



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 Holiday Inn Missoula, 200 South Pattee, Missoula, Montana, at 1:30 p.m., Nate St. Pierre, Moderator, presiding.

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PRESENT

NATE ST. PIERRE, Moderator

SANDRA BOHAM, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Salish Kootenai College

WILLIAM MENDOZA, Executive Director, White House Initiative on American Indian &

Alaska Native Education

JOYCE SILVERTHORNE, Director, Office of Indian Education, U.S. Department of Education

MANDY SMOKER BROADDUS, Director of Indian Education, Montana Office of Public Instruction

BRANDI FOSTER, Director of American Indian/Minority Achievement, Montana State Office of the
Commissioner of Higher Education

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(1:35 p.m.)

MR. ST. PIERRE: Welcome everyone to the Tribal Consultation, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Indian Education and the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaskan Native Education.

My name is Nate St. Pierre. I'm a member of the Chippewa Cree tribe from Rocky Wood, Montana. I will serve as the moderator for today.

And we do have some reserve seating up here for tribal leaders. If there are any tribal leaders coming in please join us towards the front row here. There is some reserved seating, so we would like to invite folks that are tribal leaders to come on up.

I would also like to invite a gentleman to help us out and get it started in a good way. I've visited with Robert 'Smokey' Doore from the Blackfeet Nation. I've called upon him to help us with an invocation. And if you would please proceed with that, he'll lead us through that.

And I really appreciate this gentleman. Kind of just approached him today. He's one of those kind of people, as a tribal elder, that I think is very willing and generous with his time. So I've known Mr. Doore for a number of years as a tribal educator and a business person but also as a spiritual leader.

And so, I'll turn it over to Mr. Doore.

MR. DOORE: Thank you, Mr. St. Pierre. It was a pleasure when they approached me because, to me, our future is in our people, as our prayers. There's a lot of different kind of prayers.

And, for me, I was very fortunate to have the elders back home in grounding, to take me aside at a time where our reservation is heading in the wrong direction, many years ago, and with that basis of that knowledge, we talked about language. I'm not a fluent speaker in Blackfeet, and the language that I do learn has to do with our ceremonies. It has to do with prayer. It has to do with the religious ceremonies that so much of us might have participated in or should participate in. Because without those ceremonies, a lot of the questions that our young people have will not be answered.

We can't find answers to our tradition in books because the people that wrote those books don't have the insight in terms of what that knowledge is. And for me, to be fortunate enough to be able to see it from the inside and to still be able to be a part of it really, my feeling, that the Creator has bestowed that upon me to do that.

And so when Nate asked me to do that, I don't hesitate at any time. I do a lot of the opening prayers at our national meetings in D.C., and to see people come back and say, you know, I really believe in prayer and where it's going to lead us, and that's where I believe today.

And in our ceremonies, once we sit down as elders, we don't get up until the ceremony's over. But I also say that it's in your right to stand, please do that, but if you want to sit that's perfectly fine with me.

(Speaking in Native American Indian dialect.)

We call upon you today, the Creator, to watch over, help us, protect us, keep us safe, to listen to our words today to help us in a good way.

All of those people that are here today, we ask you to bless them. Bless all of their families, their children, grandchildren, son in law, daughter in laws, grandpa, grandmas, all of those that went on before us. That we call upon them to watch over us throughout our days, our evenings and through our prayers. We ask you to watch over them and help them.

We ask those elders that are here that are right at home to watch over and protect us, to share their information with us so that we continue to try hard, we continue to know and continue to expand our knowledge in terms of who we are and what we are and where we are going.

We ask you to watch over this panel today to listen, to hear our advice in terms of what we might be able to offer in terms of what our children might be looking forward to in the future. We call upon the Creator to watch over our families that are not here today. To watch over and protect them, keep them safe. All of those that are traveling, help them so that they get to their destination in a good way.

We ask you for special prayers for our people that are in the military. For my great niece, who serves and is there, we ask you that she comes home safely. We ask you to watch over all of our veterans that are here that protected us in the old ways, in helping us along the way. For our young warriors and lady

warriors that are out there, that their mind, back and hearts are strong, that they continue to seek the elders for advice, and help us to keep their minds open.

We ask you to watch over us. We ask you to watch over all of our Natiitapis, all of those people that are bestowed upon their holy prayers, their holy pipes, their sweats, all of their holy belongings and the things that's been transferred to them. In the holy way we ask you to watch over theirs.

We ask you to watch over Nitukini and all of my family. Help us all. Protect us, keep us safe. To help all of these people that are involved in education, especially our legislators, our political people, that their mind, backs and hearts are open, that our recommendations will lead to something good for our young people.

(Speaking in Native American Indian dialect.)

Thank you very much.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Smokey. Again, if some of the tribal leaders have come in after we started, there are some seats that are reserved up in the front row here. So please feel free to move forward here.

This Tribal Consultation is actually the second one this week, as I understand, and so -- and part of the Montana Indian Education Annual Conference here in Missoula. This is an opportunity to share some comment and provide consultation to the Department of Education.

Many of you, and I think most of you, did receive a packet with today's agenda. We'll move forward with that momentarily. But as part of the sort of the setup for today you'll notice that we have, my microphone here looks like and it looks like one over on this side of the room and near the aisle.

What we would like to do after the presentations are made, the formal presentations, is allow some time for tribal leader comments and then open it up to public comments. And many of you, or some of you, did fill out a form to request to be on sort of the comment period, and some of you may not have and that's okay.

But when we get to that point, I'll remind you that as you come up, please state your name, where you're from and perhaps the role that you serve in your community or whatever position you hold. We will have a court reporter keeping track of the record for today.

So we may ask you to clarify your name if, for some reason, it's an unusual spelling or something that the court reporter's not familiar with. And, as I mentioned, in terms of the comments, rather than having this as a listening session per se or a question and answer period, we've structured it so that, as a consultation, the presenters would like to hear from you.

So if you have feedback on a particular issue or initiative, or if you'd like to provide some kind of a comment, please do so. And this is the appropriate place and time to do that in this forum.

And what we'll try and do is allot enough time for every person who would like to speak, so we have people with timers on so that we'll be able to keep moving things along. And so my role as moderator is to keep that flow going.

But anyhow, without further delay, I want to invite up Sandra Boham, who's Salish. She's also the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Salish Kootenai College, just up the road, at Pablo, Montana. She's also the Chair, or the President actually, of the Montana Indian Education Association. A fellow educator, I understand she's just about to defend her doctoral dissertation here in the next few weeks, I suppose.

MS. BAHOM: Next week or so.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Next week? Okay, so she's that close, and no more ABD. So, Sandra, please give us a welcoming, an opening.

MS. BAHOM: Welcome. It's good to see those of you who made it here today to come. This is a important opportunity that we all have to be able to visit with the Director of Indian Education and the Director on the White House Initiative on Indian Education.

So I want to welcome all of the tribal leaders who are here today and all of the rest of the folks that are in the audience to make sure that we let them know what's working or what we need in Indian education in our communities.

This morning I said we were very fortunate, as a very rural state, to have this opportunity. Frequently these consultations are held in larger areas, in bigger cities. And so we're very grateful that you were able to come here and have this consultation.

So welcome and thank you, and we look forward to having this interchange here today.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Sandra. The first presenter is from the Office of Indian Education. The Director of the Office of Indian Education, United States Department of Education, Ms. Joyce Silverthorne, who's Salish, also from just up the road, on the Flathead Reservation.

And I've known Ms. Silverthorne for a number of years. And she's been very active in promoting Indian education not only in the state of Montana, but throughout the region and throughout the nation. She's also a strong proponent and supporter of American Indian language preservation and perpetuation. So we're very fortunate to have Ms. Silverthorne here today.

She has a very, very busy schedule and just having some time home during the Easter weekend and Good Friday, being near family, but also to share some thoughts here. And I know she did present some information this morning for those of you who were here.

But we'll allot some time for her and then we'll move right into Mr. Mendoza following that. So Joyce, please proceed.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: I think it's on. Can you hear me? Okay. Hello, everybody. It's sure nice to be home. Closer? Very good. It's okay? Hand signals from the back of the room, sorry.

It's very nice to be home. It's awfully rushed, of course, as we try to do everything in a few days, but it's nice to have this opportunity to come, and especially nice to have Indian education from this region, this state, our local area get to be a part of the permanent record for the tribal consultation that we keep federally.

These will go into a record that are kept on the ed.gov site. And you can look through and see Tribal Consultation information back to 2010. And this has come about as an executive order and the executive order directed government to government consultation which is why, again, the reserved seats for tribal leaders and the reason that we have a reserved section, that we ask for tribal leader comments.

So we're very happy to have this opportunity to come and listen to Montana. Indian Education for All has been a model that we hear a lot about around the country. They're curious. They want to know

how they can do what Montana has done. And so we're anxious to see how we can get this documented as well.

