to warm weather and we had snow yesterday, so we're going to try to do a little bit better for you today.

I also want to welcome our tribal leaders, many of whom you will be hearing from today, who are sitting around this table. We are so glad that they would take time from their very busy schedules to participate in what I am sure will be engaging conversation and a lot of food for thought for reflection.

I also want to welcome the South Central Comprehensive Center's Advisory Committee, consisting of educators from New Mexico and Oklahoma, who will be joining in on this wonderful dialogue this morning.

And then for those of you who are just interested citizens, interested educators, and from wherever you may have come, we are also wanting to welcome you and hear your voices. The voices from the field are the voices that matter the most, and as we inform the leaders in the discussion, I think you are the ones that need to be heard the most.

In closing with my welcoming remarks, I found a quote from John Gardner that I think really fits this occasion, and once he said: "Much education is monumentally ineffective. All too often we are giving young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants." So today let's talk about how we move away from giving our young American Indian children and students cut flowers and what it's going to take for all of us to put in grit labor, roll up our sleeves to teach our children to grow their own plants.

Welcome, and we're delighted to have all of you here.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Dr. Biscoe.

And now let's hear from the director of Indian Education for the State of Oklahoma Department of Education, it is Mr. Dwight Pickering.

MR. PICKERING: Thank you, Ray. I want to apologize for being late. I was right on schedule and I guess someone had an accident on Singer Road on the way down here, and so we had a big backup there, so I called Jacob ahead of time to let him know I may be just a few minutes late. And then I guess they were clearing the traffic and I began to move forward again and got here as soon as possible without getting a ticket or anything.

I want to welcome you to this consultational hearing on Indian Education, the people from Washington, D.C., the Office of Indian Education and the White House staff there who are here today to take testimony or information on Indian education here in the great State of Oklahoma. I'd like to welcome our tribal leaders, our educators and administrators, and I'd like to bring a welcome to you from Superintendent Janet Barresi, and I'd like to welcome you to our state and look at Indian education here in Oklahoma.

Superintendent Barresi is very supportive of Indian education issues and one of her very first statements when she was elected was that she wanted to see the Indian culture taught more in our public schools and classrooms, and I want to tell you today that we are very close to getting some of that done at this time with a small group of educators from across the State of Oklahoma who have come together to develop Indian cultural curriculum on our 39 tribes which we will go live with in July, and that will be available to meet our standards here in Oklahoma to teach our children and all children about Indian education here in the State of Oklahoma, and the 39 tribes and their importance to our state.

So we're very excited about that, and that's just one of many initiatives that our superintendent has looked to our Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education for some guidance in there and some recommendations, and so we've moved forward with a lot of things that she has received from us in recommendations.

So without further ado, I'd like to thank our tribal leaders for being here today to bring that real vital look at the education of their tribal members in our state, and I look forward to our Indian education people here in Oklahoma stepping forward to give testimony on what a great job we do here, but also some barriers that we're looking at and continued support from the Office of Indian Education of the U.S. Department of Education in funding and helping us to get to that next level.

Thank you, and enjoy your consultation today.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Pickering.

And now the next item on our agenda is going to be some opening remarks from the two individuals who are taking all this information in back up to, as Jacob said, the Beltway, and first off we're going to have the director of the Office of Indian Education from the U.S. Department of Education. Would you please welcome Ms. Joyce Silverthorne.

(Applause.)

MS. SILVERTHORNE: (Native language spoken.) This is a good morning. It may be a little cooler than we anticipated, but it's certainly welcome to be in Oklahoma. This is, by far, the largest population of American Indian students that we serve in our Formula Program through the Office of Indian Education, and so this is a good place to hear from the folks in the field that are doing the work that makes our office a viable entity.

There is a power point on the screen behind you, and you have a handout in your packets that talks about some of the things that we are working on implementing. Because we are going to try and keep this to a fairly short presentation, I'm not going to go through all of the slides, but we'll try to take a look at some of the information that was presented at a NACIE meeting a couple of weeks ago that summarizes some of the enhancements and changes that are a direct result of the things that we are hearing in the field.

As we are moving to make our program a program that has the appropriate kind of information, we have heard from the field that not always do we have understanding from all of the folks that are working in those programs. So number one, we have multiplied the number of people that are on our contact lists; we have at least three names for every Title VII Formula Program that are listed in our database so that we can be sure to reach them each year. We had heard recently that there were grants that were not submitted because they had not heard from us, so we now have at least three names, that shouldn't happen any longer.

We have an electronic system for application, and that electronic system is one that is operated through the Formula Program. You see on your screen, Dr. Bernard Garcia and Paulette Davis, who are our

Formula senior staff. We have a total in the office of 13 staff members, and we work with all 1,300 programs across the country, and discretionary programs as well.

We've made some changes in the EASIE application this year. A few years ago when the EASIE application came out was at the beginning of No Child Left Behind, and there was a heavy focus on achievement. While achievement is still a priority, we found that 75 to 80 percent of our programs were doing math and reading. Title VII is a supplementary program and math and reading are both core subject areas of every school. There are good programs that do supplementary academic work, but 75 to 80 percent of the programs doing math and reading seemed like a very high number for our programs to be focusing on skills that our schools are providing for all of their students, remembering that American Indian students are part of the all.

We've also tried to look at how we will know what's happening in the field, and so we've tried to expand our objectives to four years. If we have objectives that are new every year, it's difficult to measure growth, and a third of our programs this year, as we start into our new application year, are working with four-year objectives. All of those objectives should be culturally responsive. In the past the culturally responsive was an option for an objective, and we felt like that was a misstatement, that it really means that we should be looking at everything that we do in light of culturally responsive, and so we have changed that in our application. Our objectives, we hope, will be more appropriate for the kind of work that we do.

Another issue that we see is the concern for supplement not supplant. When we talk about reading and math being primary subjects of the school, we shouldn't be duplicating those in Title VII, we should be adding to them. Are there culturally responsive math and reading activities that students are doing, or are they being taken out of a math and reading classroom to be provided math and reading from a tutor or someone who is not their academic instructor. So we're trying to look at some of the issues that we have heard from the field.

We are also trying to create an annual performance report. That's required of every grant that the federal government provides to schools across the country, and so we are trying to look at how we can do that with as least burden of work for the grantees. We recognize these are annual grants, meaning that to try and do performance reports every year could be very burdensome, especially if the program may or may not have access to all of the central office records that they need. And so we're trying to

look at an annual performance report that will be self-populated with the objectives and as much information from the grant application as we can include.

I'm not going to spend much time on some of the pages because you do have them in your folder and can look to them. There is also a handout on the 2014 enhancements.

Our parent involvement, our parent engagement is one of the oldest parent engagement programs within the Department of Education, and yet it has been a challenge to keep parents engaged in these activities. I think every grantee can talk about the difficulties in getting their parents to meetings, to having people who are interested, involved and committed to the education and well-being of students. Holding the public hearings, making sure that recommendations are discussed with parents is a challenge for every one of our programs.

And the annual performance report will be informative to parents as well, that hopefully from these reports you'll be able to also see what the school is seeing as improvements and progress. Our students are the full gamut of educational experience and ability. They are not only students who are in need of remedial work, they are students who are in need of academic enhancements. They are the gifted students, they are the baccalaureate students, they are the students in STEM programs, and our programs should be looking at how we can supplement the skills and make sure that their successes are progressing.

We have another new piece in the application this year. We have always known that our students were part of the all in the schools, but part of the all also means that other programs should be addressing the needs of the American Indian students, so a school should be able to talk about how their various programs are addressing the needs of Indian students.

Our students are part of Title I, they're part of Homeless, they're part of Title III and our language activities, they're part of school improvement grants, they're part of rural programs, they're part of the Impact Aid, they are the major source in our schools of the Impact Aid funding, Migrant Education, Johnson-O'Malley. All of these programs should weave together to make an overall plan that benefits the students from the time they arrive at school until they are out of school. And then, of course, culturally responsive, looking at all of our subject areas as how we can address culturally responsive.

The reporting will begin at the end of 2015, so we are beginning it this year, the annual performance report won't be due until the end of the next academic year.

There's a lot that we're putting forward in enhancements this year and we hope that they will be a benefit to the programs. We know that they will be an improvement in the information that we're able to take back to our leadership, as well as to our funding opportunities.

So thank you from the Office of Indian Education, and I'm sorry that's kind of a real rush on this and there's a lot of information. Please feel free to contact us again if you'd like to. There are a number of websites that are available, and on your last page of the power point you'll see some of those in your packets.

So with that, I will close. Thank you so much for coming, and we're looking forward to hearing your comments.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Ms. Silverthorne.

Just a quick followup on that. I know a lot of the directors and coordinators that are just now receiving that information, will there be also the webinars that will be given by the EASIE folks?

MS. SILVERTHORNE: The first one was this last week for Part II. The Part II information should have gone out to folks this week, it is now open. And yes, there will be two more webinars that will be available before the end of the month. So thank you.

MR. RODGERS: All right. Thank you very much. And if you do have some questions and you'd like to publicly comment, again, we'd like to remind you to please register back at the registration desk. You must be signed in to be able to speak this afternoon when that window opens up.

Next for our opening remarks and information on the overview of today's consultation, we'd like to welcome the executive director of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. Please welcome Mr. William Mendoza.

(Applause.)

MR. MENDOZA: (Native language spoken.) I greet everyone in the Lakota language. Thank you so much for having me here. I greet you all as relatives and extend my hand to you in a heartfelt handshake.

Thank you so much for having us into your community. Thank you especially to those who engaged in our opening ceremonies this morning, and especially our tribal leaders who are with us here today and throughout the day, and all of our educators and families. Just can't tell you enough how appreciative we are for you to take this opportunity to channel through us to the federal family, if you will, and in many respects, we know that we are both partners as well as, in many cases, challenges and barriers to the good work that you all are trying to impact within your communities.

And as senior advisor to both the secretary, and as connected to the President, we just couldn't be happier to be back out here in Oklahoma which, as we'll touch upon as I go along, is going to be a busy week for Oklahoma, knowing all of the activity that is going to be out this way.

And as the director of White House initiative, I'm just really happy to have here with me my associate director as well. Many of you know her, if not all of you know her, Sedelta Oosahwee, who hails from this area of the country, and she's just a critical part of our initiative in Joyce's and my work to ensure that we're addressing those critical policy issues from the lens of this country's great nations. And so her connections to both North Dakota and Oklahoma kind of takes care of some big swaths of this country, so I hope she appreciates that amount of responsibility she has on her shoulders.

One of the things that I wanted to kind of just talk about today is just the amount of activity that's happening. As many of you know, if you tuned in to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I had the honor and privilege to testify before the Senate Committee on the issue of Indian students in public schools, and that conversation couldn't be more opportune for an area like Oklahoma in which the challenges and circumstances are not so much the same case as anywhere else in the country. And so these issues are front and center, both from the congressional standpoint, they have been front and center from the standpoint of the initiative and the mechanisms that we have at our disposal, and we really hope that they're going to continue to be that way moving into the future.

One of the things that is happening right now is that there is a series of hearings happening, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, early learning, public school students. There's going to be a series of a five of these hearings that are happening throughout the next few months, and if not sooner, and so we

want to make sure to keep you updated on those activities, make sure that you're aware of those opportunities. Many of you will be, in some form or fashion, tapped for information to roll up, and as I've always said, especially in our consultations, that information is the most strongest and relevant coming from you all, you know, what are the real-time effects of this changing dynamic that we're dealing with in Indian education.

And we're still in the thick of it as we talk about college and career-ready standards, the onboarding of the new generation of assessments, and everything that our states are doing in preparation to that and how they are pivoting in terms of what we're learning in terms of this new context. And like you all, we don't want to have Indian students forgotten in that combination of activities.

So I just couldn't be more happy, again, to kind of serve in that role. As the initiative director, I have primary program responsibility over a pretty large charge, and that is all of Indian students, in my estimation, 1.5 million students across this country affected by anywhere from 3,000 schools all the way to looking at our institutions of higher education, that number, well into the immediate nucleus of that activity, being about 140 institutions. And so that level of responsibility and identity is really where we're trying to get to at this point.

Joyce spoke in survey of some of the great things that we're doing through Title VII, Indian Education, to really get at the core of these issues. When we listen to and have heard time and time again the realities around measuring program effectiveness through Title VII, we hear those same conversations in Johnson-O'Malley, they hit the heart of the conversations within Impact Aid, when we had this conversation with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Those are going to continue.

How they are addressing the unique language and cultural needs of our students is at the core of those issues, and we've taken some pretty meaningful, seemingly incremental, but not so much the case, to ensure that we're adhering to the statutory spirit of Title VII, and that is at the core of the language and cultural academic needs of our students. And even in that you can hear the little qualification there if you missed it that we deal with all the time, the academic needs vis-a-vis math, science, English.

And this is something that, again, we're not not invested in. We have an added value contribution as well as an investment in each of those disciplines, and we see that 21st Century American Indian and Alaskan Native learner being essential to have those skills, those knowledge and skills, but we know that the principles of differentiation, we know that the strategies that are employed to get our students to

that understanding and expertise, to not only just survive but thrive within those disciplines, is going to take all of our input nationwide.

The inclusion of the multiple levels within Title VII serving as a hub for our communication and outreach is an essential one moving forward, and it's actually being expanded. We're looking at, for lack of a better way to characterize it and I joke with our team all the time about this Directory of Indian Education, if you acronym it, as we tend to do, it's DIE, if we do Indian Education Director it's IED, so none of those are working, so help us out if you can come up with something clever for what amounts to whenever somebody calls upon Indian Education.

We know we have NIEA, we know we have NCAI, we know we have AIHEC, but the federal family has to take a vested interest in ensuring that we're touching all of our grantees, everybody that we're resourcing with this area, and then, of course, as a result of our trust responsibility, everybody that we are required to communicate with, namely our 566 federally recognized tribes, their tribal education agencies, their divisions that are essential to the wraparound services and needs of these students. So you see real quick where this notion of a directory becomes critically important to our ability to channel not only these opportunities but be held accountable for those conversations as we move forward.

And so I'm really excited about Title VII taking the lead in this arena, and we serve as a vested partner in the development of this directory. It's grown now to expand over 4,200 points of contact around the country that we've interacted with over the past three years, and we continue to clean that up, we continue to tap other resources, and as we move forward with some of this greater clarity of definition around where our students are and which systems are they being affected by, we expect for that to be even more utility.

And what that means for the federal family is that when we get that call from the Office of Post-Secondary Education and they say tell me something about Indians, when we get that call from some corner of the Office of Elementary and Secondary and Joyce can say let me point you in the right direction, or if the Secretary is traveling to the Northwest and we need to ensure that that community is notified well in advance, we can push that button and disaggregate in that fashion. And so that level of disaggregation and turnaround with this directory is the goal. I just wanted to make sure I touched upon that.

Joyce did not mention at least I don't think; I was trying to get my bearings at the same time that we are moving forward with rulemaking on our State Tribal Education Partnership Program, and so this is in anticipation for, as my budget folks would qualify B assuming Congress gives us funds for it the State Tribal Education Partnership Program in 2015. Also in preparation for that is consideration of rulemaking for our professional development program, and in there is a definition for Indian organizations. And Joyce can talk more in detail about this as necessary, but each of these are critical and we're going to need your input on this. We have already consulted on these areas in national consultations at an intense pace so that we can meet the timeline in order for us to have this competition, given what is needed from the process for not only proposed rulemaking but also in design of the competition. And so understand that the intensity is a year-long calendar as we've kind of addressed it, so that's why we've consulted with UCEP and we did webinars, we also did teleconference calls in relationship to that. And so when that notice comes out, if it's not already out, we need to have your input on that and please cast that net far and wide.

One of the key things for us has just been this engagement and collaboration with our secretaries, and when I say our secretaries, as many of you know, Secretary Jewell and Secretary Duncan are both co-chairs of not only the executive order but the initiative. They also co-chair an education subcommittee within the White House Council of Native American Affairs who will be meeting May 1. And so that convening we are very interested, we are watching very closely as to what will be the priorities, what will be the goals of this White House Council on Native American Affairs because what stands in its place is the President's Interagency Working Group on Indian Affairs which met in February of 2013.

Agencies were called upon at that time to think of short-term and long-term goals that could then populate their four-year plans and would then drive annual performance around those four-year plans. In comes the White House Council on Native American Affairs with this subcommittee, and so we are very interested in the interactions of these two especially.

And it's most strongest between the two departments has been what has guided this work of the executive order and the collaboration between the two secretaries all the way back to Secretary Salazar in 2011, has been the Department of the Interior and Ed memorandum of understanding for 2012. This memorandum of understanding not only prescribed to the seven goals of the executive order, but also had specific activities that the two agencies would be working on. This document is well consulted on as well as has been out in the field for a while.

And so these specific activities, sub-groups have been assigned to them. These are agency officials, everybody ranging from deputy assistant secretaries to program directors of specific offices with their relevant areas of oversight, and so working towards outcomes in these specific activities, as well as reframing of the goals in ways that look at the short-term and long-term issues is something that we are immersed in as we speak.

The subcommittee will be meeting on the 21st of this month to kind of make sure that everybody is on track, that they're meeting, and that they have an opportunity to engage with the initiative in kind of a 30,000-foot level, if you will, on these specific activities. These meetings are mandated to be quarterly, and I'm happy to say that we are on track for that quarterly obligation, and now we're digging down into what level for activity happens between those points in time.

As was released in the president's budget, there are a number of high-level initiatives that are of critical concern to Indian Country, especially our Race to Top College and Opportunity Fund, and our Preschool For All Initiative. And as Preschool For All in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs conversation, it was basically Impact Aid and Preschool For All, and so we know how critical those issues are.

And so each of those initiatives we want to make sure and put those on your radars to be understanding how they're going to be in concept impacting your communities, and we especially look forward today hearing your insights on kind of what, as we move forward, and especially the Equity and Opportunity, Race to the Top fund, how we can understand what is happening with Indian Country in terms of equity and how we are looking at the issue of access, data disaggregation, equitable distribution of teachers, especially within states, and how does that relate to public schools, as I've always communicated, tribally connected.