The task that we are at at the Office of Indian Education includes four different grant programs. The Formula Grant Program Title VII, and there is a PowerPoint in your folder. We aren't going to try and go through the PowerPoint. Usually our tribal consultations are a day long and we have a little bit more opportunity to make more of a presentation, but because we did a condensed so that we could combine this with MEIA, we are able to provide some information in the folder. And there will be a workshop tomorrow morning at 10:45. And I'll have to find which room that is in. Check your schedule. That -- we'll have more opportunity to go into more information with Title VII tomorrow.

The other grants that we operate from the Office of Indian Education are Professional Development, training teachers and administrators to go into the schools and work with American Indian students. That program has been around in different iterations for quite some time. In its current form, it is moving forward with those two priorities, teachers and administrators. There is room in statute to expand to other priority areas as well.

We also have a Demonstration Program. Demonstration Program, when I first started teaching in 1977, under Title IV, if anybody remembers --

MR. ST. PIERRE: I was II.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: -- before V, VII. At any rate, children. And at that time, Two Eagle River was a Title IV Program Demonstration, alternative education. It has morphed through and is now a BIE tribal contract school, and I'm now at the Office of Indian Education. How time changes things. How little I would have understood, at that time, about the path that has taken me to where I am.

Certainly, we also have a new program. It is a program called the State Tribal Education Partnership. And that program has come about -- actually, it's, the roots for that program came about through the blueprint of ESEA re-authorization that some of you have seen. That actually has not been re authorized at this time yet.

It is still the latest document that supports where the Department of Education foresees the ESEA re authorization, ESEA, Elementary/Secondary Education Act. And that is where the Office of Indian Education has been a part, back to the 1972.

So under each of these re authorizations things change a little bit. And rules change and opportunities change. Last -- 2012, when the budget was approved, they surprised us a bit and they granted us a \$2 million opportunity to do a pilot program for this TEA Capacity Building, Tribal Education Agency Capacity Building.

And as this pilot is moving forward, that we have had, certainly, not enough time to be able to put it into rule so we did a Waiver of Rulemaking. That Waiver of Rulemaking will complete with these first grants when they end in 2015, September. So before we can do anything with any new grants, we have to go back through the process, now, of Rulemaking. And so what we are doing is an 18 month long endeavor to establish rule, to be able to authorize state tribal education program grants.

Those are going to be -- you have a document that shows, points you to a blog that is open and available for comment. We were seeking tribal leadership, a consultation, before we began the drafting of the documents that we'll move forward.

There will be more opportunities for comment as it continues through that 18 month long journey. And so the document that will be prepared will be a Notice of Proposed Priority that will be out sometime this summer. And there will be more opportunities for public comment from anyone and everyone who has an opportunity to see it and work with that. That'll be in the Federal Register Notice.

Okay Bill, did I forget anything this time? I think we're good. We're also doing a rulemaking with the professional development that, because it has been in place for a number of years, it's time for us to update the rules that govern it.

We have gone from a paper documentation of the Payback Process into an electronic documentation of the Payback Process. It's going to provide some options for reporting. It's going to provide some options for better information in a more timely fashion and better accuracy because it is electronically kept.

There are many things that we need to do for the protection of the privacy of participants within that. And so part of this is a documentation of how we protect and handle any private information. The rulemaking changes will allow for the change in process. It also is allowing for the changes in order to be accurate and consistent with everybody that goes through that program.

So those are the things that you'll find in your packet. We're also involved in conversations with Native American language issues within the department. And the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Interior, Department of Ed and Health and Human Services.

And that's a new initiative. And we're working on seeing where that will take us and make as positive changes and improvements as we can. More at tomorrow's Title VII meeting. So with that, I'll stop and we could go for a lot longer. We shouldn't. If there are any concerns as we move through, we can look at that.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Okay.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Ms. Silverthorne. I failed to mention earlier that in your packet, you should have a biographical sketch of each of our presenters today. So I just wanted to point that out.

And then for those of you that are coming in, there is the PowerPoint presentation in your packet that Ms. Silverthorne mentioned. We will have, or we will open it up to comment a little later as well. We have a telephone line open for comment.

And, just wanted to point out, she mentioned a tribal Web site or, excuse me, a Web site where there's going to be a blog or being able to provide comment. I'm not sure if that's in your packet or not. But just, to note, www.edtribalconsultations.org, that is the Web site that she mentioned for this blog. And it's also, apparently is in your packet, so.

All right, next we have Mr. William, Bill, Mendoza, who's Oglala. He's the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on American Indian & Alaska Native Education. He's joined us today and presented some additional remarks this morning, if you were at the opening of today's event. But I'd like to welcome Mr. Bill Mendoza.

MR. MENDOZA: Thank you. Such a great honor to be here as well, and thank you to all of our new persons who came specifically for this consultation. Thank you so much.

Both Joyce and I are kind of dealing with a little bit of wanting to specifically reach out to every kind of demographic that is represented here at MIEA. And so we have numerous speaking engagements, so we're dealing with kind of an element of not saying the same thing over and over.

And so if I don't do a full topic justice, and I think Joyce would agree, please give us the benefit of the doubt. And we're going to be accessible for the next couple days here and we would love to expand on some of the points that we're making.

Especially because, I just want reiterate what Joyce said, we want to be really conscientious of our roles here. Contrary to our brown skin and the upbringing in our communities, we need you to take us as everybody that you need to speak to in Washington, D.C.

That's our responsibility, to channel and direct these conversations back to Washington, D.C. and be the most accountable to you all in how we're addressing and grappling with these issues. And so we need you to tell us how it is, and we'll do our best to continue this feedback.

And really this is what being here is all about. It's very important to the President, it's very important to the Secretary, to be in areas of this country that are more reflective of that fabric of Indian education that we are seeing in the data. And as we're seeing where our investments are going, we need to be looking at the whole picture. And historically, we've tended to have those conversations in certain pockets of this country.

And not that we're walking away from those important, you know, mass concentrations of our -- whether you're talking about land based tribes or percentages and numbers of American and Alaskan natives. We need to be trying to reach out to those areas of the country that have not been historically heard from and that we know that there's critical issues as well as just tremendous work that is happening in those areas.

And so that's a big part of kind of how we've approached consultation up to this point, both looking geographically as well as looking at where the no brainers are, partnering with organizations like MIEA, NIEA at large, NCAI, and in bringing those conversations where people are at. And so we want that to be the way of business moving forward. And so we only expect these to continue to grow and grow. And so please look forward to the next iteration of us in 2015 and where we're going to be.

And as was pointed out, these are designed to be nationally accessible. We are working with new and developing or existing and developing technologies to try to make these as accessible and as interactive and dynamic, as most cost effective as well as reliable. We're trying to create a standard of practice, so to speak, in the accessibility of these.

So we're playing with everything from webcasting to chat function as well as the old reliable teleconference in trying to pipe that into the mic so that participants from wherever they are in the country can, and in the world for that matter, can be able to chime in on what is happening within Indian education, both from your viewpoint as practitioners, as tribal leaders and everywhere in between and from our standpoint, from the federal level, and what is happening in our nation's capital and how those issues are affecting you.

We also have a commitment now to try to bring together those who have the greatest responsibilities in this area. And that's that trilateral responsibility that we know all too well between state, tribe and federal responsibilities. And so we're very pleased, again, to have that level of state engagement here, we'll hear from later.

And then we look forward to continuing to strengthen that, making sure that we're working on these issues together. There's a lot of added value interest and investment in our communities, whether you're talking about them at the tribal nation level or at the state level and local municipality government level as we look around the country.

I want to just touch upon, and Joyce and I work in tandem as the senior policy advisors on Indian education within the Department of Education and, as the executive order spans all federal agencies, all the way to the White House. And we serve as the primary point of contact with Congress. We also have a mechanism, the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, which is -- oversees Title VII and jurisdiction to virtually every program that the Secretary has jurisdiction over.

They produce a report annually. This is a 15 member presidentially appointed advisory council. And currently there are four vacancies for that council, and we are in the process of releasing a federal register notice to solicit nominations for that national advisory council.

And so you really want to put that on your radar to be thinking about those individuals that you want to be recommending. Again, it's self recommendation. If you want to sign up for the charge, the members that are sitting on NACIE now come from a vast array of sectors.

Of course, we have many educators on there. We also have business folks, former Tribal College leader folks and current. And so we're really looking to kind of ensure that we have our best and our brightest thinkers out there and doers out there really considering these posts.

It's been Joyce's and my effort and hopes for NACIE to begin to -- and they've called upon themselves for this and are pushing on us to be more active, to carry a larger voice and then be able to operate in a way that begins to effect the kinds of recommendations that they put out annually.

They've made specific requests to the Secretary. They submit their report annually to Congress and they continue to push on us to be able to be more active in the policy and fiscal implications of those recommendations.

The initiative itself has a number of primary programmatic components. Joyce touched upon one, that mount to charges, you know, areas that we're trying to unwrap the executive order itself and spend time on. Native languages being critical to that as a foundation for success in the area of those outcomes, those achievement measures that we know and are, of course, invested in as well as initiatives centered around expanding opportunities.

And so native languages are at the core of all of that. Either way, if we're talking about STEM opportunities, if we're talking about Human Services, if we're talking about just representation within that, as I always say, the comma separated value you know, African Americans, Hispanic, Latinos, and we tend to just drop into other we need to have inserted in that the American Indian and Alaska natives, Native American.

We want to work with individual program offices, we want to work with Congress to begin to look at those issues in a disaggregated fashion so that we know that those opportunities as well as when we're looking at outcomes, we're accounting for native students.

The way that this happens from the initiative level is facilitation of these work groups. Joyce will readily state that it's hard enough to manage the four elements of Title VII that she has responsibility over and even harder to begin to facilitate policy level conversations that affect other critical grant making program offices.

And so being able to get to those goals, get to those objectives and to effect them and establish an institutional record of that and memory of that is just one way that we are working together through

these work groups. One specifically on native languages that brings together those three agency partners.

Another, the Department of Interior and Education signed a similar memorandum of agreement that looks over our goals as well as some specific activities that they've outlined, a heavily consulted upon document that we are currently engaged in.

It is what you can expect subcommittees that break down these areas. These documents are all accessible through our Web site and included in your packet. We didn't include the 2012 memorandum because it's a pretty long document with appendices and whatnot. It's a financial document as well as a policy document.

And so I just really encourage you to look at those measures within there. And we look forward to kind of continuously reporting on those specific initiatives that come out of all of that. Of course none of those efforts happen without triggering Consultation at the appropriate time.

Some things fall within the administrative purview of the programs themselves and can be done in a way that we need to be communicating what has happened and what has been done and the rationale behind it. Other things trigger Consultation.

And so that's a part of the Department's commitment, is to continue these regular and meaningful Consultations around the country, so Native Language Working Group, DOI ED, Joint Committee on Indian Education.

At play right now, as many of you know, is the White House Council on Native American Affairs coupled with the President's Interagency Working Group on Indian Education. And so there's a subcommittee under the White House Council on Native American Affairs that the Secretary of Interior and Secretary of Education co chair.

And right now that is our biggest kind of area of emphasis that we're going to be looking at here in early May about the interactions of those two interagency working groups so that we can avoid duplication of effort around those conversations.

As many of you know, critical to this is the work of the study group that's in place right now, a small joint agency team and experts from the field looking at the Bureau of Indian Education, fact finding up to the juncture. And we know have Consultations announced.

If you've not seen those they are beginning on 4 28, this month, in Oglala, South Dakota. On the 30th we'll be in Anadarko, Oklahoma and then in Auburn, Washington, Muckleshoot School on the 2nd and Gila River in Sakhlin, Arizona on the 5th.

And so those four Consultations will be dealing specifically with the Bureau of Indian Education and what the study group is looking at right now from a 30,000 foot level. Of course, we would not move forward in a way that necessitates Consultation on specific measures without first consulting on the broad direction as we see it now.

A report for those Consultations has been released. And so we really need to point your eyes and attention to what is happening there. And this affects not only the Bureau of Indian Education schools tribally operated and funded but it also affects our Tribal College as well because we're getting at systemic concerns of the efficiency and effectiveness of BIE. And so I just really, really want to stress those opportunities.

Native languages coupled with the emphasis around Indian education as a whole is certainly continuing to be a priority for not only the Administration but Congress as well. And that was signaled, of course, by a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs more recently related to public schools, much of which is the focus of the conversations that you all are engaged in today.

And that is going to continue. Senator Tester, as many of you know, has committed to, a minimum, five of these hearings that he wants to hold. As we continue to consider the number of interactions of bills that are being put out there for consideration as we look to re authorize everything from Elementary and Secondary Education Act to the Workforce Investment, Carl Perkins as well and Esther Martinez, all of them are up for re authorization.

So if we don't move forward with those re authorizations, at the least, we're front loading policy here. And so everybody needs to be immersed in that.

Last but not least is certainly the continued commitment from the Secretary. We're very proud of the fact that we're bringing him to Joyce's home country there, Salish. And he'll be delivering the commencement there June 7th up in Salish.

And so, certainly, invite you all to come up and enjoy that time with the SKC there as we celebrate the work of our Tribal Colleges. And really look forward to kind of continuing to bring senior officials out to Indian Country.

As you know, last year during the Tribal Nations Conference the President committed to being in an Indian Country before the end of his administration. And I'll tell you now that those activities are already being ramped up. And so we really look forward to that time when he can be out in Indian Country to follow through with that commitment again.

I think that's about all that I want to talk about at this point, just to kind of give you a survey of where we're at. And I really look forward to hearing from you all. As was mentioned by Nate, it's a time to kind of shut up and listen. You always hear us talking and kind of sharing what we're trying to do to effect that.

These times are really designed to really sit here and understand what you're dealing with. And look forward to trying to follow up in more meaningful ways as we move forward, with better designing this process in looking for that accountability that you all are asking for from us.

Thank you, especially, to our tribal leaders. Thank you to our Tribal College presidents who are here with us as well. And just really appreciate everybody's participation today.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Mr. Mendoza. We would be remiss if we didn't include folks from our state offices in terms of this discussion on Indian education. So part of today's Tribal Consultation includes the Office of Public Instruction and well as the Montana State Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

So next we'd like to invite up Ms. Mandy Smoker Broaddus, who's Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux. She's the Director of Indian Education with the Montana Office of Public Instruction or OPI. So, Mandy, if you'd please join us.

MS. BROADDUS: Sorry. Thank you, everyone, for showing up. And thank you all for hosting such an important gathering. These are always wonderful opportunities.

I want to, I'll try and talk fast because it is most important that everybody, especially our officials, hear from you all, from your direct experience. But I do want to take just a little bit of time to talk about a couple of components at the Office of Public Instruction.

We're really fortunate, of course, to work under the tutelage of Denise Juneau, who is just an extraordinary leader. And I had to get that on the public record, Joyce, so.

But we're really proud of public education and the work that happens, the good work that happens in schools across this state because it's not easy. And we don't often give gratitude or say thanks to those folks who really put in their blood, sweat and tears and do the best they can with the circumstances that they're given in our schools.

I love my job. As Bill talked about earlier, feeling of use and feeling you have a purpose and feeling you have agency is something I never take for granted. I'm really, again, fortunate. I get to travel this state to many of your communities. And I get to sit down and I get to talk with trustees and students and community members and teachers.

And I always, when I'm out there, I try and be a good guest. I try and be a good relative. I want to be a careful listener and an observer and to build strong relationships.

I'm really grateful to everybody that kind of has shaped what I want to talk about today because I wouldn't know these things if I didn't go out there and folks didn't share and open their hearts and their minds and want to talk about these really important issues that their children and their communities face.

So I'm here more just like as a translator, I think. But I receive a lot of information and knowledge and wisdom from you all out there and then hopefully I'm able to take that back to the state level and use that to inform the work that we do and really advocate on behalf of you.

So thank you for your openness and for everything that you tell me because I've and everyone that works at OPI. Because I've never once gone out there and had someone say oh, I'm too busy to talk

about schools or kids. People are always grateful for just those moments to sit down and pour out their hearts and their feelings and their thoughts about something that's so important.

And that's what really fires me up, and everybody else at OPI, to be the top advocates for public education, because we believe that healthy educational systems can create a lot of opportunity in everyone's lives.

But one thing we've definitely learned is that this work is so complex and so multi dimensional that educators really have to constantly be on top of their game, on top of their toes, responding, trying to meet everyone's needs, really complex needs, out there.

We've got issues with poverty, morality, language barriers, trauma, historical contexts. And everybody's out there trying to row in the same direction, trying to do the best job that they can. But sometimes we're missing really key partners at the table.

We can't do this work alone. Educators can't fix everything. We need tribal education departments. We need tribal governments. We need HUD, IHS, BIA, everyone, to sit down at the table and really realize their connections, their funding streams, their resources and align those so that everything's moving in the same direction.

I only want to tell one story. I could tell a lot of stories but I'm just going to tell one really quickly because I think it really illustrates this point. I was in one of my schools that I work in a lot. And one of my trustees or the trustees from the school was in here but I think she stepped out.

The trustees were having their meeting and then during the public comment section a young man, maybe not quite 30, came to the meeting. And he had brought his partner and their two young children. And the two little girls fell asleep in this late evening school board meeting, and they were students in that school.

And he got up and was really emotional, but it was amazing to see him muster all the courage that he could and stand up in front of that board and say I need your help. I don't have a place for my family to live. Is there any way you could get us into the teacherage even for a while and I'm going to cry.

He said I'll work it off. I'll come at night and clean and do whatever you need, but I need a place for my family. And there was nothing they could do. And yet those kids are going to show up in the class the next day, and teachers and administrators and school staff are going to do what they can.