And this really is the next step. It has been the perplexing issue of this initiative since our inception is these tribally connected school districts. We know that there is a huge investment, and largely not a coordinated one, between Title VII and Johnson-O'Malley, and how those offices are working together within the school districts that they impact. We also know that Impact Aid plays a huge role.

All of these are local education agency or school level resources, and so the necessity for local education agencies to be meaningfully engaged is kind of the next juncture that we're at in looking at how our tribal education agencies can lead the way in these conversations. In many respects they are. Those who are doing in here in Oklahoma, as well as across the country, have developed and are maintaining,

and we know that this not ad hoc that these things are happening around the country, but now the question is how does that interact with the State Tribal Education Partnership Program, and especially as we look towards the Bureau of Indian Education what is happening there.

A series of consultations have been released through the BIE. I don't have that information in front of me right now. There's a Federal Register notice out there, I'll try to make sure and grab that before we disperse today so that we can touch upon those dates. The initiative, I have served as a part of the study group on the joint ED and BIE study group. They are a part of our memorandum of understanding, they're actually a subcommittee under that which are addressing just huge, huge reforms. This has been an intensive nine-month effort that builds upon not only a series of reports but consultations that were devoted to this subject.

So they're not operating in a vacuum, we're not operating in a vacuum, and there's been significant engagement around the country, including here in Oklahoma, in anticipation for what we are looking in terms of the 30,000-foot understanding of what we've learned, what we've understood in these preliminary stages of what I can best characterize as kind of a fact-finding cast of what the BIE is dealing with. So look forward to more news to come on that subject, especially here in Oklahoma.

And the last thing that I want to touch upon, which Director Oosahwee was able to experience yesterday, is engagement around My Brother's Keeper. This is one of the more recent, more targeted efforts, but not at the exclusion of any other population. We know there are tremendous challenges and concerns with other critical demographics within our communities, but this is looking at what is happening with our boys and young men of color.

And for us that is zero to twenty-five is the target population from there, and it's looking at early childhood in that zero to twenty-five, early literacy, five to nine, pathways to college and career and school discipline from ten to nineteen, and then criminal justice and violence and crime interaction at thirteen to nineteen, and then ladders to job and support networks from sixteen to twenty-five.

And there has been critical 30-day, 45-day and there will be 90-day timelines; we are a little over halfway in what the federal agencies are doing in this area. And primarily they're resting upon assessing and making recommendations to federal policies, regulations and programs, and provide data and online views of the status and progress of these critical life outcome areas that we just talked about, kind of compartmentalizing that, and identifying and lifting up and incenting the adoption of what works

in this area, looking at what are the critical organizations, who are the critical people that are doing this work within our communities and how do we know that it's getting to these kinds of outcomes along this continuum.

And moving forward, the sustain ability of this is, of course, inclusive of recommendations for actions on trying to align the programs, services. What this means in federal speak, as you know, as well as I do, grants, contracts, loans and services. And so the inclusion of American Indians and Alaska Natives is one that the initiative is intimately connected with because Deputy Secretary of Education Jim Shelton, serves as the executive director of this task force.

And so we have been on kind of we need to speak from those who are affected most by this initiative, and that is our boys and young men of color, and so everywhere we have been going around the country during this preliminary time, as we begin to amass this information and pull it together within the task force of My Brother's Keeper, we've been engaging these conversations with boys and young men around the country.

And these issues, as you could readily guess, are just centering on just about everything from role models to health care issues, to issues of poverty, looking at expectations for these populations, and then just strongly connected to language, history and culture as being a foundation for their ability to play a more meaningful role in their communities.

And when you sit with these boys, when you sit with these young men, you really hear their hunger for doing better for their community, and you ask them if they want to have things be the way that they have experienced them, if it was disparaging, unanimously they say no. You ask them if they want to be a role model within their community, if they want to be a stronger individual within their community, unanimously they want to be. And so the hope, the expectation is there.

How do we help support and address these issues is what's at the essence of this work. And I was talking to Sedelta in preparation, and we were surveying kind of what the conversation should look like, and I said, Well, I don't know, just prepare yourself because if you haven't in the conversations up to these, if I haven't left in tears or these boys haven't left in tears, that's the kind of environment that you want to be creating with them, and they get to those issues really, really quickly.

And so I just want to thank everybody who participated in that, thank you to our host at Oklahoma University there, and everybody who ensured that we had an opportunity to reach out to this community. And as we begin to ramp up these efforts, we're going to stay in communication with you on what exactly is happening with this initiative and how American Indian and Alaska Natives are included in this effort.

So with that, I also want to keep my remarks at a minimum. There's so much to talk about. I really want to thank our Comprehensive Center, who is here, and I didn't get to meet with yesterday because I was getting bounced around the country and trying to make sure that I was here for today last night. And just really appreciate all your hard work here in Oklahoma, and I look forward to hearing about the issues.

I'll leave you with: Let us know how it is. We are your representatives, although brown-skinned and coming from the communities that you all do, we need to hear exactly what the issues are that are affecting you and how we need to be more accountable to you all. Thank you so much for having me.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Mr. Mendoza, we appreciate your remarks, and it just looks like our audience is swelling up with some comments that they're going to be making a little bit later on, and so you gave us a lot to work with. Thank you for your energy up there in D.C. and what you're doing there.

Speaking of the South Central Comprehensive Center, we did have an advisory committee meeting yesterday, and that brought in some folks from New Mexico, from the Land of Enchantment, and along with them came Dr. Ferlin Clark. He is the assistant secretary of Education for the State of New Mexico, and Dr. Clark, we'd like to ask you if you'd like to step up to the microphone and address the consultation today. We know you traveled a long way here to the National Center for Employer Development in Norman, Oklahoma. Of course, we have to have you say Boomer Sooner before you make any remarks.

(General laughter.)

DR. CLARK: (Native language spoken.) Mr. Rodgers, White House Initiative Director Mr. Mendoza, Joyce Silverthorne, and all the tribal leaders here, my counterpart, Mr. Dwight Pickering, your secretary and new governor of the great state, Dr. Biscoe, tribal leaders, governors, and the 39 tribal chiefs, governors, headmen and all the elders and all the warriors that came before that are here now and those that are yet to come, I want to welcome you on behalf of the State of New Mexico, our good Governor Susana Martinez and our Secretary Hanna Skandera, also our Indian Education Division in the State of New Mexico.

We have 23 tribes and pueblos, as well as 23 school districts, and we serve 35,000 Native American students that are both on and off the reservation. All of those of you who are in the audience, I want to say good morning (Native language spoken) and all the tribal greetings from back home.

I also am here with Terry Frasier, who represents the largest American Indian school district in the United States, Gallup School District. I also have Ronalda Warito-Tome, who is an advocate for students with special needs and disabilities, and she's also on our NIE board. And also here with our Indian Labor Advisory Council who also works for the Laguna Community Foundation, Mr. Gil Sanchez I believe he stepped out, and just some of the folks that we talked about education yesterday with our South Central Comprehensive Center; very encouraging, inspiring and collaborative meeting.

And I think that's the spirit for what we are doing here today, the collaboration between the federal government, the three branches there, as well as the states, then our tribes and then our universities.

The South Central Comprehensive Center we have four states, but between Oklahoma and New Mexico, that's what brought us here to Norman to talk about common core, talk about cultural, language, relevancy and parental involvement, exceptional teachers, educators and those employees that are down at the grassroots, our bus drivers, our cooks, they all make a difference, our school board members.

The other day I heard and I observed the hearing that streamed to New Mexico and the need for forward-thinking for Impact Aid. I think that would be very influential for planning for our school districts. Our STEPP program with the State of New Mexico, one of four in the United States that were funded, like I said, it's a small step for the state and the tribes and the school districts, but it's a larger step for tribal sovereignty. And so we want to continue to support that increased funding for that,

increased support for that. Sometimes we have difficulties between the tribes in the state, but those are all areas that we can work through.

So I want to express my gratitude to the United States Government, even though it has a trust responsibility unlike the states, who we have a government to government relationship responsibility with the tribes and the pueblos on one footing. I think the federal government, through treaties, through different arrangements, has a profound duty to honor those prayers, songs, ceremonies, wishes of our foremothers and our forefathers, and without education to be the great equalizer, bring us all to an equal footing, our future, our communities who are battling different levels of poverty, social, cultural, economic, educational, language, culture, health, wellness, sickness, we're going to be starting with that. Education is a great tool, it's good medicine. Like former president of Navajo Community College used to say, the late Dr. Dean C. Jackson, he said, Education is strong medicine. And I believe in that.

And so I want to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to say something on behalf of New Mexico, on behalf of our tribes and pueblos, they're all unique and distinct and they all stand proud with their culture, language, history and philosophy. (Native language spoken.)

MR. RODGERS: Dr. Clark, we appreciate that, and appreciation to Ms. Silverthorne and Mr. Mendoza for those opening remarks. We'll get into our panel here in just a moment.

Again, I am Ray Rodgers, the moderator for this morning and afternoon. Just a couple of housekeeping notes here. I would like, again, to ask everybody, we've had some more people come in, make sure your cell phones and your smart devices are muted at this time, and also online as you're coming online, this is a live webcast across the country, please mute your phones, you can do that by hitting Star 6, and we'll have some more information coming to you here in just a moment.

This tribal consultation is being webcap, so we ask that you please respect those who are speaking by holding your conversations down to a minimum. We're going to be broadcasting these proceedings continually throughout the day via webcast, and we are transcribing this consultation and the official recorded remarks and documents being discussed during today's consultation will be available within about 30 days.

MR. MENDOZA: Sorry. In both Joyce's and my zeal and I'm pulling her in there with me too because she has dual responsibility we neglected to mention, she mentioned our National Advisory Council on Indian Education, but also critical to that is there are four vacancies for NACIE. We have one of our members here with us, Greg Anderson, who sits at the pleasure of the president, and a very active entity, a federal advisory commission to the president, and so imminent is a Federal Register notice which is the starting point to nominate, either self-nominate or nominate another to be able to sit on that board, very broad roles, spans every sector from business to education to tribal leaders. And so I just want to make sure that that's on your radar.

And also just want to say no selfies today, unless it is a Samsung, iPhone, Blackberry, Windows Phone of any kind.

MR. RODGERS: We appreciate that, Mr. Mendoza, which makes a good point. This is a consultation, this isn't a hearing, we're not in front of a committee where you're limited to what did you have, five or six minutes the other day, so that was a little bit tough for Bill during that time.

Again, we would like some discourse going on, and we'll have that, of course, coming from our audience here as well. Audience participation is the key during a tribal consultation, so we're going to give you that opportunity. You must be registered, and so please go to the registration table to sign in if you're from the audience and you'd like to participate. And also, if you don't want to speak publicly but would like to have your voice heard, you will have that opportunity as well online. You can go to www.edtribalconsultations.org. And that's open to everyone in attendance today or on the webcast, and again, you must sign in to be called on. We'll begin that after lunch today after we finish with our tribal leaders, and the deadline for signing in for that will be 12:30 this afternoon, so just right as we break for lunch.

MR. RODGERS: Okay. I think we've got most of our speakers here that are going to give an overview of American Indian education, and so we'll go down our list here on our agenda. I see that Dr. Star Yellowfish has made it, and she's got the next generation in her arms. That is wonderful to see. Of course, we've got our Riverside kids here, as well, doing our color guard. Would you please welcome Dr. Star Yellowfish, United Keetowah Band of Cherokee. She's the president of the Oklahoma Council for Indian Education.

DR. YELLOWFISH: Thank you so much. Thank you for inviting the Oklahoma Council for Indian Ed to be at the table. Really appreciate it. It's an honor to sit here with our tribal leaders and our federal agency leadership, so really appreciate the chance to, you know, just hear our voice and see what's going on in Oklahoma. We feel like we have a really strong community here, we feel that our students are doing well but could also do better.

And I wear a couple of hats here in Oklahoma. Let me just introduce myself a little bit. My name is Star Yellowfish, and I am Keetowah Cherokee, and I'm married to Easton Yellowfish, who we have two sons, Raymond and Pacer, and Pacer is here, who's just a little bit over a month old, so I'm on maternity leave, but had to come and represent our students for Oklahoma, so I'm happy to do that.

I'm the current president for the Oklahoma Council for Indian Education, and some of our goals for OCIE which we call it here in the state is really, one, to advocate for our native students, to share effective strategies, both in culture and academics, so we bring our membership together, and we share what's working and what's not working and how we can work together. And third is to collaborate with other organizations, whether it be state level or at the federal level, to promote Indian student success. So that's really why we exist as an organization.

This year OCIE is really concentrated on two main goals, and one of the goals that is being met here is to work with our tribal leaders. We understand that our tribal leaders represent our communities, whether it be our urban communities, our tribal communities, and they're the voice of our people and our sovereign nations. So it's really important that OCIE is able to work with our tribal leaders, our tribal governments, but also for them to understand what are the issues in education, in particular what are the issues for the State of Oklahoma and our Indian students.

So that's one of our goals and I'm really happy to see some of our really strong leadership here with Ms. Butler and Mr. Thurman, so we really appreciate you guys being here, and I believe, Chairman Shotton will be her as well.

The second goal was to collaborate with other Indian organizations, and not just at the state level but also at the federal level. So we really appreciate you guys being here on our home turf, I guess you could say, and to listen to some of the concerns that we have here in Oklahoma. I think it's unique in the sense that Oklahoma has a lot of our kids in public school, like the rest of the country, but also we have urban communities that aren't our small town schools but our urban communities.

For example, for Oklahoma City Public Schools where I'm the Indian Ed director, I have 68 tribes represented and not one tribe is very close to us, so we're being pulled in different directions on what the families need and what the students need, and we really have to make those relationships with those tribes. Some of them are really far, like Cherokee Nation is like 2-1/2 hours from us, and some of them are really close, the Cheyenne-Arapaho are 30 minutes. But we still have the obligation because we have so many of their tribal members in our school district. So that's unique to Oklahoma.

And OCIE had several events where we tried to meet two of these goals and we are really excited to be at the table as an organization. A lot of us wear different hats. Our board members sit on different committees throughout the state, but in the end, all of our board members and our membership really care about Indian student success, and in particular about our kids that are here in the State of Oklahoma. We feel that our kids here in the State of Oklahoma carry the same issues and problems that maybe our reservation kids have in Arizona.

So our students across the board have similar issues, and OCIE is here to provide all of those support systems that could help with effective strategies to help make them more successful. We feel that not all of them are doing terrible and we need to be on the negative, and some of them are doing really great and we want to lift those students up and continue to push them and be positive.

For example, we have an event coming up just this week, we have the Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society. This is a 3.9 prestigious honor society, they have to show both academic standards, leadership and culture, and we have 700 students in the State of Oklahoma that have a 3.9. They apply for this honor society, their application is reviewed, and if they're accepted, they go through an initiation ceremony. And to have 700 kids with a 3.9, that to me is outstanding and it says that Oklahoma is doing some really great things, and more importantly, the staff that work with these students are doing some really great things. So yeah, just really want to be excited about those 3.9s.

(Applause.)

DR. YELLOWFISH: But again, I just wanted to keep this short. I have a little baby here and I didn't want to sit at the table and have him crying, and who knows what will happen with a one-month-old. Again, just on behalf of OCIE, we really thank you for bringing us to the table. We'll submit comments, both in writing and verbally later on when it's open to the public. Also, we're here to answer

any questions on behalf of OCIE and what OCIE is doing to help both staff development and student achievement.

So really appreciate it, and thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Dr. Star.

Next up on our agenda is going to be Dr. Gloria Sly, and I'd like to remind the speakers we are recording the consultation today, so please remember to state your full name and who you represent.

DR. SLY: Thank you. I'm really happy to be here this morning. (Native language spoken.) I'm Gloria Sly, I'm of Cherokee Nation, but this morning I'm representing the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly. And I have with me this morning Quinton Roman Nose, Cheyenne-Arapaho. He's our executive director. Quinton, raise your hand. There he is.

(Applause.)

DR. SLY: And TEDNA, as we call it, the Tribal Education Departments, we want you to know that we're honored to be here with you this morning to speak before this assembly, this prestigious assembly, and we want to commend, Bill, you and Joyce, for your work that you've done. I know you've worked very hard, faced many barriers. Thank you for working on our behalf.

And so I want to tell you that TEDNA is here in Oklahoma. We're an incorporated national association of tribal education departments. Our main mission is to strengthen tribal ed departments and gather our membership and help them become stronger, because as speakers for our nations and our individual tribes, even here in Oklahoma we have tribes who the education department consists of the higher ed program, we have huge education departments of 300 employees, maybe more, with some of the larger tribes, and so it goes from a one-person education department to 300 or so, so we have this all across Oklahoma with our 39 tribes, we have different kinds of representation.

And so we're hoping to strengthen each one of them because we want them to have a voice and hopefully we'll have a united about our sovereignty and our rights as tribal eds and as tribes in education. And so we have many kinds of collaborations and partnerships. We're so proud of the Cheyenne-Arapaho and the Chickasaw for their STEPP Grant and their collaboration there and their

work on that and we're learning so much from that grant that they received. And so we have that and we're looking at it and sharing information, not only with this STEPP Grant but with the other three too, and we're looking forward to having more grantees of this nature.

We have the tribal school partnerships, and I know that Dr. Yellowfish talked about meeting the tribes and their school here in urban Oklahoma City, so we too meet with my tribe, Cherokee Nation, we meet with every superintendent across our 14-county area. We either meet with them monthly or bimonthly. We want to hear their concerns and talk to us about what their children need.

Now, as an example, and I can talk more about Cherokee Nation because that's who I work with and who I know. The other tribes, the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, they all have these wonderful programs and I'll talk a little bit more about them, but for us, working with the schools, you mentioned Impact Aid, many of our schools are Impact Aid because people who pay taxes, there are none in their schools (Sound system failure) don't have access to internet and so they've had to figure out ways to do it (Sound system failure) and it doesn't matter if you're in urban Tulsa, the Union Public School, you know, 60 percent of the children don't have access to internet and they're right there in South Tulsa, but then it's more of a percentage out there among our American Indian homes out in the rural communities, so we're working really hard and other tribes are working with us, and the issue that's coming up for us and we know we're facing (Sound system failure).

Cherokee Nation, through its businesses, casinos and all that, employs over 8,000 people. Now, Osage Nation employs a good number of people too, even though they're smaller. They have all of these wonderful things and we pay into the state. Now, what's going to happen? The state is trying to minimize their governmental expense, so therefore, they've taken money away from everybody and if a tribe helps a school out, that's going to be a stream of financial dollars that's going to be taken away from the school.

And I'm thinking that they're going to look at Impact Aid that way too: Oh, that's a stream of funding which you can't count on. You can't depend on it every year for a school because the fluctuation of students and their moving about, so we can't count on that funding. Certainly can't count on our casino funding because it's up and down, but I'm thinking that the states are going to begin, especially Oklahoma is going to begin holding this against the schools so that they can cut their funding to those

schools and say: Oh, you've got these dollars and streams of funding coming in, we're going to cut you. So that's one thing that can help.

And so the Tribal Education Departments, we have those states and tribe relationships, those tribal schools and when I talk about knowing our children and knowing who we represent and speaking for them, that's because we're out there, and we are talking with them, we're visiting them, we have our programs out there, and bringing them what they advocate to us.

And we want to improve our citizens' educational achievement. Those children out in those schools, we want them to reach their potential, whatever that may be, and so that's why we're investing, that's why we're looking at our schools, because that's where 97 percent of our children in Cherokee Nation, they're in those public schools. We do have a BIE-funded school, but it only holds 400 students. And so we're looking at those schools and there are many of them that are close to 90 percent, 60 percent, 75 percent in our area, and for us education is economic development, education is the way to bring yourself out of poverty, and so we're hoping to break that cycle.

And we also encourage our tribal education departments to improve education. We talk to each other and try to help each other and give them information about this is how we do it, this is how we do it, here's some of the things that we tried that might work. And so that's what we as a tribal education department do, and we try to help figure out ways so that tribes can stay in contact with their constituents, even though they may be outside their jurisdictional boundaries, off the reservation, in another state, around the world, serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, we want them to be in contact with us, and we can do it through technology and skyping, but we, the tribes and the tribal eds, we need to have ways to do that too.

So we're looking at ways to be strengthened through our funding for our tribal ed departments so that we can develop these things to support and work with our tribal citizens. So we're looking at all of these different changes and the tribes here in Oklahoma, they all have wonderful programs, some of them have wonderful language immersion programs, and they do a wonderful job. I know that everybody heard about Cherokee Nation but there are other tribes who are doing it and doing it really well.

And so I was glad to see this MOA between the departments and the health and human services, because the Chickasaws have one of the best mentor apprenticeship language programs. We have online classes to the public schools through the Choctaw Nation. They do 50 schools? Thirty-two right

now. When I first talked to them, they had a bigger deal and I'm going: Okay, I want to try that. It was such a model program. You know what, I could never get more than four schools at a time online because of scheduling. So how they maintain that every day in those public schools it's a wonderful, wonderful program.

You know, we have all of these things going for us here in Oklahoma. We do a big variety of things. I know that you will hear tribal leaders who are very, very supportive of education and they really work to help us maintain our funding for our programs, all the way from Head Start, Early Childhood, and through our other programs, Job Corps. We have all of these programs and our tribal leaders support education, higher education scholarships, career services scholarships for vo-tech training, they do all of that, and it all flows from their leadership down through our tribal education departments and agencies that have to handle all of these programs.

So that's a little bit of the work we've done so just wanted to let you know a little bit about us and we're always seeking membership.

But I want to thank you all for being here, and I'm looking forward to everything that everybody has to say, and we will have further input in writing and verbally later this afternoon. But thank you all very much for being here.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Dr. Sly, we appreciate your comments.

Going by the agenda here, let's go ahead and take our scheduled break for 10:30. We will break for 15 minutes, and then we'll reconvene and continue on with our overview of American Indian education in Oklahoma. We have other panel members which we will be letting have the floor for their time.

We'd like to remind our webcast members too that if you have any questions that you can put it in the chat box and we'll try to get those to our panel members, or if you would like to participate in the open comment section, remember you can do that after our participants here in attendance have their say.

We'll recess for 15 minutes. Remind you that we will have our tribal leader session, as well, coming up in just a moment. I will warn people at three minutes with a little bell. I couldn't figure out how to use that, but there we go. So we'll reconvene in 15 minutes.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

MR. RODGERS: This consultation is being broadcast around the world on the Worldwide Web, and we'd like to welcome you back to the U.S. Department of Education Tribal Consultation here at the National Center for Development's Conference Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

I'd like to remind you again to please turn off your cell phones and your smart devices, and make sure that you do sign in for the public comment portion of today's consultation. You must be signed in at the registration table and that opportunity will close at 12:30 Central Daylight Time.

At this time we'll pick up where we left off on the overview of American Indian education in Oklahoma, and next on our agenda is Mr. Greg Anderson.

Mr. Anderson, would you please introduce yourself and tell us who you represent.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Ray. My name is Greg Anderson. I'm the superintendent of the Eufaula Dormitory, Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma. On behalf of Eufaula Dormitory, Jones Academy, Sequoia High School, the Chickasaw Children's Village, Riverside Indian School, Eastern Oklahoma tribal schools, and the Bureau of Indian Education Oklahoma Area Education Office, I want to thank Joyce and Bill for being with us today. It's certainly a privilege to have you all in Oklahoma giving our comments and our recommendations, so thank you.

I wrote my comments down because, one, I want to keep them organized and I don't want to leave anything out, the second thing is it's a well known fact that the human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you are asked to speak in public, so I didn't want to leave anything out.

The Bureau of Indian Education is currently in the process of creating a strategic plan that will create a more efficient and effective organization and will improve academic outcomes and opportunities for our American Indian students. This plan will embrace an attitude that our American Indian students are high achievers and will successfully prepare them for a competitive global job market. The BIE is tasked to

ensure its organizational structure is responsive and effective in delivering the most qualified teachers and rigorous competitive education for all American Indian students.

The BIE serves 48,000 American Indian students on 64 reservations in 23 states. The organization has 47 separate funding streams that serves 183 schools, Haskell Indian Nations University, and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

The U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Education partnered to create the American Indian Education Study Group. Their task was to meet with tribes and analyze the BIE structure and provide sound reform measures to improve the federal education system. This group of education professionals was asked to integrate information and recommendations from several reports and listening sessions to create a comprehensive transformation plan that will guide the BIE to address new challenges and implement solutions that effectively and equally serve our Native American students. They have created a plan that will address new challenges and implement solutions toward a better and more improved BIE.

This has been a challenging task for members of the group. The issues that must be recognized and addressed by the group to meet these challenges are multiple and complex and understanding of the historical relationship between the American Indian cultures and the American educational system was essential in this effort. They had to familiarize themselves in the maintenance of bonds to traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures, while also providing preparation for successful participation in a culturally diverse and modern technological society.

There had to be a focus on identifying the strategies that will be most effective in building on a student's cultural strength to enable them to successfully participate in a complex, multi-cultural world. An effective model would respect both the historical and contemporary aspects of a child's culture, validate the realities of the world in which the child lives by recognizing its existence, and using educational methods that build on cultural strengths and demonstrate how those strengths can be used to benefit both American Indians and the larger society.

The BIE strategic plan identified four major priority areas that began transforming the face of American Indian education: one is to promote increased educational outcomes and opportunities for students; two is promote self-determination in American Indian education; three, promote the sustainability of

native culture, history and language; four, promote excellence through the support of our BIE and tribal school employees.

They want to create a unified system that will improve student outcomes and opportunities for our American Indian students when teachers, administrators and all other levels of management understand accountability and are willing to accept responsibility for student learning. I believe they have succeeded in their efforts to create a blueprint that transforms the face of American Indian education.

Week before last I was in D.C. and I met with some leadership, and I heard a statement that resonated in my mind and gave me encouragement and hope. They said, our actions will challenge the impossibilities we have created and create stories of possibilities. That reminds me of a quote I once heard: Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.

This is what we are doing as we gather in groups such as this one today. We want to create a better future for children, and the nicest thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time. This can be our day one. For the sake of enabling all American children to pursue and realize the American dream, we must collaborate and advocate and collectively work on our priorities and agendas. And I think yesterday was a good start, meeting with the folks from New Mexico who brought good ideas and what they're doing. They have a blueprint that some of us need to follow.

I would like to remind everybody that on April 30 at Riverside Indian School in Anadarko there will be a BIE consultation session that will address the study group's recommendations and consult on the plan going forward. I would ask that those interested attend the consultation session. They want to hear from us. I encourage everyone to go to Anadarko and submit their comments, make their recommendations to the study group.

And I appreciate the time. I would like to touch on what Joyce and Bill brought up earlier about the National Advisory Council. This is my eleventh year on the council, and I think it's very rewarding for me as an individual to serve our federal education system. I think we're doing great things on the council. We had a meeting two weeks ago that was very, very encouraging. We're getting great participation and assistance from the president, to the secretaries, to Bill Mendoza, to Joyce Silverthorne, to Dr. Monty Russell, to Secretary Jewell, Secretary Lashburn. They are committed to seeing improvements in

Indian education. They've supported that with their executive order, with funding, and I think we need to give this group our support and best wishes going forward.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

Next on our agenda is Mr. Jim Parrish.

MR. PARRISH: From the Choctaw Nation, Chief Pyle, Assistant Chief Gary Batton, Jim Parrish, (Native language spoken) My name is Jim Parrish, and I'm the director of the School of Choctaw Language, and it is my privilege to be here today. I am the chairperson of the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education.

To bring you up to date, just exactly what that means is through Oklahoma legislation this historical council was established in 2010, and we have existed since then. And what's historical about that is that there had never been a council that sat that close to the State Department of Education. Our purpose in establishing this council was to enhance the relationship between the tribes of Oklahoma and the State Department of Education, and this is the first council that has actually sat that close.

Presently at this time, to continue our existence we have House Bill 3243. It has gone through the House and it is now on the Senate floor and is supposed to be voted on either this week or next week that we might have six more years of the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education.

I would like at this time, if you will give me the privilege, I'd like to have the member of the counsel please stand, we have several members. If you will please stand so people from Oklahoma can see who you are. Thank you very much for that.

Our council is an 18-member board, and I would like to recognize Mr. Ray Rodgers. He was our chairperson at one time, did a great job in heading us down the right road to where we're going today. But on our council it represents tribes, tribal education departments, higher ed, career tech, common ed, the Oklahoma Council for Indian Education, the State Department of Education, American Center and Museum has a representative, so you can see we have a wide, wide range of board members on this advisory council.

We hope that our legislature sees that we have six more years to exist and that the governor does sign this because we feel like that we've made a difference. As I listen to people make presentations in this advisory council, we kind of bring all these things together, and as we bring Indian education, different departments together and we talk about these Indian education programs and we bring them together and work with the state department on a lot of issues.

Let me just give you kind of an example of this. We work on legislative issues, whether it be state or federal, because everything that has to do with our schools and our school children because we represent about 130,000 Native American children in our schools in Oklahoma, so all legislation that affects, whether it be curriculum, test scores, funding, whatever it might be affects the Native American children in our schools and so we set apart a portion of every one of our meetings to have legislative updates.

Greg is on our board, we're very proud of that. He brings those things from the national level. Lucyann Harjo, she stood up, she's with the Oklahoma Council on Indian Education, she brings those issues that our Native American Indian education coordinators from our schools have and she brings those issues to us. And we have, like I said, from higher ed, so it all comes together. But we are a group that hears these things and then wants tribes to work with our State Department of Ed.

For example, we listen to test scores, and we had the lady that's over the reading department at the state department come and give us a presentation. She invited all of our tribes with our Head Start programs that she would come and help them. You know, that's historical that the state department wants to help us with our Native American children and offers that help. And through Dwight Pickering we're able to do that, and he does a great job with that as we've discussed these educational issues.

I was listening to about funding that Gloria was talking about. Any funding, JOM, Impact Aid, Title VII, and even on another point that I want to bring to you this morning, even on such things as E-Rate when they talk about doing away with Priority II funding. Well, that affects our Native American children because that affects the process that we have in our schools.

So as the chairperson of the Oklahoma Advisory Council for Indian Education, anything affects our children in our schools in Oklahoma and it's our responsibility to look at those things and see exactly what that does. Of course, funding is a huge part of all this.

But just to kind of give you an update on some of the things, accomplishments that's happened through this board is that we partnered with the American Indian Institute and the South Center Comprehensive Center to put on the American Education Summit in October of 2013, the first time that our state has had this since about the mid '90s, the best of our knowledge. So there was about 200 people there and through the collaboration through the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education, we're proud that we had that Indian Education Summit, and it's just the beginning. We already have it scheduled for September 2014 and we're really proud of those things.

Staff development for Indian education in our Leadership Vision 2020 through the State Department of Ed, Dwight and Ray and Jacob, all were a part of staff development at Vision 2020 for our schools, and we were very proud of that.

Native Language Certification, House Bill 2921 was signed by the governor just last Monday, and what that did it put into law what the State Department of Education through administrative rule did the previous session, and it gave us an alternative route to certify Native American teachers to teach in our public schools, and it's really awesome. And our state board, this Advisory Board on Indian Education had their hand in on that. Many people that sit in this room sat on the committee to develop these rules and these issues for teacher certification for Native language. So we're very proud of that.

We also want to say this as far as Indian education is concerned, that the state department has partnered with the advisory council and Oklahoma Council on Indian Ed to create a website, and at this website at the State Department of Education, all tribes will have a place to be represented, and Native American children, wherever they might be across the United States, can go to that website and click on whatever tribe that they want to and there's information about services that a tribe may have, history, language, culture, whatever.

And on this website too, we've partnered with Oklahoma Historical Society, OETA, so many partners that we have developed and have come together to create this website. We're going to be really proud of that. Dwight may tell you that it's going to be open in July, hopefully in July 2014. So it's a huge step in Indian education for Oklahoma. As a matter of fact, best of my knowledge, the last time the State Department of Education developed a product for Indian education was like 1992 wasn't it, Dwight? and now with this website we just hope we'll open up Indian education for all students across the State

of Oklahoma. We just feel like that's a big accomplishment and we're so glad that this council had an opportunity to be a part of that.

But I want to say this about that. Our Indian educators across the State of Oklahoma, several of them and Lucyann was in charge of that came together to help create this website to represent all of our tribes in Oklahoma. We're very, very proud of those kinds of things.

I want to also make mention that as I listened to Dr. Sly talk just a little bit, I was talking to her, and just to give you an idea about where we need to be headed for Indian education, I was talking to her about my grandchildren. They're part Cherokee, part Choctaw, and part Chickasaw, and so they went to visit the culture center at Cherokee and all they could say was "osiyo" and I said "halito" and they say "osiyo." So I'm trying to say you're Choctaw too. But I did throw in there Chickasaw "chokma" trying to get her to say that.

But the point to be taken is that how excited that they were to learn the history of their people, even though they represent three tribes, a resilient people as we all came on the Trail of Tears, a resilient people that we're still here and that we're still thriving and we need to be proud of who we are. And that's what we all do with Indian education is just for people to be proud of who they are.

In my endeavor in the School of Choctaw Language, we do teach in 32 public schools with distance learning that we carry on a dialogue with those children, and about half of our students are Choctaw and the other is whomever wants to get into the class. But what that does, it makes them proud that their native language is being taught. We also teach cultural lessons as we do this also, but we're very proud of the things that we do. But I'm also proud, as being the chairperson of the Oklahoma Advisory Council for Indian Education, how we're coming together as a state and tribal people and sharing our ideas, and how that you've come to visit with us and hear about our ideas and what we're doing. And so we are accomplishing a lot of things in the State of Oklahoma and we're glad to do that, but we also need your help in the things that you do on the federal level. "Yakokih." Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Parish.

I think when we take a new look at three Cs here at the State Department of Education, Mr. Pickering, I think we're looking at collaboration, communication and consultation now between all the tribes. So appreciate those comments.

Next up would you please welcome Mr. Robert Bible.

MR. BIBLE: Good morning. I want to thank you for including us on this part. I'm Robert Bible, president of the College of Muscogee Nation.

To give you a little background, I spent 20 years in public education, so I've been in many of your seats of being there seeing our Native students, and now I've got the opportunities that we have as a private college here in Oklahoma.

I could give you a little background of the college. Mr. Anderson had his notes all typed out and had them memorized. I did mine in the truck this morning because I've been in Chicago for five days at the HLC conference. But what I'll do, I've spoke about the college a lot and so just kind of remember some few dates and I'll go from kind of a timeline, but also on behalf of all the tribal colleges throughout the nation and the four developing tribal colleges here in Oklahoma. As you know, we have a Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribal College in Southwestern State University, we have Pawnee Nation College, we have Comanche Nation College, and then College of Muscogee Nation.

So out of the four, two of us, Comanche Nation and us, we are in what we call the candidacy stage of accreditation, and so we just had our site visit for initial accreditation just within the last three weeks, March 10 through 12. And then we went to HLC and the next step will be we'll have a hearing through the Institutional Actions Council sometime in September, and then it will go before the board of trustees for initial accreditation.

We started in 2004, and actually, Dr. James King I'll call him our founder he had done his thesis on his doctoral program back in the '70s on how to develop a tribal college, and as he went through and taught in public universities, he applied for a grant within the tribe, a \$25,000 grant to start the college in 2004. And so I think we started with him and one other person doing that, and hired two adjunct instructors.

From there, once we began the college and our national council and Chief Tiger and our higher ed department, and I want to thank all of them because without their support, we would not be where we are today. It takes everybody to build this college and it's been a long process, but an exciting process.

Through Tribal Legislation NCA 11-040, we established a tribal college back in 2004. We had our first regent meeting in 2005. I was a regent. I was currently a superintendent in a public and I also served as a regent for four years, and now am completing my fifth year as the president.

In 2007 we signed a partnership with OSU-IT so that our credits could be transcribed and transferred out to other universities, so we've been OSU-IT system since 2007. We have received four HUD grants so far to date, \$800,000 HUD grants, to help build our facilities. We have received \$1.2 million in funding from Department of Energy to have geothermal in our buildings and student housing. We also qualified for USDA as a Land Grant institution just here recently and received \$125,000 for cafeteria equipment in our new building that will be completed June 25, will be our second building. We've also received EPSCoR funding through the partnerships; we received \$160,000 to hire our first science instructor.