But everyone else that can impact that circumstance should feel a moral obligation and should do whatever it takes so that everybody has a home, so that everybody feels safe, so that everybody feels as though they have an opportunity. And schools can't do that alone. Teachers can't do that alone.

So that, and then that even translates a step further, that we need the funding streams that we get from the state and federal government, need to be comprehensive in their approach. I remember several years ago we got a large Drop out Prevention grant that we were to target to American Indian communities.

And we all know the work of trying to keep one kid in school is really complicated and takes a whole lot of effort. And you have to be comprehensive and holistic in how you think about that. And just directing it to a new program that's going to be the silver bullet and keep that kid in school is not in any way going to work or be successful.

In Montana, with our school improvement grant, and I am really fortunate, some of the trustees from our schools, Frazer, Lame Deer and Prior, and one of our administrators are here. And I have to say thank you to them because they've allowed us, for the past four years, to really walk alongside them and do the really deep work of school improvement.

And these boards and our administrators in these schools have gone the extra mile. And they have gone above and beyond and are really focused and driven and passionate about the work of improving their schools.

But the federal government allowed us to be flexible and to be more comprehensive with that school improvement grant. So we weren't just working on academics. We were working on mental and emotional supports. We were working on infrastructure. We were working on data collection. We were working on bringing the community and culture into the school.

So we were grateful for that funding stream, for the partnerships and for the opportunity to really think holistically about how you improve schools.

One of the pieces of that that I'm so proud of is our work with Wrap Around. Wrap Around is not a program or a service. It's simply a network of people who are trained to work with young people and their families and their support systems to use their strengths and assets, not their deficits, to use their strengths and assets to help that youth and anybody that loves them and cares about them, on a daily basis, chart a course to greater success.

So it could be something as small as I'm not able to get up in the morning because I stay up really late. So how is that team going to problem solve and help that kid solve that one problem. And then that kid, something inside that kid blossoms. But also what's really powerful is something in those team members blossoms too.

And everybody begins to realize that no problem is too big or too great if you take it in steps and chunks and move over time you can accomplish anything, and especially as a group of people working together, which Indian people, we have done. We have been outstanding communal group problem solvers for millennia.

And so it really ties back into our own sense of efficacy. And that's especially important, I think, because we could hear a lot from many of you about the symptoms of trauma that students live with and bring to our schools every day.

It can be something like a student isn't able to focus or they're distracted in class one day because they're already thinking about the next traumatic event that's going to happen to them, maybe that night, maybe later that week or over the weekend.

And so they can't learn the math problem that's up on the board because their brain is trying to help them survive in other avenues and in other ways. So that Wrap Around is really culturally aligned to the values of indigenous people and really honors that sense of self.

I know I'm going to run out of time so I just want to talk about a couple of pertinent issues really quickly. Joyce definitely wanted me to be sure to talk about Indian Education for All and the Common Core Standards.

We are so fortunate in Montana that, you all know this, we have a constitutional mandate, we have legislation, we have funding, we have resources to get into the hands. I hope you've stopped by our table out there. But everybody always walks by and we have all those materials, and they say, these are free? We're like, yes, elect the right people and they're free.

And so it's amazing that all this stuff is out there. And we're able to create all these great resources for teachers to be able to use that other states don't have. They really are envious. And that we were able to take the Common Core Standards and use the 15 percent that all states were given and make sure that we incorporated American Indian content across the board.

We're the only state to have done that. Other states with Indian populations are using ours. We've aligned or are in the process of all those resources you see out there, aligning them to the Common Core so that they can be of great use to teachers.

And we like the Standards. They're rigorous. They place high expectations on all kids. And that's what we need. We need a high bar. We need to help kids get to that high bar and support them in any way possible.

But it does us no good to just set a lower standard and to live there and say that's good enough. So that's my little plug for the Common Core.

One really quick thing I wanted to talk about was data. We have these great reports that we generate each year. They're the entire state and how American Indians do across the state in many different areas.

I would encourage you, just as one example, if you don't know how many students dropped out from your high school last year I would ask you why. Because I guarantee, in our small rural communities, in some way, your life has touched many of those young people. You've crossed their paths, you're related to them somehow.

We need to understand them, reach out to them and bring them back into the fold and keep them in our schools. So this is just one source. I would grab a copy, download it every year. But, again, take it back and begin to understand your local context in a even more profound way.

One thing that we're really proud of is that we have now developed an Early Warning System. It's an online, live time, dynamic data system. I can't say enough about it. It looks at all the risk ratios for students that are at risk for dropping out, attendance, grades, referrals. And those are all ranked in what, statistically, is most reliable and most valid.

The data guy should be talking about it. He makes it sound cooler than I do, but. And then it can tell you, on a daily basis, with all of your students and all of those factors, what their risk ratio is of staying in school or dropping out.

And so if you know that, if you see those red flags in that system, you can begin to employ interventions, whether they're academic, behavioral, emotional, whatever you need. And then we become our own little researchers.

And we say, wow, did that treatment that we applied to Johnny work? If it did, great, he's back on track. If it didn't, why not, what do we have to do? Do we try something else, do we adjust?

That's the kind of continual improvement cycle we have to live in today if we're really going to do the work of improving our schools. So check out the Early Warning System. We're going to be going out there this fall and piloting it in a couple of other American Indian communities. So if you might be interested we're onboard with you.

The last thing I want to talk about, quickly, is Graduation Matters because it's awesome. How many of your communities are Graduation Matters Montana communities?

Yes, okay. So we have 43 communities that have launched GMM initiatives. They make up 75 percent of the high school population. Twelve of those are in American Indian communities, Browning, Heart Butte, Box Elder, Hayes Lodge Pole, Rocky Bay, Frazer, Wolf Point, Lame Deer, Arlee, St. Ingatius, Hardin and Prior.

And you guys rock. You're doing the hard work of getting people in your school and your communities together, like I was talking about, and trying to problem solve and use your resources and be flexible and be innovative. And you can't, you know, you've got to give yourself a pat on the back for that every day because it's really hard, but it's really necessary.

And it's paying off because, for American Indian students, just this last year the dropout rate for high school students went down almost a full point. And that's huge. It doesn't sound huge, one point, but it is.

So when people come together from all parts of a community you can address your the answers live within you. And they live within the people that you work with and the people that you drive by every day.

So I guess, in a nutshell the one thing I really wanted to say last, in closing, I'm a full advocate of these partnerships. And I think tribes, it's complicated, I know, but tribes need to get involved, no matter what the histories or not matter who's pointed fingers at who in the past, tribes need to get involved in public schools. And public schools need to let them get involved.

There's just no other way. There's no other way it's going to work for American Indian kids if people don't break down those barriers and say, well, I don't like them because of something that happened 15 years ago. That doesn't even have a place anymore.

We're too good, our kids are too good, and we just need to figure out a way to move forward together and break down those barriers. So thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Mandy. Next we'd like to invite up Ms. Brandi Foster. She is of the Iowa tribe of Kansas and Nebraska. She is also the Director of American Indian and Minority Achievement with the Montana State Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in Montana. So welcome, Brandi.

MS. FOSTER: Thank you. That's a tough act to follow. Nice job, Mandy. Hi, again, I'm Brandi Foster.

I'm with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and I've worked in higher education for about 18 years, specifically in issues of access and equity and with the Montana University System for about 14 years.

The mission of the Montana University System is to provide opportunities for teaching and learning for all citizens of Montana. We have 16 campuses. And every semester we serve about 47,000 students with the help of 8,000 employees.

We're governed by a Board of Regents who are appointed by the Governor. And the staff office that serves them is the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Ed, which is where I work. My office is the Office of American Indian and Minority Achievement.

And so we have a system level commitment to ensure that we're serving the indigenous population of our state. We do that, I advise the Commissioner, the Regents and the Presidents of our campuses on all aspects of the functions of the campuses, academics, student services, human resource, community outreach and research.

We do have system level policy to support those efforts even though we are much more de centralized than the Office of Public Instruction. Campuses have a lot more authority and autonomy on how they fulfill the promise of that mission.

We have statewide system policies on enrollment so that we want to make sure we genuinely reflect the demographics of our state, both in our study body and in the people that work for us. We have curriculum policies that state that we need to build awareness on multi cultural issues and that every single campus, sorry, every single campus offers a course on American Indian history, American Indian culture and specific to the people of Montana.

That is one of the ways in which we support the Indian Education for All mandate. Our process of doing that is a little bit different than OPI. We don't have necessarily the same funding streams that come into Montana University System to do those things. But we still have it as an obligation and a responsibility.

We also support, through our office, funding state dollars to our Tribal Colleges for non beneficiary students. So students who are not tribal members but who attend the Tribal Colleges of Montana, the state does provide some funding. And that's sent to us and we then, in turn, give that to the Tribal Colleges to help supplement some of the cost of their education.