And so from the college side, we started this process Lucyann was asking me when did we start the deal of accreditation, and we started it back when really we started the college. Officially when we submitted our PIF, preliminary information form it's not one page, it's like probably several hundreds of documents we submitted that in 2010 to the Higher Learning Commission. In 2012 we passed that stage, then we went to the candidacy stage.

We had our site visit about a year and a half ago in May, and then we were successful and we became a candidate, and that's the key word is a candidate for accreditation because that opened the doors for a lot of other areas. It opened the doors for us to be a full member of AIHEC. It opened the doors to receive American Indian college funding for our students. In fact, last semester 92 of our students received that funding. And it opened the door for funding through the BIE, and with the help of Mr. Mendoza and his staff, thank you for your support in helping us get where we're at today. And so we were notified a few months ago that we will receive BIE funding. They said we'll get it sometime this summer, haven't received it yet, but we're waiting on that funding.

We also received Title III funding because of being a candidate, and with that funding we established our Student Success Center, and what we're doing there, because when we started in 2007 with OSU-IT, our student retention rate for Native students was 2 percent. The highest it's been since we've been involved has been up to 38 percent, so we're making an impact with our Native students. With the national council passing legislation that says that if you're a Muscogee Creek citizen, you can attend the

college at no cost, so we will continue to get funding from the tribe and the council has been very supportive, so that's helped us in our development.

We average between 175 to 220 students per semester, we offer 55 classes, we have four degrees, associate degrees in gaming, Native American studies, tribal services and police science, two certificates in language and one in gaming, and so now we're making a pretty good impact on our students. There are 72 JOM high schools within our boundaries, and so with the Student Success Center, they are going to go out to every JOM high school within our nation, within Muscogee Creek Nation.

They're going there as community outreach and they're talking to our native students in all these public schools about the opportunities of going to college, not just our college, to any college, because we believe that our students can be successful in any college. We would love for them to come to our school, of course, but we also come outside our boundaries, we come here to Normal public schools and work with them in their program, so we're open to going to any about high school in Oklahoma.

So it's been a good impact. Like I said, I was the tenth employee hired in 2009, and now after I got back from Chicago, we have 39 full-time employees, seven full-time faculty members, and so it's an exciting time for us. We have one 22,000 square foot facility with eight classrooms. They all have smart boards. Every one of my instructors and administrators have an iPad to help with their curriculum and instruction.

We have student housing. We got some money from within our tribe through our housing. We have 16 two-bedroom units that will hold 64 students, and so because it's HUD money, and to give you an example, if you were to go to OSU or even OU, I don't know what it costs to stay in housing, but OSU-IT it's like \$1,200 a trimester, but because of the HUD funding, the most it's going to cost our students is \$470. But it really doesn't cost them anything because our national council has given us a budget and we pay for that difference anyway.

So we're excited. We have 98 percent of our students are Native American, 90 percent are Muscogee Creek, so we also represent probably about 15 other tribal affiliations throughout our college. Faculty and staff, out of 39 faculty we have 32 that are Native and 28 are Muscogee Creek. So we feel we're making a big impact because this is the first time a lot of our students are a majority for the first time in a classroom, they are taught by Native instructors, they see Native staff, they see Native administrators, and they see that they can be successful.

And we have a lot of first generation students within our college, and Lucyann has sent us a few students from her school, we got some from Ardmore and so forth. And so I think for the first time every one of our students, one of the requirements, they must take the Muscogee Creek language as a requirement, it doesn't matter which program you're in. We teach a lot about the culture, and I think that's important. I think that's why the tribal college movement has been going on, and we are different than the mainstream institutions, we are different than the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University and other universities because we're a tribal college. And we just made that statement with AIHEC with the board of trustees that we are different than mainstream institutions.

But we are also successful because the person that I hired for my coordinator for that Student Success, she was a graduate of the College of Muscogee Nation and then came here to the University of Oklahoma and was successful and graduated. So our students are successful in those other colleges. They've just got to have that opportunity for that success.

And being a first generation student sometimes, when our students dropped out there's no one to tell them to go back because they're first generation, so we're changing that mindset of our students, that's what we're trying to do now. You know, you need to start that early. My sons knew they were going to go or I knew they were going to go to college starting early in elementary and started developing those skills in reading and those academics. That's what I want them to do with their kids, with my grandkids, but that can be with all of our Muscogee citizens and all Native citizens.

So we're here in Oklahoma, we're actually real proud of our college, but we're also here to work with the other tribal colleges. We received Title IV funding, as well, and this was the first semester that we disbursed Title IV funding, and so we're excited to get in all these new areas.

But without our national council, the chief, our employees, the White House Initiative, AIHEC, it's been a great experience working with everybody because we have the same student, I promise you. It's the same student, same families that we deal with, and it doesn't matter if you're in New Mexico, Arizona or Oklahoma, or North Dakota or South Dakota, it's the same student and we want those students to be successful because we have a lot of talented Native students and Native instructors and Native administrators.

So I better stop there. I have this deal when I talk to my faculty, when I want you to stop grab your tie, so grab their ties and I better slow down. But again, I want to thank you for including us, because being

a tribal college now, it's a new era for Indian education in Oklahoma that we have those opportunities, and I think it's very important that they attend tribal colleges and get a foundation because they can be successful and will be successful at the other higher ed institutions. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Bible. That sounds exciting over there, and I can attest to the campus, it's beautiful. It's going to be an awesome experience for our students.

Next on our agenda, Mr. Kevin Fields.

MR. FIELDS: (Native language spoken.) I greet you in my language. It's good to see you here today, and my name is Kevin Roberts Fields, but my preferred name, my given name, my tribal name is (Native language spoken). It's too complicated to translate parts of it.

I would make note that I do not work for the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma anymore. That was previous position that I held. I do have a working agreement with the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Language Program, so as such, I'm not here today representing a particular organization or a specific tribal government. I am here representing those select few who have undertaken the task for revitalizing their tribal languages within the State of Oklahoma.

Before I begin, I do want to acknowledge (Native language spoken), our God and Creator for allowing us to convene here today, and I want to acknowledge all of those who have come before us, for some given their lives, and have made it their life's work to lay the foundation so that we can be here today.

When I was asked by Dwight to sit here today, I immediately thought of a couple of other people who I thought were more deserving and more capable to sit here in this position, most notably, Jacob Manatowa-Bailey of the Sauk Language Program, and Richard Grounds from the Euchre-Yuchi Language Program. Both of those individuals are my mentors and they have truly dedicated their lives and made the sacrifices necessary to ensure that their respective languages will persevere to at least the next generation. And so I want to publicly acknowledge those individuals for what they've done not only for leading me but being an example for all indigenous languages to follow in their quest to revitalize their languages.

Bill, Joyce, Sedelta, it's a privilege to sit here, it is a high honor, I want you to know that.

What I have prepared is a status of some of the languages and the revitalization efforts being undertaken here in the state. The majority of the world's minority languages are in immediate danger of being lost forever. According to K. David Harrison, 6,912 human languages were spoken worldwide in 2001. Within 100 years, fully half of these languages will no longer be spoken. Seventeen of the 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma have no fluent speakers.

The majority of speakers have diminished or vanished completely within the course of four generations. Today, Oklahoma's tribal linguistic demographics from monolingual tribal language speakers to monolingual English language speakers. The children from most tribal language speaking families are now monolingual English speakers with little or no background knowledge of their heritage language.

At this point I must say that please hear my heart's desire for every tribal language community to revitalize their language to the point that it becomes the primary language of daily usage, daily communication, and also the primary language of educational instruction for their children.

What follows is a sample of Oklahoma languages that have language education programs supporting those languages. The remaining speakers estimations that I will present are liberal and are self-reported by tribal language programs and/or departments approximately one year ago.

The Cherokee language spoken by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and United Keetowah Band has approximately 5,000 speakers, with the youngest native speakers in the age range of 40 to 50. I would note that, yes, there are individual exceptions to these numbers, but these numbers, these percentages, they represent the norm and not the exception.

The Chickasaw language has 80 speakers but the youngest native speaker is age 62. The Choctaw language was 500 to 600 speakers, with the youngest native speakers 50 years or older. The Muscogee language spoken by the Muscogee Creek Nation and Seminole Nations of Oklahoma, combined 3,500 speakers, with the youngest native speakers age 50 or older. The Sauk language, spoken by the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma, three remaining speakers, with the youngest age 70 or older. And the Euchee speakers with four remaining native speakers, with the youngest 89 years old.

I have an interesting note that I got from Richard Grounds this morning, an email that he sent me talking about the status of the Euchee language. And it says that: The numbers show us in a strange place as

the Euchee language project now having developed twice as many second language speakers than there are now elder first language speakers.

(Applause.)

MR. FIELDS: He goes on to say: Put it another way, we have triple the number of speakers who are at least fluent enough to conduct immersion classes. But he does say that these extreme proportions are only possible because of the very few number of elder speakers that remain. And he says that if you combine the number of second language fluent speakers with first language elder speakers, that it would still amount to one-half of one percent of the larger Euchee population. But the good news, he says, is that we are at least beginning to count upward, not consistently counting downward, as in how many speakers that we have at the end of any given year.

Within Oklahoma, Native children are being raised in the home and public schools without being afforded the opportunity to become fluent literate speakers of their heritage language.

Of the remaining tribal languages that possess speakers, only approximately 10 percent of those tribal populations identify themselves as fluent first language speakers, with 90 percent of those populations being 50 years or older. Without swift intervention, the tribal languages of Oklahoma are predicted to be lost within 20 years.

Now, there are a number of tribes, tribal programs who operate language education programs, ranging anywhere from community classes, to public school instruction, to distance education, to online education that have produced results. But worldwide immersion has been the only successful approach to creating fluent second language learners. Immersion is defined by Dr. Janine Pease-Pretty on Top as: a practice or methodology of language learning that concentrates on communication exclusively in the heritage or tribal language.

Immersion generally takes one of three approaches, or a combination thereof, and these approaches are as follows.

Master apprentice, which has been mentioned previously, where one-on-one or group-based, master apprentice consists of fluent speakers teamed with young learners to acquire language in immersion settings without the use of English, so there is no English explanation of grammar structure, it's not a

grammar-based translation method, it's developing communication skills completely in the tribal language.

The second is language nests where second language learners, aided by fluent speakers, provide native language medium education from infancy. These, again, are no English programs.

And the third are immersion schools which second language learners assisted by native speakers provide primary and secondary education instruction in the medium of the tribal language, again with no English.

While past and current language efforts, such as those that I mentioned, community, public school instruction, college, internet-based classes, are beneficial as language enrichment activities by creating interest in learning the language, they have not resulted in the development of fluent speakers. Therefore, immersion language approaches must be the focal point of language revitalization efforts, and every attempt must be made to maintain and fund one, or a combination thereof, of the aforementioned immersion approaches.

A small number of tribal language organizations within the state have responded to the dramatic decline in language speakers by implementing at least one of these approaches to creating second language speakers. These are the Cherokee Nation Immersion School, the Sauk Master Apprentice Program, the Euchee Language Project, the Seminole Nation's Pumvhakv Immersion School, and the Chickasaw Master Apprentice Program. Unfortunately, most tribal language organizations do not have the resources, either human or financial, to implement programs of this nature.

With the realization that without young people who take on the responsibility of learning and teaching tribal languages, the vast majority of tribal languages will be lost within the next 10 to 20 years. Programs are beginning to be developed that simultaneously teach apprentices the language and prepare them as immersion teachers and language mentors for future generations of tribal language speakers.

One such program under the direction and leadership of Jacob Manatowa-Bailey, of the Sauk Language Program, is the Center for Tribal Languages. The Center for Tribal Languages is an American Indian Division of Bacon College and has as its core a concentration in tribal languages with the emphasis on learning and teaching Native American languages.

This new course concentration provides students the opportunity to study and learn their language in a master apprentice setting, while earning college credit toward degree completion. Graduates of this program will have the verbal, literacy, and pedagogical skills necessary to teach second language learners within language nests, immersion schools and public school classrooms. As of now there are three language education programs that are participating as a group in this endeavor.

I just want to offer up a few points on language revitalization, and that true language revitalization requires a paradigm shift that counters the effects of historical traumas and intergenerational grief that Native peoples have suffered or endured that has been associated with language, and it still resonates in the hearts and minds of our people. True language revitalization also challenges the thoughts and attitudes of how, where and why language is learned and taught. True language revitalization is also, and most importantly, a lifetime commitment.

Dr. Richard Grounds, again, offered me a quote from Eduardo Galeano, who says that: Blatant colonialism mutilates you without pretense, it forbids you to talk, it forbids you to exist; however, invisible colonialism convinces you that serfdom is your destiny and impotence is your nature. It convinces you that it is not possible to speak, not possible to act, and not possible to exist.

And those are the challenges that those who are involved in language revitalization face. It's not only the challenge of do we have the funding to do these things, but it's challenging the thoughts and the minds that the people have that are a result of the experiences that they endured as children in regards to their use of the language.

To honor those who have demonstrated their commitment to language revitalization within the State of Oklahoma, and who have demonstrated that the aforementioned approaches do indeed work, I would like to conclude by publicly acknowledging the following individuals who have become fluent second language speakers and teachers of their respective languages. They are: Jacob Manatowa-Bailey; Mosiah Bluecloud and Katie Grant of the Sauk language; Ryan Mackey of the Cherokee language; Richard and his daughter, Renee Grounds; Yoney Spencer; Lester Revis and Jeanice Brown of the Euchee language; Josh Hinson of the Chickasaw language; and Nicholas Charleston of the Choctaw language.

Our greatest need in regards to language revitalization is to be afforded the opportunity and resources necessary to design, implement and fund these types of programs that I've mentioned. (Native language spoken.)

MR. RODGERS: Mr. Fields, appreciate your comments. Gets us thinking in a whole new direction there. Thank you very much.

Next up, Mr. Dwight Pickering.

MR. PICKERING: I almost want to stand, it's so cold in here, and as old as I am, the knees kind of start to ache first, or that's the first thing that goes.

I wanted to give an overview of Indian education in Oklahoma, and when I talked to the committee that we were in conversation over this, I told them that I can't give a good view of Oklahoma Indian education without these individuals that you just heard from. These are just a small part of the many people in Oklahoma that have organizations that support our Indian education efforts.

We've been involved in Indian education since the '70s. I've been in Indian education 35-plus years. My mentor, who showed me the way in Indian education, Dr. Jerry Bread, as a young man and we had a discussion when I was in high school. I never knew I would go into this area of education, and he's been a great mentor to me and given me the knowledge and the opportunity to be where I am today. I've been there as an Indian education advisor, a counselor, an Indian education director, and now the director of Indian education for the State of Oklahoma. I have the opportunity to work with all students, not just one school district but all of our students.

But I'll tell you that these people that talked to you today, they're the ones that can tell you the story about Indian education in Oklahoma: Mr. Jim Parrish of the Oklahoma Advisory Council; Mr. Greg Anderson on the Bureau of Indian Education Schools in our state; Mr. Robert Bible on our tribal colleges that just began for us here; Dr. Star Yellowfish and her leadership on the Oklahoma Council on Indian Education which is an old organization from back in the '60s; Dr. Gloria Sly with a new organization called TEDNA, Tribal Education Directors National Assembly, who is responsible for giving us guidance for the STEPP grant; and then Kevin Fields brings us this history of our language which has been taken from us because of the education they wanted to bring to us, and we now have the job to revitalize that, and we have this group of individuals whose sole responsibility of their life now is to dedicate it to preserving that language.

We have 681,000 students in the State of Oklahoma; over 130,000 of them are Native American students. We have 517 school districts in the state; over 400 Indian Ed programs; we lead the nation in Title VII Indian Ed grants. We have the third largest Johnson-O'Malley Program in the United States.

We are one of four STEPP grants that our State Department of Education is partnering with, and it's very unique that one comes from the Woodland people, the Chickasaw Nation, and one comes from the Plains Indian Tribes, the Cheyenne-Arapaho, two completely different tribes but two completely different nations that are striving to educate their children, to utilize the federal funding that comes to the state and to our school districts, to understand it better, so they can develop it and make it work for us.

We have 39 tribes that were removed from their homeland that were transferred to this place called Oklahoma, Indian Territory. We have 39 different governments and different nations. We are sovereign and have sustained everything they brought with them and continue to grow with. The most important is their language and their sovereignty.

We at the State Department of Education support their efforts in any way we can dealing with education, and working with the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education, and the Oklahoma legislators with the Native American Caucus of 18 members, to help give support, when we can, dealing with legislation that supports our tribes and our students. With the sunset setting on the Oklahoma Advisory Council, our legislators came forward and put into a bill to extend the Oklahoma Advisory Council that they may do a better job and more complete job because you can't do it in four years.

A new House bill dedicated to charter schools for our tribes. We already have a charter school law that states that if you have a Bureau of Indian Affairs school within your jurisdiction, you are eligible for that type of charter school with an immersion. This new bill will give you the opportunity to develop a charter school, if you are a sovereign nation and you have land that's in federal trust. That will be going to the floor next week.

A new law on Native American language with our new rule that was installed a year ago, and the support of our legislators to make it a law has just passed and going to the governor's office. After many, many years of trying to contain our Southwest Native American people and educating our own children, we again have this opportunity in partnering with the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

And with the great job that our 39 tribes are doing in their communities, with funding for not only their tribal members but other people in their tribal jurisdiction, even with the local school districts who fall short in funding, our tribes are stepping up to help with that. They see the importance of that.

If you look at our treaties, and many treaties across the United States, and I've looked at those many times, always within our treaties is an area that says we want education for our children. I used to carry around a document that had such treaties, a list of them, for education responsibility the U.S.

Government has with our tribes. I was looking for that the other day, and I became frustrated because I couldn't find it because I know how dear that is to me, and I told myself I just need to take a deep breath and it will come to me, I'll know where I put that. I carried it in a briefcase because when I think times is hard and things are too overwhelming for me to deal with, I look at those treaties, and there's a reason for me to be in that position.

I want to thank the Office of Indian Education, the White House Initiative on Indian Education, and the job that they have to do, and I want to thank them for coming today to listen to us. We have programs in Early Childhood and Head Start at our tribes that are very successful, and we want to share with you as much as we can about the education of our children here.