As far as our Indian student enrollment, in the fall of 2013 we had 2,275 students who self identified as American Indian, which is about 5 percent. And if you know our demographics of our state, about 6.5, 7 percent as American Indian, you can see that we don't quite fit, we don't quite measure up to that goal.

However, the good news is that the number is increasing. And we are finding ways to increase our service and increase the ways that students experience success on our campuses. Every year we

produce credentials. And that's the students earning a degree of some sort, associate, certificates, bachelor's, master's and doctorate.

And about 3 percent of those every year are earned by American Indian students. So you can see that even though our enrollment is at 5 percent our degree production is at 3 percent. And so there's a gap there and we need to really work with all our partners to determine what can we do to improve that.

One of the things that we look at is the need for remediation. And so when you come to college you take a placement exam that shows how prepared, academically, you are in English and in math. And for our American Indian students about 50 percent that come to us have to take at least one remedial course.

Now that's all students. That doesn't mean they came straight from the K 12 system. They could have taken some time out or be coming back to school. But that is certainly higher than our general population and we want to make sure that we are working with our partners in K 12, with our Tribal Colleges and with adult basic education to make sure that we're preparing people to be ready for college.

As you probably know, if a student comes in and has to take 3 credits or 6 credits or 9 credits of a remedial course before they can even get to a college level course, the chance for success is diminished. Students are making lots of sacrifices to come and explore higher education. And when that time is expanded because of their preparation we have a lower chance of success for them.

Some of the areas of focus that we wanted to talk about just to make sure folks know is, of course, we are committed to serving our American Indian students. We have many programs on our campuses that are specific to targeting our American Indian communities.

We have the ILEAD Program at MSU Bozeman which takes American Indian teachers and helps them develop skills to become administrators in rural and reservation schools. We have the Native American Center of Excellence here at Missoula that's for health professionals to get into Pharmacy and Bio medical Sciences as well as a research lab that is funded specifically for Native American research.

We do a lot of academic and social support. We have GEAR UP. We have Talent Search and a lot of those programs that we're very proud of. The one thing that is common or often common to those programs is those dollars are funded through the federal government or through grant programs.

And so one of the things that we really need to focus on is how do we ensure that we're supporting and sustaining those programs appropriately. That's important work and we're very happy that private institution and the federal government wants to support that work in our state. But we, as a state, also need to make sure that we're supporting it.

We do focus and have been focusing quite a bit on the retention and recruitment of American Indian faculty. We know that our students, if they have people on the campus that they can connect to and that they can trust and feel that, understand them, that they'll do better.

We also just feel that it's important to have diversity in our academic discourse. And so the problems of the world and some of those problems that Mandy talked about as far as social issues that we have in our communities are only going to be solved if we have a diversity of perspectives at the table when we ask those questions.

So we really feel that's important. And we do have some specialized recruitment programs to get, to grow, our own faculty so that you can come through our system, learn the skills on the content and then we help you develop the skills on what it means to be a researcher and a teacher.

We are working very hard to collaborate with our Tribal College partners. As you know, the Montana University System does not oversee our Tribal Colleges in this state. And we have seven wonderful partners who we work with to ensure that we are both serving our students appropriately, as we share many of them.

We currently have been working with colleges. In particular, we finished an agreement with Blackfeet College, and are working with Salish Kootenai College on joining them with a common course numbering system through our Transferability Initiative.

So the Montana University System was funded by the state legislature to change our course numbers and prefixes so that students, as they move around the system, don't have to repeat courses or aren't told that their courses don't count.

So we've done that internally and now we're inviting our non system partners into that process. And it's been a great learning process for both of us and to understand how we can share our curriculum and how we can make it better. And we hope that our students will feel that the learning is respected regardless of where that's taken whether they come from a Tribal College to us or they start with MUS and go back home to attend a Tribal College. So that's something that's very exciting.

We also work diligently on financial literacy, helping our students understand how they pay for college, helping their families understand that. And we work to collaborate with OPI to support the Common Core in our teacher education programs and Graduation Matters.

The theme is really about, like Mandy said, how do we all pull our resources and knowledge and specific responsibilities together to serve the mission that we share.

One of the other initiatives that we're working through is making sure that our staff, faculty and administration is culturally responsive in providing opportunities for professional development and training so that when you send your children and your sisters and your brothers and your moms and your grandpas to us we provide a welcoming and appropriate environment for learning.

So those are some of the things that we're doing. Again, I just want to reiterate that the Montana University System really does take its mission for teaching and learning for all people of Montana very seriously, and I look forward to continue working with you all as we do that. Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Brandi. Well, we're going to shift gears just a little bit now and turn some of the discussion over to you as the audience. We would like to spend the next 30 to 35 minutes talking or listening from some of the tribal leaders that might be here.

I have a list, for those of you who signed up, and, again, for any of the leaders that are here in the audience please move up to the front row.

We have the two microphones, one right in front of the panel here and then over here. Way over there in the corner, come on over if you like. Let's kind of gather in. I need binoculars to see that far over there, but please close in a little bit here.

And this will be the opportunity to provide public comment, any comments from leaders. We'll also open it up in a short while to any of the folks who may be on the telephone line, so we'll hear from them as well.

So first on the list we have Billy Jo Kipp, the President of Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana. Give her about five minutes or so for providing any comment or feedback.

MS. KIPP: Five minutes you're giving me? No, just kidding. Thank you, Bill, Joyce and Nate, for allowing this discussion. I didn't know I was first on the list.

A couple of things that really struck me with the previous conversation is that when we look at the graduates in Montana and 65 percent of the undergraduates are attending Tribal Colleges. And so it's really important to recognize the contributions that Tribal Colleges play in Indian education.

However, we play these important contributions but we don't get near the funding that our counterparts of U of M or MSU get. Currently, for our students, we're funded at a level of \$5,800 a year. When we look at that in relationship to historically black universities who get about \$18,000, this disparity exists.

And I'm glad, this in on record, right, because it's really time to look at that educational disparity. And if you look at the amount of money that the University of Montana receives, MSU Bozeman receives, but yet they're nowhere educating 65 percent of our undergraduates that are being educated in the Tribal Colleges.

And I really have to underscore that of those 65 percent that are being educated in the Tribal Colleges the largest graduate pool is coming from Blackfeet Community College. And that's from your Web site. So it's really, you know, data is important. Data is key.

But we've got to recognize if our funding streams are going to the University System's and we're not in a good relationship with our Tribal Colleges we're missing a huge resource, a huge, huge resource. So it's important to recognize that.

The other data I have, and I've got five minutes so I'm trying to get it here, is when we look at our USDA partners like MSU and what the money they get, they get approximately, state, get about \$300 million

for research. The Tribal Colleges get \$1.8 million that we have to compete nationally with each other for. So 37 colleges compete for \$1.8 million.

And the HBUs get \$43 million in research from USDA. So you can see the disparity in research. Tribal Colleges are prime grounds for research. We do community based research that's important to our community, that helps the health of our community and helps the health of our nation.

The other thing I heard Ms. Smoker talk about and Brandi talk about is the ability to benefit or those remedial course work course. And what we know right now, and recent statistics said that 86 percent of Indian students across the nation want to go to college. However, a recent report by ACT said only 56 percent of our, 50 percent, less than 50 percent of our students are ready.

Most of our students don't meet the four earmarks that ACT says you're ready for college. So guess where those students end up? They end up in Tribal Community Colleges. And we continue to educate them and provide the education they need to get them ready for college.

But yet we get the poorest amount. And our ability to benefit, our GED programs have diminished to nothing. But yet it impacts us. It's important to our communities. So we do that. It's really important. And so we do that.

I heard Ms. Smoker talk about the ratio of students who struggle and how we have to look at those statistics. But we've got to start rethinking that. If we continue to look at a deficit model about what's wrong with our students we're missing the resilient ratio.

There's many of us in this room who have been through a lot of adverse problems, who have come from the reservation but nobody's measuring what does it take to get you through. We can't continue to subscribe to those deficit models. We have to change that paradigm. We have to move past that.

And the other thing that OPI talked about, and it's very interesting because it really tells you how we really need to align together and how we need to dialogue better. Because the Tribal Colleges are that place where 65 percent of Montana students are going, not to U of M, not to MSU, but to the Tribal Colleges.

And at BCC we have a Behavioral Health Aide program that now we are working with Browning Public Schools to certify their teacher's aides this summer in a Behavioral Health Aide model because we know

our students struggle with trauma. We know our students struggle with those needs attached to poverty and impoverished areas. Those are the things our students struggle with.

And it's time for us to work together to equip our communities, our teacher's aides, our teachers with skills that will help students get through. But we don't get any funding for that. BCC is doing that because we recognize it as a need.