Even though we look successful and we're doing a great job, there's still room for improvement, there's still barriers, there's still funding, there's still responsibility to us, and we're going to call upon that and ask for that. And if we can get it any other way, through legislative process, we'll be glad to go and do that. I know our tribes will do that.

In closing, I want to say how important the Native American language is to save of these 39 tribes, and I always say this when I'm at conferences or meeting with the tribal chairmen, the presidents, the governors, and so on and so forth, is to fund that tribal language, it's very, very important. Because when you don't have it anymore, such as the Eucheas are going through, and in our time to see that happen, it shouldn't. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Pickering. We appreciate your comments here today, the awesome responsibility that we have and carry on with.

That concludes our overview of the American Indian education in Oklahoma with our panel of speakers. We'll hear from Mr. Nuttle here this afternoon, before we begin the public comment period. At this time we do have some time left before lunch. That's going to be taking place at 12:00.

I would like to ask if that would be, Edwina, you're up first, would that be enough time for you, or would you like to defer? You would like to defer. Okay.

So let's take an early lunch break then, and then when we do come back we'll hear from Governor Edwina Butler-Wolfe, from the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, and she will kick off our tribal leaders. And we appreciate all of our tribal leaders for being here this afternoon, and we will start with you right after lunch. We will reconvene here in one hour, so just before one o'clock, please be back because we would like to hear from our tribal leaders, and then it will be open, if you have registered and we encourage you to do so for our attendees. You must sign up at the registration table if you'd like to speak before the consultation today.

And also, on the web at our webcast, if you would like to speak you will be given I guess you have to raise your electronic hand there online on the webcast, just raise your hand and we'll recognize who that is and then we will call out your name if you're still online with us this afternoon, so that will be taking place.

We thank you for being here for the U.S. Department of Education Tribal Consultation at the National Center for Development's Conference Center in Norman, Oklahoma. We will reconvene at 12:55.

(Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the consultation was recessed, to reconvene this same day, Tuesday, April 15, 2014, following a lunchbreak.)

AFTERNOON SESSION

(12:55 a.m.)

MR. RODGERS: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you once again to the National Center for Employee Development here in Norman, Oklahoma. Ms. Joyce Silverthorne, director of the Office of Indian Education, and Mr. William Mendoza, with the White House Initiative on

American Indian and Alaska Native Education, extend their greetings from the United States Department of Education Tribal Consultation.

And we'll begin our afternoon, we have one more speaker to present, and then we will have our tribal leaders give some comments, as well, and we would, again, like to thank our tribal leaders for being here this afternoon and taking time out of your busy schedule.

But before we begin that, remind everybody once again, I know you made some phone calls probably, checking in with the office, if you could, please, put your cell phones on silent and your smart devices on mute, and that way we'll be able to give our full attention to our speakers here this afternoon.

And with that said, we would like to welcome to be able to give some comments is Mr. William Nuttle, from the Bureau of Indian Education and the Department of the Interior. Mr. Nuttle.

MR. NUTTLE: Thank you for that introduction, Mr. Rodgers.

I just want to take a brief moment to express, on behalf of the Bureau of Indian Education, Oklahoma Education Line Office, our appreciation, Mr. Mendoza, to you, and to Joyce Silverthorne for your presence here and taking the time to come down and listen to the issues and the concerns that are here in the Oklahoma area.

Also, I'd like to recognize this morning we had a wonderful exhibition of students assuming the roles of leadership, and that was the Riverside Indian School students. I'd like to acknowledge them and recognize their efforts and their leadership roles, stepping into those roles. I know it's certainly inspiring, not only to their fellow classmates but also to those of us that are concerned about the future of education, and it's good and rewarding to be able to see students like that step into that role. So I wanted to acknowledge them. Riverside is actually one of our schools at the Oklahoma Education Line Office.

And just for some context, the Oklahoma Education Line Office is located in Oklahoma City at 200 NW 4th Street. Actually, if you know where the Oklahoma City Memorial, who, unfortunately, is going to be having an anniversary of the unfortunate Murrah bombing this Saturday, if you find yourself there, the federal courthouse, just across the street to the south, that's where the Oklahoma Education Line Office is located.

Our acting Education Line Officer Catherine Fatheree, sends her regrets because she was overbooked. She had to attend some monitoring sessions that are going on at Riverside Indian School today and tomorrow, so she wanted to be here. Unfortunately, as we all know, time tends to get away from us and we have to schedule as best we can.

So the line office is responsible for the educational services, technical support and oversight for education programs that are funded by the federal government, and those are for Native Americans here in Oklahoma or the Oklahoma area. Our jurisdictional area actually encompasses three states: Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas. So within those states, in addition to the 39 Oklahoma tribes, we have three additional tribes that we provide services for.

So one point I'd like to make is that under the current operation of the Bureau of Indian Education, we all know there's been a hiring freeze, and that freeze has limited staff any time the line offices experience a retirement or a turnover, there's a freeze on hiring, and it turns out there's just two in the education line office as of now, where there was at one time six.

And the point being is that there's a lot of responsibility that is expected under the mission of the Bureau of Indian Education, and the fact that the Oklahoma Education Line Office not only provides services to six Bureau-funded schools, one being Riverside Indian School, an off-reservation boarding school, and then they have five Public Law 100-297 tribally controlled grant schools, those being the Chickasaw Nation's operation of the Chickasaw Children's Village, Eufaula Dormitory operated by the Muscogee Creek Nation, Jones Academy by the Choctaw Nation, the Kickapoo Nation School administered by the school board of the Kickapoo Nation in Kansas, and Sequoia High School operated by the Cherokee Nation here in Oklahoma.

But in addition to administering that oversight for the schools, the line office is responsible for the administration of numerous Public Law 93-638 contracts, grants and contracts. We administer in excess of 148 grants and contracts. As you know, or as some of you may or may not know, the line officer is the approving official for the education grants and contracts at each of the regional offices of the BIA. So any grant, any contract that goes out and goes through there, we're statutorily responsible for monitoring, providing oversight and providing technical assistance, and at the request of the BIA, to go out and help negotiate during those contracting periods.

In addition to that, there's responsibilities of A-133 audits that we have to go out and we have to monitor and make sure that compliance is there. And that's a massive amount of responsibility that is handed down, especially under the current organizational structure where you have limited staff that is responsible for providing all of those statutory requirements.

Like I mentioned, we provide technical assistance to 148 grants and contracts, in addition to the schools. The tribal contractor students affected is upwards of 68,000; the total public school students affected exceeds 11,000; and the total students affected in the Oklahoma Education Line Office, directly affected is 80,000. Oklahoma and its population and this jurisdictional area, actually the tribal population beneficiaries, exceed a half million people.

Other areas of specialization that the Oklahoma City and some of the other line offices actually provide, I know that Oklahoma has been unique in its operation because we provide direct support, direct contract services to those tribes that have either retro-ceded their contract if their contracts have been re-assumed for any reason, or for those tribal contractors that don't care to contract, we still by statute have to provide services for those educational programs. So we provide what we call direct services to higher education, adult education, Johnson-O'Malley, infant and toddler, and so on.

There's a massive amount of work that goes on and the tribes have actually expressed the concern that the Bureau of Indian Education is streamlining activities at one point and I don't know what the status is to date but at one point the plan was to move the Oklahoma City Education Line Office, or just to cease operations, and that would either be absorbed by the administrative deputy director in Minnesota, and all the direct services, all the contracts, all the schools, everything would have to be administered from Minnesota.

At that point, the tribes and the schools, the public schools, the tribal constituency, they expressed a lot of concern and a lot of support behind the education line office for at least having some type of in-office presence so that they could take care of the most highly populated Indian population for those services that are to be rendered, and a lot of them statutorily.

Another example of a requirement is an environmental management system which, in accordance with the recent consent agreement and final order, settlement agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Indian Affairs, including the BIE, is accountable for compliance and sustained operation of

an effective environmental management system. Now, those are statutorily provided for. The responsibilities for administering that, the line office is responsible for ensuring compliance.

One other unique area of specialization in Oklahoma is 25 CFR 122.1(b), the Osage Tribe, by act of Congress of October 27, 1972, provides \$1 million each year, together with other funds which revert to the Osage Tribe, and they may be advanced, expended or invested or reinvested for the purpose of financing education. But they provide scholarships in addition to their higher education, but by statute the Indian Affairs is responsible for administering that, and that's just another point of why an office presence is really uniquely required in Oklahoma.

I know that for the past year we haven't really had any detailed information about just what the streamlining plan may or may not be, but it's certainly a year of wondering. We have a lot of the tribes, a lot of the programs that are always calling and asking us to respond to that and calling us to visit with them and to respond what's the face of BIE going to look like. And without having any detail or any proposed plan of knowing what the organization or structure is going to look like, we can't respond to them, and it's a little disheartening when the people that you're representing ask you questions, how's it going to be represented, and we can't provide the answer to that.

We feel that it would be more beneficial if under the streamlining plan that we were afforded a place at the table to provide some coherent input. I think you're going to get a better response, a better product on what the actual needs are, on how to operate, on how to employ a new organizational structure. I think it's virtually impossible for someone not in the area or not from Oklahoma to try to devise a strategic plan that doesn't include input from the tribes and the bureau who is operating those programs, Indian Affairs, the personnel that's actually administering those programs.

Afforded that opportunity, they would have better buy-in, they would see that they have ownership in that program, and I think you'd see some new enthusiasm as far as administering or as far as Indian education is concerned, but lack of providing the collaboration, the cooperation and the consultation, as was mentioned this morning by Mr. Rodgers and I was glad, Joyce, that you mentioned the cooperation that was required in order to marry all these programs together so that we could get an outcome that is productive but I think if we included the stakeholders of this particular area, you're going to come out with a product that they indeed buy into, and they indeed see the importance of administering.

So that's mainly the message that I wanted to express today was the concern about not knowing what the design or the organizational structure of the BIE is going to be, and perhaps encouraging the streamlining plan and I don't know who the committee is, but it was funny because one time I asked and they said they were going to move the office to Minnesota or they were going to close the office down, and I immediately asked them: Why are you going to do that, why not leave an office in Oklahoma? And the only feedback they could give me was that, well, they wanted a direct flight to Washington, D.C. I mean, that's ridiculous as far as we've been known to have airports here in Oklahoma, I mean, for those that would get out and come visit us.

But that's not anything that we would feel comfortable with conveying to our constituency when they ask that question. So if we could have some good positive, meaningful input at the table as far as the design or the structure of the BIE is concerned, we would certainly appreciate that. And I know that the tribes have expressed that desire, I know that the Cherokee Nation has submitted a letter from the chief, and I know that the Pawnee Nation has submitted a resolution, I know that the Choctaw Nation at one of the consultations actually expressed the same, and actually, all the tribes in Oklahoma are of that same mind.

So we would hope that we would have a place at the table to do the planning for the design of the new BIE, and if you could carry that message forward for us, we would definitely appreciate it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Nuttle. We appreciate that input, and it affects so many students, as well. And as you mentioned, it definitely has some weight to it when we can get our tribal leaders to get behind the communication process that we have, the government-to-government relationship, which brings us to our tribal leaders, and this is the moment when the tribal leaders are going to be able to present their comments to the consultation. And from the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, we would like to recognize and start off first with Governor Edwina Butler-Wolfe.

GOVERNOR BUTLER-WOLFE: Thank you. Good afternoon, everybody. I just have a few things to say about my experience with Indian education, which started back in 1991 at an independent school just northeast of Shawnee.

First whenever I was in there, I was the bilingual assistant for a 5th grade class which dealt with a lot of Native American kids and other kids that spoke as English as their second language. But I stayed in that position for two years, and then our Title VII person resigned and I put in for that position, and then I was in Title VII ever since. I stayed at this independent school for 15 years, started in '91 and ended in 2006, where I resigned and went to work for my tribal government at that time.

But seeing our kids during those 15 years, seen a lot of struggling with a lot of teachers, people in the community. The school was probably about 45 percent Native American kids, and it was a little community school, and when you're in school and in the school system, you wear many, many hats. That's what happened to me as being there. You're the kids' teacher, you're the kids' counselor, you know, they just depend on you.

And I really praise all the ones that are in there today because they're still in there, like Star Yellowfish, she was the big person that I called upon, and Jacob, during my years in the Indian ed program. So I'm glad to see them still in there and doing quite well, and these are high profile educators in my books, they're there. Where I didn't ever leave the Indian education because as my role as governor of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe it's just added more to what I'm having to deal with within education and higher ed.

But in some of the deals that I encountered, and there was a lot of the funding. The funding in the Title VII program where it goes to the schools, it's like it's no control over where that money goes. There's got to be more tightness, and it's for the kids, you've got to hear what the kids' needs are. I know that the Sac and Fox Nation was our tribe that we went to for Johnson-O'Malley, so I worked with the Sac and Fox Nation in trying to get supplies, field trips and stuff for our kids.

But as of today, when I left that school, they never replaced what I did in that school, and I see that a lot of our kids now today are struggling because there is nobody in that school. And I have talked to the superintendent of the school system there and I advised him that that's what these kids need, because in 2011 when I worked at the school before I became the governor, I implemented an after-school program for that same area out there, and it's still going successfully and we average about 30 to 35 kids a day which is all Native American kids.

And I utilize the two universities in the Shawnee area, the Oklahoma Baptist University and the St. Gregory's, for my tutors out there, and these are college students that are going into education, some are nursing, and it's just a little stipend for them to earn while they're going to college.

But I think that a lot of the tribes need to pull together. I know Sac and Fox, we're very fortunate that they kind of went jointly with us in some funding for our after-school program because we do tutor Sac and Fox and Seminoles, we've got a whole variety of Indian children out there.

But the sad part about it is that the school that's in that area, the same school that I worked at for 15 years, they do offer an after-school program for 3rd through 8th graders, mine is open from Kindergarten through 8th grade, but the kids that can stay after school choose not to because they feel like they're not getting helped in the public school. So they're coming out to our program, which is good, but I've just got one little building, one room for my kids, and since then I do have a double-wide trailer there that I utilize for all the smaller kids.

But just to see the kids, they're excelling in their academics, and they're really, really good of wanting to go to school. Like I said, they're excelling and they're wanting to come to the after-school and we provide snacks and stuff for them, and the bus. The school is good about bringing the kids to the center, they have their own bus coming because we've got like 30 kids that get off at one route, and so they do have their own transportation over, but the parents have to pick them up.

I just feel like that since when I left the school that it just didn't provide for these kids. They didn't have someone that they could go to because some of the kids, they would come up to me and they would say this is what my teacher said. When they'd get a group and I just can't stand this phrase, I just go off on people whenever a group of our kids, our Native American kids were outside, some of our teachers would say: What are you having, a powwow? And it really offended them and they really felt bad, and so they would come and tell me, so whenever the next planning time for this teacher, I would go and talk to them about it.

And a lot of these teachers don't understand, they don't understand our Native American kids, just little remarks and stuff that they say, it really offends them a lot. And I think we need to look at our teaching, our teachers in the school, of trying to get more Native American teachers in there, even principals, superintendents. Like I said, it's a small school and it's a community-wide school. But since I left, there's new people that comes in and I really don't know too many of them.

But I just feel like that the funding, if we could just look at the funding to see to make sure that this is going towards the areas that it's supposed to go to, and not tie it in with other funding and programs, because Title VII is, to me and I wish we had it whenever I was in high school because I wish I had someone there to push me because I probably wouldn't be where I'm at today because I didn't have someone to push me to make me go to college, which I had the opportunity to go to college on an athletic scholarship, but just because of my grades I didn't make it. But if I had that opportunity at that time until later in life when I did go back.

But the kids, they really need that counseling, they need that Native American person in that school system to rely on somebody that's going to understand them, because I'm sure that a lot of these other schools, they have good programs and I hear nothing but good that when they do have a Native American person in there that's running it, you're going to have a good program. We just need to take care of our kids.

As governor of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe now, I see what needs to be done, and I wish that every tribal leader would take that initiative to go forward and let's all stick together and do something. And just like Dr. Sly said this morning about the Impact Aid monies, you know, and the state is going to come after, I see it, I see it as the governor of the tribe, they're slowly taking away from the tribes, and without us standing up and fighting back, we're going to lose if we don't fight back.

And the same thing we see with our Indian education program, if we don't fight for these kids, there's nobody there to fight for them, because they're just going to be just sitting, you know, we're going to have to take care of them. Some of our tribal people in my tribe, they don't have an education. These are the same people that come forward and need help month by month. There's no end to it because they wasn't taught and they wasn't educated to fend for themselves.

And these are our future, our kids are our future, and I don't want to see them do that, to have to depend on the tribe to do this and this. They need to get out and get an education so they can fend for themselves out there.

What we're doing in our tribe is that as me being an educated person to provide for our people, I'm in the process of opening up another after-school program on our campus, on this Shawnee campus, and we've got daycare, which we have after-school program in our daycare. We're opening up another daycare center in the Little Axe area.

Our higher education department, they're putting our kids through school. With what little lack of funding that we have in the tribe, we take care of the surrounding schools. Just this past week we donated about \$1,500 for the school system to be supplied with archery supplies. So we try to take care of kids in our schools and plus take care of our tribal people. So it's a big hand in the tribes.

A lot of people say tribes don't do enough, but the tribes do what they're capable of doing. You know, we all have one another and we try to help the schools what's come up in our own kids. They're always in camps, their families need help in sending them to camps, and this is what the kids like to do, this is what's keeping them in school is the sports, basketball. Because without basketball, I probably wouldn't have went to school because that's what kept me going through high school, to be able to play and making that eligibility list, not staying off of it, but it wasn't enough to get into a university, but I just got by it. If I'd had that push, then maybe I probably would be somewhere else, you know.

But I can't let these kids end up, the opportunity is there, they should be able to take it and run with it. So I'm asking Joyce and William to think about it. I know you're hearing what we're saying, but these are our kids, and Oklahoma has like, I think, 400 Title VII programs, and voicing our opinions out, and I wish there was more tribal leaders here to voice.