As a Ph.D. clinical psychologist, I know these things exist. I know these things impact our learning. But we're not going to take it as something that's going to defeat us. And in this hearing, if there could be any changes in funding towards Tribal College, advancement towards Tribal College support, that's what we need. Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, President Kipp. I'm going to ask for actually a tribal leader, Shelly Fyant, I hope I said that correctly, from Nkusm Salish, from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, if you'd come up and provide some comment. Thank you. And if you would, please state your name for the record.

MS. FYANT: Can I stand over here?

Mr. ST. PIERRE: Sure.

MS. FYANT: I just want to face everybody. I don't want you to see my back. My name is Shelly Fyant and I serve on the Tribal Council for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes on the Flathead Reservation. So welcome to my homeland. This is our Aboriginal Territory. I just wanted to welcome you here.

So I am on the Tribal council. I also serve on the Arlee School Board as the Chair for one more meeting. Arlee is a public school. I was recently appointed to the Two Eagle River school, which is our tribally controlled BIE funded school.

I also serve on the Salish Kootenai College Foundation Board, which is a Tribal College and Nkusm is our Tribal Emersion school in the community of Arlee. And so I'm tied to that as well. So I don't know which hat I'm wearing today but I'm going to try to cover all those issues in my comments.

My passion, one of my passions had been the education of our tribal youth. And I think it's because of my background. I'm a parent, first of all a parent. I have four sons. They have been, I guess, designated in the public school system as anywhere from special needs to gifted and talented.

So that has helped, I guess, shape my perspective on everything. One of my sons went through a public school on the reservation and he was never diagnosed with a disability until after, when he went to Montana State University, flunked out, went to Salish Kootenai College, and then he was finally diagnosed as having ADD.

So that's one of the things that I bring to the table. I have raised those four sons. I worked in a public school as a student advocate/mentor. Like I said, I serve on the local Arlee School Board and the Two Eagle River school board.

I have also worked over 15 years at the only all Indian Job Corps in the nation, which is at Kicking Horse Job Corps in Ronan. And I have served on parent committees throughout my life from Head Start to Indian Education committees and other board appointments.

And I guess one of the most disturbing circumstances to me is that as native we're always below, we're always below the average. It's just so sad that everywhere we go it seems like in the statistics we're always below, and just how much below are we?

And I understand the poverty, all those things that Many mentioned, the trauma, on this she didn't mention was the substance abuse. And that's just full blown in all of our communities. But I think this Presidential Initiative provides a unique opportunity for decision makers to design programs to overcome these things.

I specifically wanted to talk about Two Eagle, which is our BIE school. Our students receive 61 percent of what is provided for students who attend public schools. And this is due to a state and federal funding determination that could be fixed. And I think this presidential initiative must find a way to equalize funding for all students.

This school, this year, had a technology budget of \$245. Not \$245,000, but \$245. In this day and age and with the reliance on technology this is simply unacceptable. Our students deserve better. Last night I read the GAO audit on the BIE, Indian education. And we support their recommendations to improve that.

One of the problems that I think might be unique to Montana is that Two Eagle River school, and I believe the Northern Cheyenne Tribal School are the two tribally controlled schools in our state that are not eligible for any kind of stat funding because they're designated as private schools. And I'm not sure if that's a federal or a state designation.

Because we lack status as a state or a local educational agency we're denied the opportunity to participate in many grant programs such as the Carl Perkins funding, Race to the Top, Impact A & B, At risk Payments, Quality Educator, Indian Education for All, Multi district Co op Incentives, JOM, et cetera.

So if that's something that could be changed that's something we need to look at. As far as my role with the Arlee school board, our biggest issue is the impact aid payments and the timeliness of those payments. We are a school that relies heavily on impact aid and in this day and age, and I'm sure a lot of you are in the same situation, our funding barely covers our staff and faculty's salaries.

And now with the added health care insurance costs we have almost zero money for operations. And we were luck enough to have a couple grants, demonstration grants, that we awarded but it just puts undue pressure on our schools.

And lastly I wanted to speak towards the native language monies. Nkum, as I mentioned, is our Tribal Immersion School. It's currently funded through the Esther Martinez grant. We're in the process of writing, oh, actually it was submitted last week at another ANA Grant and Tribal Dollars.

And in talking with the administrators of that school, and they came to the tribe for funding and one of the things that was asked of them by another council member was well, we give you all these tribal dollars and public schools get only \$5,000 per student or whatever as a base funding.

And as a tribe, we're funding you at a much higher level. And the question, or the response was well, what is our education worth? And, bottom line, as Salish people, we might have a different definition of what a quality education is. So when are we going to be afforded that opportunity to define, as Indian people, what is important as far as a quality education? So that's all I have.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Shelly. I would like to invite any other tribal leaders.

MR. KENNEDY: Hello, my name is Jim Kennedy. I'm from Fort Belknap Indian Community Council. Gros Ventre at large, White Clay, I guess, would be politically correct.

I came here today, some of the things that we have going on in Belknap I'm really proud to be a part of is we're actually going to, because we are new elected officials, when our president does sign off in the impact aid is not necessarily hold it hostage but look into that budget, see what we've got going on in terms of resource for our students.

Because we've got about 90 percent kids in one of our schools that are domiciled on our reservation. But we don't want to look like the bad guys. So, I mean, any kind of help that would come from your guys' end would be much appreciated.

It would be nice to see more students here at these, knowing what's going on at this level. I know, in Fort Belknap, I got a meeting, Division III meeting, because I am the Oversight of Education. We invited our students to come over, you know, eat pizza and read letters of concerns, what they want to do with their education whether it be language, cultural resources or anything of that nature.

So it would be really good to see them here as well. But I'm really interested to hear some of the educators' opinions and stuff. And hopefully it will be taken serious, not cosmetic. Just to note, because they're in the trenches right now, doing what they have to do to educate our kids because they're with them a good proportion of their lives.

So, I mean, that's really all I got to say. It would be nice to have support when we do look into their budgets and see what's going on. I heard talk about that's going to happen. I heard you talk about it at MACIE, so it was good to know that. We're almost on the same paths there. Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you. I just want to address real quick the youth involvement. Typically we do invite the youth wherever we go for the Consultation. And we're working to expand that engagement and outreach working with Unity and Center for Native American Youth and a lot of the mobilization that's going on around the country, around those specific areas of getting that feedback.

And we're also looking at how to incorporate that into our formal Consultation policy and to be able to account for that on a regular basis. For this time, we worked and took the guidance of MEIA, knowing that they had a parallel Youth Chat that's happening right now. And I forgot to speak to this in my opening remarks but I'll actually be departing with you all a little bit earlier, and I'm sure you'll forgive me for that, because I'll be addressing them directly. And we're also hosting tomorrow a conversation

with boys and young men, particular to the President's My Brother's Keeper Initiative that I spoke about earlier.

So I just wanted to make sure I touch base on those. And I think you bring up an excellent point on examination of those budgets. And I really applaud you for that and kind of want to put our heads together and maybe touch base with Mandy on maybe some technical assistance in this area to kind of help tribes look at how to assess that budget and how to get what initiatives are in place and kind of understand that better.

And I think that's a great idea. Sorry. Go ahead and please state your name and tribe.

MR. WILSON: Good afternoon. My name's Dana Wilson, Vice Chairman of the Crow Tribe Executive Branch.

You guys are the we met a little bit this morning. And I have my back to the main crowd, so I guess I'll be preaching to the choir today. You know, sitting here and listening to this dialogue, a lot of this talk, it's good. And that's why we're having this. We have our ideas. Hopefully you guys can write them down and do something about it.

I grew up in a little school. I went to school, a little tiny school, Wyola, Montana. We talked about that this morning. And I just kind of want to talk a little about school, culture, language and how it affects a child and how it kind of forms their foundation, everything.

The problems that a lot of schools have, especially on reservations, like attendance issues in high schools, dropout rates and a lot of that is, you know, the cause of that is we all have our own social problems. There's poverty and problems associated with that, alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling.

Gambling's a big one, you know, like a lot of these people, they gamble quite a bit and they do a lot of, a lot of child neglect. I really like the idea that Ms. Smoker talked about, kind of that when there's a group they all kind of get together and solve problems.

We all know what the problems are. How do we solve them. Graduation Matters, well, that's a awesome program. We need to get our kids graduated from high school prepared to go to college, prepared to Tribal College, prepared to go to universities or whatever.

One bit of my own personal experience, I went to school late. I've become a non traditional student. I came to school here at the University and I had to take a lot of those remedial classes that you talked about.

I took, I was lacking sixth grade algebra. My daughter was in sixth grade and were doing the same, kind of landmark, I was in my 30s, she was a sixth grader and we did our homework together.

It took me a little bit longer. I finally, I graduated. I took calculus, those types of classes, and I was able to do that. But if I hadn't had that strong support system at home, you know, my wife and my kids were there supporting me, you know, I was able to do that. But not a lot of people have that.

And the university, as far as a support system, was kind of, well it was kind of weak. They had directors in these programs supposedly for Native American Indians. And you go over there and, really, it was like maybe I was a white guy that was Indian on paper but we had no connection to the students.