As being a tribal leader and being in the education field and working in the school system, really we've got to do more. The funding, we need more money for these public schools, we need a lot more individuals. So I hope that you take in consideration. Like I said, I've been out of the education field for eight years and trying to absorb everything because coming in a role of governor you've got everything, you've got health care, you've got people always clawing at you, so just trying to keep up with education. And I know that we have good people here in Oklahoma, that's where their heart is and that's where my heart is, is with the kids, our young kids.

I wanted to thank Jacob for selecting me to be on the South Central Comprehensive Center Indian Education Regional Advisory Committee. And we were in a meeting yesterday, so it was kind of like overwhelming about everything that was coming at you, and trying to, like I say, absorb.

What I wanted to say today is just to tell you what I experienced in the school system some years ago, and I feel like that it's still there, it's got to be something that we need to really look at. And I thank you for taking your time to come. As I heard that you were from D.C., I've been up there twice to D.C., and I thought: I remember that plane ride. But it's an honor to be here. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Governor, we appreciate your thoughts and your comments, and that's what makes it real is hearing the stories of what happen with our tribal people right there where you are every day, so we appreciate that.

Next on our agenda we have, looks like, Chief Thurman, I think you're next. From the Sac and Fox Tribe, we'd like to welcome Chief George Thurman.

CHIEF THURMAN: Thank you. Good afternoon.

I'm going to share something that was prepared for me before I talk from my own heart. I want to share this with you. We all agree that we want high-performing, tribally controlled schools. Our role in this process is to try to help as many tribal members to attend college and get a degree so that more Native Americans are able to be in a position as leaders in the educational system. Our common goal is to have tribally controlled schools, and in order to do this, we have to have educated professionals, so tribal sovereignty and self-determination is the pathway to create achieving, tribally controlled schools.

And I want to comment, like Mr. Nuttle said this morning, the Riverside Indian School, here recently there was the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, it was here just recently in the last couple of months, and Riverside sent some students down there and they prepared some essays, and the comment I got from our education department was that they were an excellent example of Native students who have strong cultural awareness and self-determination.

I mentioned a little bit earlier, tribal sovereignty and self-determination, actually, self-governance. I was at a conference in Denver, Colorado at one time, I think it was the NCAI, and a tribal elder got up on the stage and he looked out at the crowd and he pointed at everyone, and he said, I want to address all the self-governance tribes out there in the audience, I want to challenge you, quit proclaiming it and start practicing it. And that's what we need to do in education, we need to quit proclaiming of trying to help our students and actually do it, actually practice it.

An example is Shawnee High School in my hometown of the southern area of our former jurisdiction. There's well over a thousand students, well over a thousand in that school system, and one-third of them are Native American. I can't tell you how many tribes, I think there's over 30-some-odd tribes, if I recall right, that's represented. And right now State Senator Ron Sharp was a former teacher there, and

he recently visited with me and he was talking about the dropout rate at Shawnee High School, and he was talking with the mayor of Shawnee and myself and what can we do to help alleviate that, try to keep these students in school.

And I think we've hit upon one way. There's been other languages taught in that school there, Cherokee, Chickasaw, I believe, or Creek, and then Jacob Manatowa-Bailey, our language person there at the tribe, we now have Sac and Fox introduced and it's being taught. It started last year at the high school, it started last year with one class and there was such a demand for it, and even our own tribal members that are students there couldn't get into the class, so this year they've gone to two hours of class time. And it's an elective but they can count it as a foreign language, I do not agree with that, but that's what they consider it. And another school, Stroud Public Schools, is also wanting the language taught there and we're working on that also. So this is very important on the language portion of it.

And another thing that Dwight, and I believe the Oklahoma Advisory Council may be working on this, which we have Mary McCormick, tribal member on there, and we met with Governor Fallon last fall, last year sometime, first tribal leaders meeting with her, and I told her right then and there that there needs to be introduced as a law to have I don't know what to call it Indian culture, Indian history taught in the public school systems in Oklahoma. That's where a lot of our tribal youth go to school at public schools. And she agreed, she told her liaison to write that down.

I said, Your future governors, your future legislators, your future teachers, all your future leaders need to be taught that in the school system, so that whenever they enter into the field of politics or whatever field they go into, they'll have a better understanding of how to deal with tribal governments. They need to learn about our governments, our constitution, our history, and that's asking an awful lot with 39 different tribal nations to pick from. I don't know how that's going to be done, but Dwight and them have started the process, and I want to give credit to him spearheading this to get this introduced.

One of our tribal members is a state representative, and also Senator Sharp told me: Well, you write the law and I'll introduce it. And I kind of backed up and said, I thought that's what you were supposed to do. But they're working on it. I believe something has been introduced here recently going in that direction.

So I'd like to give an invitation to the Oklahoma Advisory Council and any of the tribal representatives here to contact, I'm the chairman right now of United Indian Nations Oklahoma-Kansas-Texas. That's all

the tribes in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas. If we can get everyone pulling together, uniting, and it's starting to, we'll have 47 tribes, and that will be one of the biggest regional organizations in the United States, bigger than UCIT and some of the others, the Great Plains Leadership.

So you can have a voice through UNIOKT, and we'll be having a meeting here shortly, sometime in May, if we get you on the agenda to address any concerns that you have. Let's see, Dr. Mann and some of them have been to one of the meetings that was hosted by the Absentee Shawnees to address about the Native American colleges here in Oklahoma, and this is another cause that the tribes can unite together and work on.

So I heard at one time, and I keep hearing this all day today, the language portion of it. I've heard it stated before that if a tribe loses their land, their water or language, they will cease to exist. And think about it, that's true. If you don't have a land base, and there are a lot of tribes in the United States that don't have that right now and they're barely hanging on, water is a big, big issue here in Oklahoma, and then language. If you lose any one of those, you'll cease to exist.

Well, Sac and Fox Nation, we try to buy up any land that we can that's in our former jurisdiction, and then the water, we will always be fighting for our water rights, and then the language, we're keeping it alive right now through our language department.

So I want to end within that. Well, one other thing I'd like to point out is JOM has been mentioned several times today. It seems like whenever the president prepares the budget, it always gets cut, but it always stays alive, it keeps coming in. Like I stated before we cover, I'm not sure, probably 13 different schools in our jurisdictional area, and we're still operating of what is it, 1994, the last count, that amount of money and it's dwindled. I mean, it's still the same amount of money that we get but the population of the students that we're serving has tripled or even more than that, so that leaves less and less money for the students to be able to utilize to help them.

And I like what Edwina said, she's approached me, Absentee Shawnees with the Sac and Fox, we'd like to partner, help support financially a lot of the students out there for the tutoring at Horseshoe Bend, they are from our tribe. And we have helped them financially, but we've talked about partnering to expand that tutoring after school from that area northeast of Shawnee into the city of Shawnee so that we can help more of the students that's in those grade schools and all the way through high school to help tutor those people.

And I'd like to mention, she might not like it, but Edwina, when she was working there at North Rock Creek, my two children were going to school there. And one of them, Shawn, he just left back yesterday for Seattle, he was a student at OU and his wife, he met his wife here. She went on to medical school, she is now a doctor and she is doing her internship in Seattle; he's got his LPN and he's going on for his RN. But whenever he was in grade school, I used to tell him and his sister that one of them is going to be a lawyer and one of them is going to be a doctor and whenever they got old enough they were going to take care of me that's slowly getting there.

So I just want to go back to Edwina played a big influence in helping these kids, especially those at the school there, North Rock Creek. Probably a third of the population is Native American, and there's other grade schools in the Shawnee area that are even a higher percentage than that.

So everyone in this room, I want to thank everyone in this room because you're here today because you see the need and it's coming from your heart. You don't have to be here but you are here because you have a concern for the Native students. So I want you to take that back to Washington from this consultation here. You can see how many people are here and how many more could be here if they possibly could, the concern here in Oklahoma for our students and our Native people. And I'm not just talking students, we're talking adults also that are going to school to try to get their degrees to come back to help the tribes in their respective areas.

So with that, I thank you for allowing me to speak here a little bit today. And I want to thank Quinton Roman Nose. I ran into him in Washington, D.C. up on the Hill a couple of weeks ago. You know how Indians are, we didn't know each other, we were up there and we walked, seeing each other in the hallway at one of the buildings up there. Quinton starts hollering at me and come over and started talking to me, and said, Hey, I'd like to invite you down to Norman in a couple of weeks. And so that's how that began and that's one of the reasons that I'm here today through his invitation. I was here before but I didn't get to attend the whole day. I'm glad I'm here today, and once again, I want to thank everyone for coming today. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Chief Thurman, appreciate your comments.

And that reminds me, too, to let everybody know that you may know somebody, as well, in Indian education or in your tribal leadership that could not make it here today and they can participate. Of course, we've got the folks on the webcast and we'll hopefully hear from a few of them in just a little bit, but they have an opportunity to provide a written comment by going online at www.edtribalconsultations.org. So anyone in attendance can do that, you have a card, a comment card in your packet, as well, when you registered, you can turn that in as well, and we'll have that open here in just a moment for those who have signed up to speak publicly. That will be open for the next 30 days at that website for you to provide your comments for the tribal consultation.

And it looks like we do have from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, next up will be Governor Eddie Hamilton.

GOVERNOR HAMILTON: Thank you. I apologize for my tardiness this afternoon.

I'd like to say good afternoon, Ms. Silverthorne, Mr. Mendoza, and other honored guests, tribal leaders, Indian educators, and school representatives. I'd like to thank Secretary Duncan for coming to Oklahoma to listen to our concerns about Indian people, regarding Indian education issues.

My name is Eddie Hamilton, governor of Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. I grew up in western Oklahoma in a small town of Thomas, Oklahoma, graduated there, and then went on to pursue my education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University where we currently have our tribal college. I'd like to acknowledge Mr. Alden Whiteman, part of the staff there at the tribal college. It's still in somewhat of the developmental stages, getting it certified.

Our tribe is composed of 12,400-plus members and which most reside in northwest Oklahoma in a ten-county area. Most of our students attend public schools located in the area and a few attend BIE schools out of the area. Every year we hold a graduation banquet for high school and college graduates. Although our numbers have increased in past years, we have a long ways to go to get our education rates up to national standards.

We are pleased to be working with the Oklahoma State Education Department, some local superintendents, and the Chickasaw Nation as a participant in the groundbreaking program called STEPP, State Tribal Education Partnership Program. More tribes need to be more involved in the

policymaking process which affects the education of Indian students through the various title programs that go to the public schools.

I want to call your attention to the lack of involvement of our Indian parents in some local public schools. There have been reports of possible abuses in the Title VII Indian education programs, and there have been reports some districts have bypassed local parents and only work with a few selected parents to get their signatures. This is a delicate situation, because if we complain too much, the school can decide not to apply for the funds.

I know there are still many issues to mention, but with discretion to the other presenters, I'd like to invite the U.S. Department of Education to come visit our Cheyenne and Arapaho Department of Education and talk with our staff and meet our tribal members and parents. This visit would include also meeting with our CA-47 television staff, only one of two public television stations for Native Americans in the country.

I'm honored to have been part of this panel today, and look forward to hearing more conversations about how we can improve the lives of our kids to get the better education they deserve and should be a part of. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Governor Hamilton. We appreciate those comments.

And did we have any other tribal leaders that have made it into the room that did not get recognized? That brings us to our final tribal leader here this afternoon for this portion of our consultation. From the Wichita Tribe, would you please welcome to the microphone President Terry Parton.

PRESIDENT PARTON: Terry Parton. (Native language spoken.) My name is Terry Parton, I'm Wichita, and hello to you all today.

First of all, I just want to thank Mr. Pickering and Jacob Tsothigh for their participation in the language fair last week. I've participated in that event for several years and we had several children that participated this year in different categories and it's really, and it's really an awesome event to see all of the different languages that our kids get to speak and perform. And our kids were really happy with the trophies and being able to get up there for the first time and it gave them a good feeling.

I have been a tribal leader for two years. I was formerly secretary for the Wichita Tribe, and there's been a lot of things that have gone on. We've just implemented an after school program, we're going to do a youth Summer Smart program this summer where we're implementing languages. That's one of my big things is our language. I taught a language class for several years. I've just recently taught one in preparation for the Indian American Language Fair.

I want to also thank you, Mr. Pickering, and the Oklahoma Advisory Council for the website that you're putting up and being able to tell our story, and inviting the tribes to be able to tell their history, because a lot of times things get put out there, especially for the bigger tribes and some of the smaller tribes don't get recognized. I know you're Caddo, I'm Wichita, some of the tribes on the western side of the state don't get as recognized as some of the bigger tribes, and so I want to just tell you thank you for that.

I also want to acknowledge Mr. Fields and his comments about language, and I can tell you're really passionate about that, and I just want to thank you.

A couple of things that I have that I'd like for you to take back to Washington, D.C., and one is JOM funding. And I think I want to hit on Edwina's comments about needing a presence, and Indian presence. We have in our Anadarko public schools, we have an Indian education program, they have tutors and stuff like that, but our tribe also has a JOM program that does a smaller school and we are able to have a tutor but we don't have somebody there all the time, and that's the school where I went and when I was young there was a presence there, and sometimes that's the only if you're from another tribe and you're not around your tribe all the time, sometimes that's the only presence that you have that connects you with your Indian people, and so funding is really important for that program.

Title VII, I would just encourage you to make sure that sequestration doesn't ever affect that. Language funding, a lot of times for the smaller tribes it's hard to apply for the ANA grants and stuff like that because we don't have the speakers. We have one fluent speaker and we have a couple that can speak some, but it's hard to even teach it because we don't have funding. Whenever I taught the class we did it on Sundays because that was the only time that I had available to be able to donate that time.

And the final thing is just access to the scholarships for Native American kids. I know sometimes some of the bigger tribes are able to fund education and some of the smaller tribes don't have casinos. Luckily

we're beginning to be able to fund more for education but it just makes it really hard when you don't have those resources.

And with that, I would just like to acknowledge one of our tribal members well, not just one Veronica Booth, she works with the Cheyenne-Arapaho. I was very encouraged a while ago about her talking about the STEPP program and it makes me feel good that she's being able to work with this program, and I just thank you employing. Maybe one day she'll come and work for us. But she was really encouraging.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT PARTON: And I just want to introduce David Sullivan from Anadarko Indian Education Program. He's very helpful to our young kids, his program is. My son went to school there and that's one of the few things that he would talk to me about is the time he spent in the Indian education program. So I just want to thank you.

So those are the things, the JOM, Title VII funding, language funding, and access to scholarships. And thank you all for being here, especially the tribal leaders that are here, and I appreciate all of your comments. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, President Parton. We appreciate you and Governor Hamilton and Chief Thurman and Governor Butler. It is important for our tribal leaders to be here. And again, if you do know that they wanted to be here and couldn't make it, remind them that they can put their comments in and on the website, and we'll give that website again here in just a moment.

We do have a lot of issues that are going on in the 21st Century for our Indian education students, and we are truly grateful for the service and the time that everybody spent here today, and now it's time to hear from you, so we're going to go to our public comment section of the agenda. I will call those names from our sign-in sheet, and when I call your name this afternoon, if you'll make your way up to one of the other microphones here.

We have allotted five minutes for each person, and I will give you a time warning with my little bell here. It's not the gong, so don't worry, we're not gonging you, it's not Jeopardy either where you have to

answer in a question. But at two minutes we'll have the first one and then with a minute left we'll give you another one, just to let you know that you can wrap up your comments so we can make it through everybody here. And if we have anybody online, now is the time to raise your electronic hand. Be sure and get your contact information, who you are and who you represent online as well so that they will know who we can call on to be on the webcast live here at the center.

So with that said, we'll ask the speakers to introduce themselves for our recorder. Remember we are recording the process and the consultation here this afternoon, and that you speak clearly into the microphone so that our webcast participants can hear you as well.

All right. Let's begin to call our names, and first up, he put himself second but since there was nobody in the first slot, that means he's welcome to the microphone Dr. Jerry Bread.

(Applause.)

DR. BREAD: You'll have to excuse my limping. I just got through working out with a bunch of basketball boys trying to prove my age, and it doesn't work that way.

I told my students this morning in class about what we were doing here today, so let me start by saying my name is Jerry Bread. I'm a member of the Kiowa tribe of Oklahoma. Rather than preaching to you, I'm going to read a statement for you, one of the first times, probably.

I'm going to make this brief but powerful in terms of vision. My name is Jerry Bread. I'm a professional educator with expertise in the areas of Indian education and Indian studies, K through death. I'm a member of the Kiowa tribe of Oklahoma, a strong family attachment in affiliation with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. I've been in the education business for over 40 years and currently make my professional home here at the University of Oklahoma Native American Studies Program in the College of Arts and Sciences. I've taught at the public schools in university levels, administered tribal education programs, and been active in Indian education policy program development for the past 30 years.

There is a need to identify, establish and promote means of "educating" all Oklahomans, especially our public school teachers, about contemporary American Indian society. Ideally our state's colleges and universities are the best places for providing this education with their programs of Indian studies. These programs are inclusive of the public school paradigm in terms of American Indian content, pedagogy, curriculum development and teacher training when available for structuring accordingly.

Indian parents, tribal delegates, communities, professionals should consider and advocate for utilization of these programs as formal training environments for current and prospective teachers at all levels of public schools in Oklahoma. Many of these Indian studies programs are led by Indian education related professionals, highly trained in teaching methods, curriculum design, testing and writing theory, and community involvement.

I'd like to offer the idea of an Oklahoma American Indian Studies Task Force initiative which should include select public school officials, tribal governments, public school teachers and Indian studies professionals to come together for the purpose of enhancing and formalizing and integrating a current Indian studies programs in relation to the training of public and tribal school teachers, counselors, administrators, auxiliary people in the area of Indian education for the State of Oklahoma.

I have attached a copy of this statement I read to you, the 2012 NCAI resolution calling for the "Support for the Departmentalizing NAS universities nationwide to educate the public about Indian Country" for your reading and support for the aforementioned position I communicated. I'm going to give you a little footnote. When we first put together this resolution it was specifically Oklahoma colleges were submitted to our NCAI representative to the NCAI review committee, they suggested that we make it a nationwide policy or resolution. That's what we did when we got the resolution approved back in 2012.