In order to retain a student they need to go somewhere where they kind of feel at home, like that Native American Center over there is an awesome place. You go down there. You might not be the same tribe as everybody.

I look around, I see a couple people that I went to school with. This guy here, those two ladies in back. We're Indian people. You know, we're not the same tribe but that's a place where we hang out. We share some of the same problems, we go through some of the same things.

And now it's a support group. And I think that those types of support groups are crucial to anybody's success in college. Another things is, what I'd like to see is in the urban area, when you get a Native American kid from the reservation that goes to an urban school, that's a shock. That's a huge shock.

My daughter went through that, she didn't do well, when you first leave school because, you know, she wouldn't. And most of her peers, most of her classmates, they were non Native. She was maybe the only Native in there. And it took her a while, you know, we had do some things the school district was somewhat supportive.

And then the same thing could happen too, like my youngest kids, they started school. They were going to school here in Missoula, a place called Lewis and Clark. And the very first day we walked in the door

and this is what we see, all these flags of the Tribal Nations in the state. And anyway, seeing those was awesome. So they went and they really enjoyed going to school there.

And we went back from Missoula and onto the reservation, and that was another shock because they were used to, you know, they were all natives at the same place but yet they were kind of seen as aliens because they were basically ahead, kind of far ahead of everybody else because of curriculum and stuff like that for whatever reason.

But kind of that's basically all I got to say today. And while our schools are doing a great job, there's 128 students in K 8 and they're the only school on the Crow Reservation that met AYP. And they have a really strong culture program. My mother is a teacher there. She teaches the Crow language, culture. And my grandmother went to school there, my mom went to school there and I went to school there. So we were kind of basically lifelong residents of Wyola.

But out of those 128 kids, I was talking with the principal this morning and she said that there's 17 kids that got perfect attendance out of that 128. And that's better than 10 percent. So I'd like to give a shout out to the Wyola school. They're doing a great job, perfect attendance and they must be doing something right.

So if anybody's got questions on that, on making AYP, any Indian schools, go talk to Linda. Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Do we have any tribal leaders on the telephone line?

OPERATOR: Ladies and gentleman, if you would like to make a comment please signal by pressing star-one on your telephone keypad. If you're using a speakerphone please make sure your mute function is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment.

A voice prompt on the phone will indicate when your line is open. Please state your name before posing your comments.

Again, press star-one to make a comment. We'll pause just a moment now to allow everyone an opportunity to signal for comments.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Remember, we're asking for tribal leaders only at this time. Apparently there are no tribal leaders on the telephone

OPERATOR: And no comments from the queue at this time.

MR. ST. PIERRE: I think we'll go ahead and open it up, then, to public comments. We have a list here. The first person on the list for public comment, and if you would please come up to any one of the microphones and state your name and where you're from for the record. Iris Kill Eagle, who is Gros Ventre and Assiniboine, from the Indian School Board Caucus. Iris?

MS. KILL EAGLE: Thank you. Iris Kill Eagle. I'm the President of the Indian School Board Caucus. I'm also the Board chair for the Dawson Public Schools.

And I need to clarify, I am not Gros Ventre and Assiniboine, but I am Little Shell. We weren't considered Indian for a long time, so I'm proud of the fact that the state has recognized us and hopefully we'll be nationally recognized, federally recognized, I'm sorry.

But I am here to speak for the small schools. We border the eastern part of the Fort Belknap Reservation and we are 82 students grades K 12. And we are 99 percent Native American. And out of those 99 percent we have about 50 percent who come from out of district. They come from Harlem, which borders the western end of, northwestern end of the reservation. And we get students from Hays.

And I want to speak very strongly for the importance of Impact Aid, for something to be done with that. As an Indian School Board Caucus we are fighting to get Impact Aid to be taken out of the education dollars and into the taxes where they belong so that we don't have, we aren't forward funded.

And for a small school, to try to set your budgets and not knowing if you're going to get 60 percent of your Impact Aid, 70 percent, 80 percent, if you're going to get it the year you're supposed to get it or if you're going to get it the following year, it's really hard to set your budgets.

Right now we have small schools who are in very grave danger of closing. If you don't have any kind of reserves you're going to, and with the sequestering going on, you're in definite danger of closing.

Small schools are very vital. The students that we pick up are coming from larger schools like Hays and Harlem because they're either getting lost academically, they're in the wrong, you know, when you get a large group of students they have a lot of peer pressure, they're getting in trouble.

We've taken in a student who was expelled out of one school and come to Dawson and is doing very well. Basically she felt she fit in better. Our classroom sizes are small. What we're dealing with now is, because we're small, we have combined classes. We have first and second grades together, third and fourth, fifth and sixth.

We are having to, we're conforming to the Common Core Standards. We started that right from the get-go. And I think Common Core Standards is wonderful, I really do. But when you have a teacher who is teaching two curriculums because they have a combined classroom and then they have some students who are low performing either academically or they're a disciplinary problem it can be a problem for both sets of the students.

The ones that are the higher end, who aren't getting the attention they need because the teacher is busy trying to get the lower end coming up or there's a disciplinary problem. So what we're dealing with, what we really need very vitally is extra income or extra monies for aides in the combined classrooms to help the students that are struggling to make the Common Core.

I'm a strong believer that Native Americans are very capable of meeting the bar that has been set. I've always believed that, and that's why I support the Common Core. I wasn't sure about it at first. But we still, we need the financial support to help this happen. And Impact Aid is going to be vital in that.

And I'm going to hold Jimmy's feet to the fire. I'm really glad he made it here. I've been on the Board for over 20 years. And when I first got on the Board we didn't want the tribal governments to have anything to do with our Impact Aid, with anything because we were always afraid they were going to administer it and then there was going to be administrative costs, there was no we didn't trust the tribal governments to have anything to do with helping us get our funding.

I think we have gone past that now. So I am very proud of Jimmy for making it here and hopefully we'll get more tribal officials getting involved. And Jimmy can start that for Fort Belknap reservation.

And, like I said, I think small schools are very vital and I just, I hope to be able to find more funding. And Mandy has been, I think, very good to help us. And I guess that's all I have to say. Thank you

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Iris. Next, I'd like to invite up Ms. Carmen Taylor. She's with the Aaniiih Nakoda College, Fort Belknap, Montana.

MR. MENDOZA: If I could, real quick, just to, you know, Impact Aid and, spoke earlier about this too. Just took center stage with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

And as much as the Department is trying to respond to, in historic times, recent historic times, two major changes to Impact Aid that were retroactive. You know, that is still a reality of not only doing a very large formula program and in conjunction to those retroactive changes, and then just the realities of forward funding and how that affects other formula programs in addition to the appropriation levels across the board not necessarily matching what the authorizing levels are.

It's really complex issues around those issues. And we just continue to try to seize this opportunity to engage more meaningfully with our Office of the Impact Aid Programs. And this is kind of what has set the stage for this initiative, to engage in new and different ways in these conversations.

And as Consultation has strengthened tribal leaders to be more active in that process and to utilize the mechanisms that are codified right now and to look at new and different ways of what that looks like into the future.

MS. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity. I'd like to start off by first thanking you, oh, I'm sorry, my name is Carmen Taylor. I'm the Academic Dean at Aaiiinh Nakoda College.

I would first like to take this opportunity to thank you for us being able to participate for several funding cycles of Indian Education Professional Development Programs through the Office of Indian Education as that has been a great opportunity for our local tribal people to earn their teaching degrees.

And it has put many more teachers, Indian teachers, into our local schools. I hope that we'll be able to continue that. I'm going to kind of ditto a few things that Dr. Kipp, President Kipp, said about Tribal College funding. But I'll try not to be too repetitive.

I think, certainly, and this goes more to the Bureau of Indian Education and Interior than it does to Department of Ed, but the AIHEC colleges are requesting to adopt a 5 year plan to address long term Tribal College inequalities in federal programs.

And as President Kipp mentioned earlier, we get \$5,850 per Indian student. And the other, the historically black colleges and universities and the Hispanic serving institutions get way more than that. We were originally authorized, in 1978, to get \$8,000 per student. And we have not made a lot of progress toward that in the years of our existence.

Specific to Department of Education, Title III is critically important to Tribal Colleges and Universities. And once again, we would like to see an increase in that. But here is a comparison. FY 2013 pre sequestration, Title III discretionary funding versus Historically Black Colleges and Universities totaled \$317.3 million. And Title V programs for Hispanic serving institutions received \$109.6 million.

The TCUs, which, by any definition, are developing institutions, were appropriated \$25.76 million. A specific area within the Department of Ed that we are really interested in seeing some change is in the Adult Basic Education, Family Literacy.

And states and territories received \$493 million, TCUs and tribes, specifically, nothing. And I know here in Montana, there are currently no Tribal Colleges that are able to participate in any of the state Adult Basic Ed.