Indian studies programs are available. There needs today, more than ever before, to be an interdisciplinary from education, to health, to tribal government, to policy, to law, to research and history. Many of our students who have graduated, 150 this past 15 years, have gone back to work for Indian tribes as far as these areas I mentioned. They are the salvation to tribal sovereignty when it comes to the education that they receive. They learn how to spell sovereignty and also how to apply it, but more importantly, they learn how to sustain it when it comes to Indian education.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Dr. Bread. Dr. Bread, would it be possible to get a copy of the resolution so that we can include it with our documentation? Thank you very much.

Next up we have Sheril Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON: Good afternoon. My name is Sheril Thompson. I am the Indian ed coordinator for Mid-Del Public Schools in Midwest City, Oklahoma.

My question is for Joyce. Back in the fall at OIE and NIEA, we talked about restructuring the 506 form, and would like to have an update on that.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Sorry. I don't mean to be hesitating on this, I was all focused for listening. The 506 form has been revised. We had some questions on it when we brought it around for conversations. The input that we received at the NIEA last year was very good, and now we're trying to sell it back at home in D.C., and as we continue, we hope to roll it out with next year's applications.

Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Next on our sign-in sheet, Dr. Gloria Sly.

DR. SLY: Good afternoon again. I'm here again on behalf of EDNA. We would like to see funding. The tribal ed departments have been authorized since the Self-Determination Act but there's never been any funding provided for them, and so we would like to see some funding funneled through for our tribal ed departments.

The other thing that we'd like to talk about is in order to prove the improved academics and programs for our students, would like to see some changes in the wording for the FERPA Act or for the FERPA forms, because I know that with the regulations if they would just include tribes as one of the entities who can see the FERPA forms without parental authorization, then we could design programs based on that, because right now we kind of take a shotgun approach, we don't know where the students are missing out. We can look at our state report cards and talk about the schools, but where are our students, which one of our younger ones are needing those. And so instead of shooting a shotgun at their needs, let's target it and get a better shell, and FERPA would help us do that.

Tribal eds conduct summer programs, miniature summer schools, after schools, Saturday academies, all of these things, but we need better feedback as of how we can also assist our students. And we need control over the dollars that are flowing into these schools, we have our tribal dollars but there are other dollars that we could utilize to impact the students a little more.

Even like with JOM, they called a couple of years ago and said, Gloria, what is your JOM doing for the academic achievement of your child? We have 24,000 students in JOM program in our 14-county area. Well, we can't tell you data because we don't know academically how it improves their achievement but we can tell you how many participate in our programs and what kinds they went through. So are the kinds of things that if we had data on the student, then we could do that.

So those are just two of the issues, the funding and then our training for our tribal eds. As we speak for our tribes, again, and our programs and we administer the higher ed and stuff, so we just need to be able to really support our tribal ed departments and give them the tools that they need to do a good job.

Thank you. I'm sorry. Did I say I'm Gloria Sly, Cherokee Nation education liaison, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Dr. Sly. I'm sure our recorder can work that out for us, should be no problem.

Which, as a matter of fact, we'd like to thank Peggy Brown for being here today. She is our official recorder of today's proceedings our consultation, and we do appreciate her being here with us today. Let's give her a round of applause.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Next on my list I have Ms. Lucyann Harjo, please.

MS. HARJO: Good afternoon. My name is Lucyann Harjo. I'm Navajo, originally from Arizona. I've been a resident of Oklahoma for 23 years. (Native language spoken). I am from the Red Streak Running into the Water Clan, born from the Towering House People. My paternal grandpa is from the Coyote Pass People, and my maternal grandfather is from the Salt Clan People.

I am the coordinator of Indian education for Norman Public Schools, as well as a representative on the Oklahoma Advisory Council for Indian Education, representing the Oklahoma Council on Indian Education. I am also advisory council member on different councils addressing American Indian issues.

And some of the things I want to talk with you about today are some concerns that others have expressed, not only in our program but directors, Indian educators statewide, and this largely affects our

program, as well, in Norman. We have about 26 schools and there are over 15,000 students in our school district, with about 2,100 American Indian students. Our student population represents about 78 tribal nations, and we serve about 1,500 students every year through our Title VII funds and through our Johnson-O'Malley funds.

One of the big concerns that we have is the representation, the advocacy of our Indian education programs in the metropolitan areas, programs outside of tribal boundaries, not receiving any of the, I guess it's the extra funding and support from tribes. Most of our students live outside of their tribal boundaries, and so they heavily rely on services we provide for them. And I guess one of the main concerns is, as you look at Title VII programs nationwide, we hope that you consider that a lot of our American Indian families live in metropolitan areas, and according to the last census data, Oklahoma has three cities that have a large American Indian population: Tulsa is one, Norman is another, and Oklahoma City is another. We hope that you consider, when looking at Title VII programs, that you look at a lot of the urban students and families around the country.

I have all my notes on my iPad. Sorry.

The other major concern I'm running up against is the how do I say this delicately? about one-third of our students in our district are unidentifiably native, and almost every concern that we addressed in our meeting yesterday, OUSC-3 advisory council between New Mexico and Oklahoma, this was a topic, again, about serving students who are American Indian, just may not look it. I hope that as Indian people we get over mistreating our Indian students and families that don't look American Indian, and that we include them and bring them to the table as much as we feel like we need to be there as Indian people.

About, like I said, one-third of our population unidentifiable, but the question I always pose to myself is: who am I to decide whether or not a child is American Indian or not? Our tribes decide that, and we serve them as they come into our school district. I believe in our district that the support of our district administration really shines in the work of our program, and how we are able to serve our students in a wide range of services, opportunities, and without their support we wouldn't be able to do that.

I think that the other major concern I have is that as we work and serve our American Indian children and families, the mindset of what we instill in our children and what they can achieve, we too, as adults,

need to change that and not put limits on our children, and every type of service we provide from our tribes to programs to our schools in our innovative programs.

And last well, I think I've included that, but there's one more point. How many seconds have I got? You said one minute. Right? Gosh, I just missed it, but if I remember, I'll email it to you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Ms. Harjo. Yes, that's true, anybody here that did not have a chance to sign up, you can turn in your written card. You have a card that you can turn in as testimony, as well as logging on to www.edtribalconsultations.org, and you can get your thought process on paper and send that to them as well, and that will be a part of the permanent record.

Next up we have Mr. Quinton Roman Nose.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Good afternoon. Quinton Roman Nose. I'm Cheyenne from Oklahoma, and I'm representing the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly, serving as the executive director. There are some issues that I have comments on and I'll submit a formal written testimony also later on. But I just wanted to say thank you to not only representatives us here from Washington, D.C., but I wanted to publicly thank the Obama Administration and Secretary Duncan for having these consultations, and you can look at the previous administration of eight years of previous presidents, we have surpassed the number of consultations when you compare the two administrations, so not only has that been effective for the consultations, it's given people an opportunity to come forth.

And unfortunately, I wish there was more tribal leaders here today than what we have. I don't know if you mentioned this earlier, if you look to the side of the hall on the wall right here, you see all the 39 flags here. The reason I point them out is we are all members of sovereign nations. We forget that, we forget about where we came from. At one point in time, most of our tribes here, if you were to take that flag and go stake it on original ground where they were located at when they had European contact, there would hardly be anybody here in Oklahoma, there might be one flag here. For Cheyenne-Arapahos, we'd be all up and down the plains in Colorado. Our first treaty was in Colorado. But each tribe has their own history.

So we are nations. We have a government-to-government relationship. We have sovereignty in education. A lot of times Native Americans are put in a diversity concept that, yes, we are like the Hispanics and African-Americans, and so forth, but that's not true. We are in a way, but we have rights here that we need to acknowledge; we need for tribal government, for tribal educators to step up and continue to push that.

If the Department of Education will continue to have these consultations, there will be more and more people here. All the comments I've been hearing in the consultations is based on experience, especially in Title VII. We've become more or less the experts in Title VII. It's been said before, if a school doesn't want Title VII, they don't have to apply for it.

Well, I spent 16 years in Indian education in the public schools, and I know a lot about Title VII, knew something about Impact Aid, and I knew something about bringing in parents for IEPs, but I didn't know how the Title programs worked. You know, all our Indian students receive the benefits of those four things in Title programs.

You'd be surprised how many Native American students actually are counted on those lists. I know for Impact Aid, if they are living on a trust property, they receive the additional 25 percent increase. But I'm pointing that out, and what I'm getting to is that because of these consultations, there's a lot of people putting in input that we need something that gives the states and tribal education departments, tribal education agencies that, as a result of those consultations that the STEPP program is implemented.

Unfortunately, there's only four tribes in the United States that receive that, but this is going to give us an opportunity to step up to learn the inner workings of how federal funds are spent on our Native students in public schools.

Right now it's just a pilot program, but if you look at the federal funding budget, even within the Department of Education, look at Indian education compared to the budget of all the rest of the Department of Education, it's just a little bitty piece of the pie, and yet all our students are counted for having services for the title programs. And so we need to be more aware of where the money goes, we need to educate ourselves.

And lastly, I don't care how many casinos we've got, I don't care how many new plots you have, and land and so forth, the future of our nations is dependent upon the education of our Indian children. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Roman Nose.

Next on the list is Emmanuel Bezzell.

MR. BEZZELL: (Native language spoken.) My name is Emmanuel Bezzell. I am the manager of higher education for the Muscogee Creek Nation. I offer greetings to all of our guests. Thank you for being here, thank for all the tribal leaders and representatives that we have here today. It's an honor and a pleasure to be here myself.

I do have a question for Ms. Silverthorne and Mr. Mendoza, but I have a couple of statements real quick. Since I am the manager of higher education, I do tend to focus on higher education, that is my priority. So just to kind of give you a rundown real quick of what we do, we serve approximately 1,200 undergraduate students with the Muscogee Creek Nation each semester, we serve about 200 post-graduate students in master's programs, we also serve about 58 students that are in doctoral-level programs. We're very proud of the progress that we've made with all of those programs. Actually, two years ago in the doctoral level we had 39, and so it's almost doubled here within the last couple of years.

What I want to talk about, though, is specifically as the rate of tuition increase at a rate of about 5 percent annually, I know the White House has taken action to offer student debt relief, student loan forgiveness options, with the tribes we're kind of in a position to where we offer supplemental funding to our citizens to help them go to school, but once they get done with school, we typically don't have way to help them pay those bills. So the economic impact of student loan debt is affecting all of us.

A degree that cost you \$8,000 in 1980, in today's numbers, cost you upwards of \$50,000. Many students have come back to the tribe seeking help to pay the student loan debt, going all the way up to our national council level, where they've actually had to try to help some of these students out. Sometimes it's just a simple amount of maybe \$1,000 to \$2,000 to help them pay off a small debt just to get their transcript released. Some of those students just want to go further their education and they're not able to do so because of a small balance.

I would like to hear more about what the White House is doing as far as that legislation is going with student loan relief and debt forgiveness, and how it impacts us as tribal nations. I also would like to hear what the position is, it seems to me like there's standards in place that, if you work for a government entity, there are times when that debt is forgiven. Are we ever going to be at a point where the tribal governments are recognized as that same level of entity, when our citizens work for those tribal governments to be in a place to allow that debt to be forgiven also?

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Bezzell.

Mr. Mendoza.

MR. MENDOZA: Thank you, Mr. Bezzell. I think I go the gist of your questions and would be glad to, of course, review the transcripts but engage with you more fully on the expanse of your issues, and couple of quick points there.

The investment in not only trying to reduce college costs, but as well as maximize supports to students of need, namely Pell Grants, has been a priority for this administration, and we've invested tremendously in this area to get them to where they're at, and we've known that even just in the impact of tribal colleges alone, this has amount to a 52 percent increase in support to those students, in just sheer numbers alone.

And so that, coupled with the efforts that we're taking around increasing transparency around these issues in terms of what we're doing now for the College Scorecard, reducing interest rates on loans, I think are some critical areas in kind of systemically addressing some of those issues that you talked about in terms of access and equity in the area of how students are financing their education, and what they walk out of that door with. We know that we have to do more in this area and that we need Congress's help as well here.

Through programs like Title VII, whether it's targeting specific disciplines or sectors for loan forgiveness programs, or through Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Education loan for service, the new task force that's in place under the Cobell Settlement, the opportunity is here where we're looking across

HHS Indian Health Service, to begin looking at some of these key sectors of need for tribal communities and how we can get down to those issues.

This work couldn't be more opportune for the Interagency Working Group on Indian Education where we need to be carrying these conversations to those agencies that ultimately have programmatic purview of how and where our tribes are included within those equations. So from the standpoint of initiative, these issues remain a top priority for us and look forward to any specific areas that you think we need to be focusing and targeting these efforts, and I think you had some suggestions there at the end of your remarks, if I understood that correctly.

Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Mendoza.

Emmanuel, do you have rebuttal? You have one minute and ten seconds left. Are you good? Okay. Ronalda. Ronalda, I'm going to try your last name. Next up Ronalda Warito-Tome. I'm getting a little bit better at the last names.

MS. WARITO-TOME: Good morning everyone. My name is Ronalda Warito-tome, and I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to be here today. I'm from New Mexico, Albuquerque, and I'm here because of our South Central Indian Education Advisory Committee, and we met yesterday and we talked about various issues.

What I want to throw on the table today is I work for an organization called EPICS, Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs. I've met a couple of people on the panel, they all know what I'm about, but I just want to say to each and every one here in your own communities is to ask the basic question: are our children with disabilities graduating? What is the graduation rate for our children with disabilities? Because I'm pretty sure you're seeing in your communities they're not graduating, they're dropping out, and how are our tribal systems also helping our children?

There's a national statistic out there that only 30 percent of our children in special education graduate, and so we have to ask, if that's the general overall population of special ed students, what is it for our Native children? And it's probably half of that.

With policies, with funding, and with IEPs and all of these things that have been put in place to service our children with disabilities, I say to you, who are here and present as leaders, how can we make school districts more accountable for these children? We need to know how much funding is going to these school districts for children with disabilities. We need to also provide parents with supports and advocacy so that they know at least their basic rights within special education.

In New Mexico I do over 100 IEPs a year and I travel throughout the 22 tribes and also helping them learn their rights. I do workshops on special ed. And I think that's one reason why I was sent here to Oklahoma, because as I've been speaking with people, as we are all about our Indian children, I have to pose to you: what is happening to our children with disabilities? And what are the issues that our parents are facing with school districts? Because it's pretty serious when you start hearing those stories. I get parents all the time that come to me crying, because of what school districts are doing.

And I would ask Indian ed to start posing and saying and being and speaking on behalf of our children with disabilities, and going to OSEP and asking, are they graduating, what are those numbers? Because we've also gotten grouped, and that's one reason why I know that I'm here in Oklahoma because I hear the conversation so many times but I'm also saying you know what, I've been called to do this work and have a passion for it, but there's so many of these children behind me that are not getting the services. They have dreams.

I have a son currently who is 22 years old, he's 15 credit hours from graduating from the University of New Mexico and he has ADHD. If it wasn't for my advocacy and my work, he would not be graduating. But I've always mentioned to him you are 30 percent of those children with a disability that graduated from high school, but there are so many other children, especially Native children, that I see who are not getting those services, and that's one reason why I am here. Please don't forget them.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you Ms. Tome. We appreciate that very much.

All right. Looks like we've got a youthful speaker here with us this afternoon. If you haven't heard this gentleman speak at any of the conferences, you're missing out. Make sure that you make it up to Alaska coming up for the NIEA. Mr. Corey Still.

MR. STILL: I apologize. I'm a little bit taller than most of our other speakers here today. (Native language spoken.) First off, thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Corey Still, representing the National Indian Education Association Board of Directors.

First off, we have already, I think, submitted our written testimony but I want to clarify, verbally, some of our remarks, the first being the release date of the official consultation policy. Any updates that we could have on that would be greatly beneficial for a lot of the tribes and Indian organizations out here that are represented here today, and that are listening via virtual means. And then also, a little bit of clarification on the definition and the possible changing of the definition of Indian organizations. Those are the two big critical things that we were wanting to ask about.

On a personal note, I just want to, Director Silverthorne and Director Mendoza, say thank you from a student's perspective. I'm a product of Title VII. Like many people sitting behind me, and many people sitting on this panel, we're products of that fight, we're products of these titles that have pushed this through, and I know that without the support of my tribe, without the communities sitting at this panel, we wouldn't be here standing where we are today, being able to fight, being able to go for our advanced degrees, and being able to continue down that path of education equity.

We're still not there yet, and so I commend both of you for the work that you're doing in getting us to par, getting us to be able to stand on equal ground with those that have oppressed us, some may say. I thank you for allowing us to give us those tools, to give us those things that we may be able to continue that fight, not just for us but for those that are coming behind us.

Again, to the tribal leaders that are here, I want to say thank you, thank you for coming to represent your people, thank you coming to fight, because, again, the path to equity for education is one that's been long and it's going to continue to be long, and for all the work that you are doing, I just want to say (Native language spoken).

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Still.

MR. MENDOZA: Thank you, young man. Had everything in me when I was visiting with him there earlier to not feel like Shoni Schimmel and start head-butting his armpit. He said he snuck in too. I didn't believe him, but I didn't see him either.

Let me address your first point, and then Director Silverthorne will address your second. On the first point, I just want to clarify that we are not operating without a consultation policy, we do have a standing policy in place for the department on consultation. We embrace and have done our best to fulfill the president's commitment under his memorandum for greater consultation, and we value the necessity to expand and make consistent our policy with what other agencies have moved forward with since the president's commitment.

We are proceeding in compliance with our consultation plan of action released in 2010 and have communicated, within the department and beyond, the desire to release a consultation policy as our top priority. And so I can't make any guarantees to that timeline, but I have committed in other venues that this is something that I would like to get done this year, meaning this fiscal year.

And so I look forward to bringing that consultation policy to consultation, it is policy that will need to be consulted on, and one that expresses tremendous value, both within the department to provide not only greater roles of accountability, but a more degree of specificity in terms of what are policies and definitely, as we talk about budgetary implications that have a tribal impact. And so that greatest point of accountability is to our tribes, but we also know that there is a tremendous amount of stakeholders, if you will, for lack of a better word but programs within the Department of Education that affect a whole matter along the continuum of education that also need to be considered.

The conversations that happen on a regular basis around such convenings like this between state officials, federal officials and tribal officials is where we see the most opportune kinds of initiatives being built that affect the greatest number of students, and so that is something that I'm really preoccupied with now, on how our consultation policy can create those kinds of conditions, upon which we know, into the future are going to be a foundation for our success in the area of affecting the critical and urgent needs of our Indian students nationwide.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: The question about the Indian organizations, and you're right, we are proposing a small change to the definition under the professional development and discretionary demonstration programs for Title VII. The change that is proposed at this time is to expand that definition. At this time an organization, in order to apply for a Title VII demonstration or professional development program must be an education organization. We recognize that there are other organizations that are out there that have education as a primary part of what they do, but that they are

not only organizations, and we're trying to acknowledge that difference. In some of our rural communities it makes a serious difference whether anybody will be able to apply or not.

And so that will go out when we have the rulemaking document prepared. And we hope to have that out within the next month or two, and that will come out in the Federal Register notice and there will be opportunities for comment again. What we have had for comment up until now has only been from tribal leadership, has only been because of the government-to-government executive order, and so we will have it out to the rest of the general public as soon as those are published. So thank you, thank you for your interest.

MR. RODGERS: And thank you for answering those comments. And we have one other speaker here this afternoon. It will be Katherine Tallbear.

MS. TALLBEAR: Hello. My name is Kathleen Tallbear. I'm with the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribes. I did want to talk about a few things, most specifically on Title VII. The question on Title VII, I know we've made some changes, proposed changes, as far as new applications and accountability, but the question is: is how thorough is that accountability going to be? Because we still have schools that feel like that's the only money that's in there for Indian children, or they don't coordinate services as well with the other programs, and so it's kind of like we have a specific teacher still being supplanted with funds, rather than supplemented for tutoring programs, or everything is on a very minimal basis.

There isn't a lot of input, because we don't have parents speaking out or advocating for that right. Some have that ability, but they just either are intimidated by the school, don't have those working relationships, or their voice is simply not heard. They do bring it up but the school may not acknowledge their role, and so a school makes a determination to do the application as they see fit, not as the parents approve.

Even though the guidance specifically says to allow the committee, the parent committee to be in a working relationship with the development of the proposal, that's not happening.

The other thing that I see is that a lot of the old-school mentality was that we had a Title VII counselor in place, back in the '80s and '90s. We had an identifiably Native American counselor that was there to assist students and students could just go in and talk about their issues. And more and more schools, because of funding issues, are phasing that part out. We don't have active Indian counselors in the

schools. We have 14 public school districts in our Cheyenne-Arapaho service area that have a Title VII grant, and of those only five have an active Native American counselor, and some of those have been there a while, so their ability to direct students is the old-school mentality. We need some young, vibrant people in these roles.

Again, the question of certification, because one time with No Child Left Behind, Title VII made a decision that they wanted to have Title VII counselors that were certified, so they could use them as teachers. But that credentialing, if they don't have that credential, then they won't hire them, or think that they can only hire a certified teacher in that position to serve as a Native American counselor.

With the STEPP program, it's more in consortium with the Chickasaw Nation, we have education specialists, and those education specialists work in the specific school district, and they all have bachelor's degrees, but some may not be certified in teaching. But because of their role that they play in the school, working with students directly one-on-one, there has been an increase in not only the student morale, student academics, but that support, just knowing that someone is there advocating for you. And that just proves that you don't have to be a credentialed teacher to have that impact on Native students.

So what we'd like to see is like maybe something in the title to stipulate that. Because I've been to Title VII meetings, or Title VII hearings, and parents say we object to this particular tutor that's non-Native and we would like to have a Native tutor, or a Native parent working in that capacity, and a lot of times the school will balk at it and say, n, they need to be credentialed, they need to be certified.

Another thing is funding. Title VII is very minimal funding, and I know it's a supplemental program, but it seems like the more issues that there are, professional development, student issues, transportation, the needs, technology issues, that needs to be increased. We can't operate on the budget that we have in order to really impact our students, so that's something else we'd like to see. The other thing is on STEPP, previously when we first started out and we had roundtable discussions, or we had monthly call-ins, and we had the D.C. officials participating with us, so that we could bounce off our ideas, our issues, our concerns, and hear back and have that immediate feedback.

We're not getting that now. This year we had one meeting, but unfortunately, for whatever reason, we weren't able to communicate with the D.C. staff. And we would like to have that support, because hearing from them, knowing what's happening with our four STEPP programs, you know, we'd like to

resume those meetings on a monthly or quarterly basis, at least, because I think that immediate feedback is good and that way it keeps us both on the same page.

I think our STEPP programs are progressing. One of the things that I do want to say is that even though we're put in this role to assist with the monitoring and the learning of the technicalities of the federal awards, Title I and Title III, Title II-A, the thing that has not been stressed is that relationship building. We've got MOU agreements with the LOAs and the schools and with the state, and they tell us we're going to do this to partner and you need to do these things, but then they say we're going to shadow you, and show us how to do these things, but yet they don't.

They just give us the paperwork, this is the process of Title I, this is the process of Title II-A, but they don't give us that visual, that hands-on, that side-by-side working. That's going to come over time through relationship building, but if you can't establish those relationships in schools, then you're kind of at a minimum.

And some schools are -B working with two schools, and one of our schools is like really a proponent of it and they're really helpful and willing to work, but other schools it's kind of like they're still not trusting, that trusting relationship isn't there. On paper it's there, but that actual interaction, the day-to-day getting to know this and that about the federal programs, they kind of have some work to do in progressing that. But we do feel like there is an outcome that's possible with STEPP.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Ms. Tallbear.

And just checking with our webcasters? All right. I'm sorry, Joyce. Go ahead.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you for the last comments. I would like to draw you to the handout that was in your packet that is a document that looks like a letter, and it's about the enhancements for 2014, and turn to page 3. There's an important section that has been included by our attorneys as we have been making the changes for this year that includes a section about Indian hiring preference. And that is a law that is something that has not been in the application prior to this year, and that is going out on all the applications as they're being distributed this year. So it's the first step of that better

accountability, and it is notice to everybody that yes, in fact, a program for Indian education does have the authority for Indian preference. So thank you.

MS. McCORMICK: Mr. Rodgers, I'm sorry. I represent a parent. Can I speak? I did not get here early enough to sign up on the list.

MR. RODGERS: Yes. If you could state your name and school district or just some information on who you're representing, please.

MS. McCORMICK: Thank you all for allowing us to come before you and present. My name is Shirley McCormick, and I am Sac and Fox.

I did not know that I was going to be representing one of the unidentifiable Natives today, but I guess I am. I am one-sixteenth shy of being half native American, but as you can see by the color of my skin, I look more non-Native than I do Native, have all of my life. When I went to school, the way that the government used to identify Natives in our school was to come and ask in each classroom, raise your hand those of you that are Indians, they'd count us, and then out the door they'd go.

I'm representing a parent. I live here in Norman, my kids were involved in the Norman Public School System, and I am on the Parent Indian Ed Committee. I've been there for six years, I've served the last four years as president of either JOM or the Title VII funds, or vice chairman, vice versa. Tried to be involved, tried to find out what was going on. I was raised in Oklahoma, moved out of the state for 18 years, and then moved back in 2008. Some of you may know my mother, Mary McCormick. I have been listening to Indian politics since I was ten years old. That was the first time she was elected to our tribal office.

I want to represent the perspective that we are in an urban school, we have a lot of students that we service, we use our Title VII funds and our JOM funds as best we can. We service kindergarten through 12th grade. There was a study done several years ago where we found that we were losing our Native students in the middle school, so we've tried to be doing some different things for our middle school and some rewards programs of trying to offer to keep kids in school longer, our Native kids in school longer.

And our mixture is about 1,700, I think that Lucyann said earlier, and we represent about 72 different tribal members. We are not on the borders of any tribal boundaries, so we have students who chose to

come to a neighboring school, that's us. Lucyann alluded to that in the Oklahoma City regional area that's about 16,000 kids, something like that that choose to do that. A lot of our students are not able to get funding or help from their tribes. I hope that those of you who have come here that you can see the different kinds of needs. There are the tribal needs, there are other programs, and there are the programs that represent school districts such as ours. We try to offer what we can. When we don't get the amount of money that we were expecting or whatever, then we adjust, we try to see what services we can cut.

That is mostly what I was wanting to represent to you, just to let you be aware. There's like another group, that I think that's what Lucyann was talking about, the unidentifiable Natives. I kind of think that's the way of the world. I think that, I've always been encouraged to go to school, my mother saw that my sister and I got a bachelor's degree, and she even got her master's degree. When I went to school, the latter part of my years, I was on an HEW fellowship. That program doesn't even exist now.

I've been Native, I feel more Native than I do anything else. Our students are struggling. We want to keep kids in school. We're finding out at different ages that reading is a big issue, that even at the kindergarten level, before they get there, they need help with reading. They don't start reading. My daughter, who is 15-1/2 and has had an excellent year her freshman year, had struggled with reading and I had to really work with her at four, five and six years old, and she loves reading. She reads books that I never would have thought of reading at her age, and it has helped her in school.

We want to help our students the best we can. We need the funding, we need the help. We're servicing a large group of students that, as I said, cannot necessarily get funding from their tribal jurisdictions, or they don't live within those jurisdictions. I don't live near Stroud, I don't live in Shawnee, which are my tribe's jurisdictions. I choose to live in Norman, and my students are going to school there. So I hope that you will keep us in mind.

Thank you for listening.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: We do have a little bit of time left. I believe there was one more person that wanted to ask a question. Oh, you remembered. All right. Come on, Lucyann.

MS. HARJO: I wanted to emphasize the need for services for our students in juvenile detention centers, and I had forgotten all about it, and I should have started with them first.

There was a report filed by our district on the number of students served in Norman Public Schools coming through the juvenile detention centers here in Norman. When I first started in 2005, there were about six or seven juvenile detention centers, today in 2014 there are fourteen, and 15 percent of the students coming through the juvenile detention centers in Norman and it's only a report that encompasses seven detention centers and not all fourteen in those seven detention centers, 15 percent of the students coming through are American Indian and they're coming from all over our state.

The task in working with students in the juvenile detention centers is such a monumental, laborious task, and it requires a lot of collaboration, funding, work with programs like the Cherokee Nation's Talking Leaves Program, the College of Muscogee Nation, the tribal programs, the Aalhakoffichí program from Chickasaw Nation where they help us with I guess finding locations for students who are coming through, who we help with academic intervention strategies. A lot of them come in with only a 2nd grade reading level, and their ages are from 13 to 18.

A lot of our boys that have come through, I think about ten to thirteen, we have worked intensely with. Out of those ten to thirteen boys, four of them have moved on into prison. There has to be something that we can do as Indian people, a communication network between tribes educating them about the concerns of our Indian children, and collaborating well to educate our families and our tribal communities, in our tribal leadership positions in working with schools and with Indian educators.

Prevention, I guess, is a big hope for our program so that we don't see so many coming through, but also the hope of educating these boys and girls so that they don't come back, or they're not going toward prison in that direction, or that they have a plan of action, and I'd really like some collaboration with programs, tribal programs that would help our kids.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Lucyann.

Ms. Yellowfish, did you have a question?

I'm sorry, Mr. Mendoza.

MR. MENDOZA: That's okay. As we wait for anybody else's lingering thoughts, that issue of those students affected in those circumstances of juvenile detention facilities is one that the BIE is really grappling with now, and the same dynamics that are dealt with through bureau-funded schools face these juvenile detention facilities and those students rights to a free and appropriate public education. And I really think that I'm with you. I've been monitoring that work as close as I can from the initiative standpoint, and in how they are moving forward and how we can get to identification of just how these tribes are really stepping up and providing that coordination of services.

Now, whether it's looking at the fully funded and operated facilities that almost serve a regional, if not inter-tribal purpose, such as down in Toyach or Lame Deer or Rosebud, these kinds of issues, we know that here's practices there that can be modeled across the country for tribes that are taking this on in whole. And so we really need to understand where are you seeing these snippets of positive effects on these students, and then what does that look like from a logistical standpoint, because that needs to then inform how we're resourcing from both a tribal level, and especially from the most immediate way that we can effect that through the federal level, so if it's through grants or contracts and make sure that those principles are incorporated to those grants and contracts, respectively.

So just thank you for raising the concern and issue and making sure that those students are continuously thought of.

MS. YELLOWFISH: My name is Sydna Yellowfish. I work with the Edmond Public Schools Indian Education Program. I am Otoe Missouria, Osage, Pawnee and Sac and Fox.

I first of all would like to thank the consultation meeting for being held in Oklahoma. I appreciate the tribal leaders that are here and I appreciate Edwina coming and speaking on behalf of Indian education because we worked together for many years before she became a tribal leader. So I appreciate the suggestions, the comments that have been taken.

I also would like to add that, my part with Indian education, we're at the schools every day and we see these Indian students every day, and our Title VII Indian education programs, like many have said, for some we're the only contact person that they may have, because we're away from our tribal jurisdiction areas and the tribes that our particular students belong to. We have over 1,200 Indian students over

the program that I oversee and they come from 52 different nations and tribes. Sometimes I'm on the phone talking to Alaska, California, South Dakota, Arizona, so we have to take care of those students while they are here in Oklahoma and a public school student within our school district. So again, collaborating, partnering with our tribes, that is something that has been very much needed.

As far as the language part, we have partnered with the Osage Nation and Otoe Missouri Tribe and just having community language classes, but I also see an avenue that's been opened up for us, should we choose to do that, with our tribal leaders of the Otoe and the Osage to implement our language classes within our school district, with the plan that the state department has put in place.

My hope, too, is to also have our Native culture and histories be taught in the State of Oklahoma. This has been a goal for some of us that have been here over 25 years, and we did it on our own, basically, in our small Indian ed program. We did implement a Native class for humanities or an elective credit, so we have been doing that for 15 years now. But to see our 39 tribes being taught in public schools mandated in the State of Oklahoma is a goal that we envisioned many, many years ago with some of our leaders that have gone on, and I hope that our tribes, working with the public schools, working with the state department we will be able to do that and implement that.

And I think that one way that that is being accomplished so far has been with these templates that we have been trying to do. Some of you are aware of them probably within your tribes, some of you may not. We contacted 39 tribes, we asked their input for these tribal templates to go on a website that will be housed at the State Department Indian Education section, and right now I think we only have seven completed we have nine now.

So I ask the support of our tribal leaders, get with Lucyann, Dwight, myself, Jacob, one of us, help get your template completed so that we can move a step closer to teaching our Indian children not only our Indian children, all children and our public school teachers about our 39 tribes of Oklahoma. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Sydna.

Are there any other burning desires from our

in-house audience? Step up.

MS. BILYEU: I'm Starla Bilyeu with Stillwater Public Schools, and as Ray mentioned, the burning desire, I'm Eastern Band Cherokee, I am a split feather, I was adopted at birth. My birth mother came to Chilocco schools as a teenager, and was forced to leave me here when she was sent back home.

I think that's an important thing because I'm sorry; I don't remember her name, she was talking about choosing to live where they live, I do not choose to live away from my tribe, and I have been able to get my card, I've been able to be in contact with my birth mother, and it's important to me. And I believe that when Dr. Bread was talking about having the studies within the schools, I so craved that, and I so needed it, and I think it's so important for our people who don't have the opportunity.

I teach in Stillwater. I, too, do not have any tribal relationship, because we're not on any tribal land. So I have to go out and hunt down tribes that I can get some interaction with. I've been able to work with the Osage Tribe, and with the Iowa Tribe, and Pawnee, just reaching out and trying to find some connection for our students, because they don't have that culture, they don't have that knowledge and that understanding within, because of whatever reason, because they choose to live there, or like me, they have no choice in why they live there.

And I think it's important that we acknowledge that and that we push to get that education for not only just everyone, but for those who do crave that. And I just hope you don't forget us as well. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODGERS: Any other panel member would like to have a final word? There's always that one person.

(No response.)

MR. RODGERS: Okay. That was your chance.

On behalf of Ms. Joyce Silverthorne and Mr. Bill Mendoza, all of our tribal leaders, thank you for being here. Our panel members, thank you for being here this afternoon. I would say (Native language spoken) all the different tribes that I work with, we'd like to thank you for your participation in today's consultation.

It's been an honor moderating this very important event, and on behalf of my fellow Oklahoma tribal members and the fellow citizens of Oklahoma, I'd like to say thank you for taking time out of your life to be here with us today. To our webcast participants, thank you for tuning in.

And remember, everyone, please, that you have 30 days to turn in additional written comments, and you can do that by going to www.edtribalconsultations.org. That you will have available to you for the next 30 days, so even participants here or on the web, or if you know of somebody who would like to comment, please have them get their written comments in. You can also turn in your comment card, which you have in your packet, and you can do that at the registration table as well.

Now, if you would, please join us in our closing prayer. It's going to be offered today by Governor Eddie Hamilton from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe of Oklahoma.

GOVERNOR HAMILTON: I just want to make one comment, and recognize two people that really had a big influence of where I am today, and those two people are Kathleen Tallbear and Mr. Quinton Roman Nose. Without their true compassion, involvement, and trust, I wouldn't be able to be in this seat that I'm sitting today in this position, so I want to thank them for what they've done for me. So I'd like to actually encourage everybody to be a positive influence to those that you are in the communities, and if we could, at this time go into prayer. Pray in whatever way you like.

Dear Lord, We thank you for bringing all these extraordinary people together today, and we thank you for our voice being heard. I'd like to thank you for the help that you're going to help to find, to give resolutions to our main concerns. I'd like to thank you for the air that we breathe, the water that nourishes our bodies, and the fire that gives us warmth and prepares our food. I'd like to thank you for the blessed ability for our women to give life to our future leaders and educators. And I'd like to ask you to watch over those that are sick or in the hospitals. Give them the compassion and warmth that they need. And I ask for you to please look over those that are in the military and overseas, and ask you to look over those that are incarcerated. And I'd like for you to please give safe travels back for those going back home. And if I forget anything, please forgive me, and I want to thank you, Lord, in Jesus name, amen.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Governor Hamilton. And with that, we conclude today's consultation.

(Whereupon, at 3:19 p.m., the consultation was concluded.)