Up until 1994 there had been a modest set aside for tribes and Tribal Colleges. And in 1994 that was eliminated. We would certainly like to see that re instituted because we have the highest high school dropout rates, the highest unemployment and the highest poverty rates in the nation.

And with the launch of the new GED the need for this modest program is even more critical. The fix for this is simple, no cost and life changing. It would just be a modest set aside of what currently is available. And I think that would end my remarks. Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Carmen. Next we'd like to call on Mr. Robert "Smokey" Rides at the Door, Browning Public Schools.

MR. RIDES AT THE DOOR: Thank you. I too would like to say I=m from
(Audio issues)

Here we go. Many years ago I was on a Tribal Council and I know that when you stand with your back to people there's an opportunity that you might get an arrow stuck in it. So I've learned to face the crowd and at least accept it from the front. I didn't hear any councilmen laughing, so.

I think to just kind of get started here, Robert Rides at the Door, member of the Blackfeet Nation, served on many, many committees, presently serving 14th year on the Browning School Board.

Browning has about 2100 students K 12. We work closely with our tribal Head Start. We also work closely with Blackfeet Community College. We're the largest Indian school in Montana, of course. And we're the third largest in the United States.

We have a large representation on both the state boards and national boards. Our Board feels that it's important that we have that representation so that when these types of Consultations happen, that we're at the forefront of that so that we can actually form, manipulate, and also insert language that will benefit Indian children, especially in Montana.

One of the concerns that I had mentioned this morning was that many times when we talk about education, when the White House calls for Consultation on Indian Education, that the people that were invited very seldom visited the schools.

Our elected officials, I know, are busy. We haven't seen an elected official in our school board meeting for probably three years. And when Bill and I first talked about this many, many months ago, I know his enthusiasm was there because he had just been appointed as a special trustee and getting together the tribes.

And our conversation was that if you talk about Indian Education, invite the people that are there to participate in it. The schools from Montana, very important that we have that opportunity to say that piece.

And if it's through our Council or if it's through our Superintendents, if it's through our Boards, it doesn't matter, as long as we have that opportunity. And today I was very happy to see that that type of meeting is taking place today. And I think with that kind of message, and if we can get the support of our tribal councils, and I see a lot of vacant seats here, I hope that we can get that message across to the Congressional people, that there is people that have the knowledge to address those concerns.

And what we need to do is we need to make sure that that type of information is given at the Congressional level. One of the things that I need to really stress upon the fact is that Impact Aid is not a

education program. It's a tax payment owed to the tribes, to the schools on properties that are not taxable.

When we talk about all the other programs that are in the education area, yes, those are entitlement programs. And, yes, those can be scrutinized by those types of political maneuvers such as sequestration.

But I think the important thing is the fact that even Montana's formula for Indian schools is so complicated that most of you would have to have a degree in economics to realize that the same that Impact Aid is, the lot system, 100 percent lot, 100 percent enrollment, the divisions as to how you're getting paid on a 45 or 65 or 85 percent entitlement or allotment from that formula.

So I think that when we talk about these types of Consultations we need to make sure that we have that type of information on those legislators' desks. We go back three times a year and we pound on those desks. But we pound on the desks of those politicians that don't know what Impact Aid is about because they're combining all of it.

The other day I was looking at how much money the United States is going to give the Ukraine and, you know, it amazes me that it's over a billion dollars that the United States is going to give in foreign aid. For why? So we can protect that pipeline that comes through southern Russia.

But yet we're fighting for education monies for our children that was given to us by that treaty. When the Blackfeet gave up their 36 million acres of land it wasn't that we'd be there every day beating on doors of legislators to fund the education of our children.

But it was, should be an obligation through the Treasury Department that it gives us that money. And what does that do for us? It might eliminate us from going to D.C. three times a year. But at least we would know how to budget our obligation and our agreements with our teachers for three years with steps increases of payment.

Now we can secure that. Right now we're in the middle of that and we don't know what we can do because we don't know what next year's Impact Aid is going to bring us. Sequestration again? We're \$800,000 they took out of our Browning budget.

And we did oppose Impact Aid going to tribal governments because if you even take the simple fact of 20 percent, indirect, that the tribe would charge we're losing \$1.6 million. That's about maybe 10 or 15 teachers, that are Native teachers probably, that we would have to let go.

And so you can see where even the tribes in the school boards that are Indian-controlled need to meet, and they need to continue to negotiate, cooperate and then push this whole idealism forward.

Because if we continue to fight over these crumbs that the government gives us for education in Indian country, we're going to be like those little birds outside. We're going to be flying around trying to peck at whatever hits the ground. Well we, as Indian people, have more dignity than that.

So I just thank each and every one of you, special panel, to be here and the gentleman that keeps giving me the two minute warning, I thank you for that too because I can spend all day up here. You know that. Thank you.

MR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Smokey. Next on our list is Robert Baluk or Baluk, Indian Impact Schools of Montana. Sorry if I mispronounced your name, sir.

MR. BAYUK: My name is Robert Bayuk. It's B as in Boy, A Y U K. I am the Executive Director of the Indian Impact Schools of Montana. And Iris and Robert sort of just stole my thunder because they took what I was going to try to tell everyone here.

But one of the elements I wanted to talk to you about in terms Impact Aid is that Impact Aid is for schools that are tax based schools that do not receive taxation from their community.

There are 71 school districts in the state of Montana that receive Impact Aid. But there are also schools such as Great Falls. Great Falls schools receive Impact Aid because of the military base. Gardner and West Yellowstone receive Impact Aid because they are federal land properties.

So Impact Aid impacts a lot of different schools. Now every year we are facing lower and lower budgets. And as an example of what Robert just said I brought with me three examples of schools that receive Impact Aid.

Every year they budget based on their application of how many students they have in their school. And they are given 100 percent allotment, is what they're supposed to get.

So this year Browning Elementary School, they're full lot would be, for this year, \$7,147,000, no, excuse me, \$7.7 million. \$7.7 million. This year they received \$6.1 million. That's \$1.6 million Browning Elementary Schools did not receive.

Now I would venture to guess that \$1.6 million could go a long way in Browning. It can go a long way in any school district that is being cut at 20 percent. And they received 80 percent of allotment, which every school in the state did, but that is without sequestration.

Sequestration was cut out of this budget just this year. So you're looking at another 5 percent of that budget. So it would have been, instead of 100 percent allotment, it would have been 75.

And sequestration is going to continue until 2022. It's just that this year it didn't go through.

So you're looking at another 5 percent reduction every year until 2022 unless they cut it out of the budget. These schools are not going to survive. They're just not going to survive.

So I would urge the Department of Education to work with President Obama to work on a plan to assist Impact Aid in not being forward-funded every year into being funded every year at 100 percent.

And, like Robert said, and many other Impact Aid schools across the country agree, the Department of Treasury is really where this program belongs. It is not an entitlement program.

Yes, it's educationally a component but it is still taxation. So I would like to urge that since you have President Obama's ear, that you would maybe talk to him about that.

I didn't say anything about my upbringing. I'm probably the tallest, thinnest, whitest guy in the room. And I group up in Shelby. I'm three quarters Bohemian, one quarter Irish, so I have no Indian-Native American blood in me.

But, hope that's okay with all of you because I'm fighting for all of you and I actually enjoy the battle. And I'm going there in late August to speak to Congressional members and Senate member who, many of them don't vote for Impact Aid because they don't have Impact Aid in their districts.

There are a lot of, there are 435 House districts in the United States and many of them don't have Impact Aid. And so when it comes down to funding something they don't have why would they bother doing it?

Once again, that would be important to move this from Education to the Department of Treasury and perhaps, I see many people nodding their head in agreement here, that that's maybe something you need to start letting Congress know about. I thank you so much for your time.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Robert. Next on our list is Sandra Boham, Salish Kootenai College.

MS. BOHAM: So I have two kind of comments. One is from Salish Kootenai College and the other one is from the Montana Indian Education Association.

So I'm going to start first with Tribal Higher Education. And I'm not going to get into a whole lot of it because you've heard it already from my fellow higher education institutions on Tribal Colleges.

But we really need to look at our Tribal Higher Education TCA funding. We need to try to get that up to a level that's on par with the money that non tribal colleges receive.

We're also, would like to tell you that we've had the benefit of some of the Demonstration Grants and that we've enjoyed the opportunity to participate in those. I believe the last one we had was dealing with early childhood education which was a excellent project for us.

And we're looking forward to seeing more of those. We know that as funding becomes more critical all of these programs become more competitive with less programs being able to be funded.

The same with the Professional Development Grants, and I'm just going to not go into that a whole lot. You heard about that from my colleagues already. And also about the Adult Basic Education. And I would advocate for a set aside for that, and you'll hear more about that so I'm not going to go into that as well.

The other piece that I want to bring up about Tribal Colleges is that we would really like to see, most of us in the Tribal Colleges, we need to have high levels of education to be able to be qualified faculty members and competent administrators in the schools that we work for. But none of us are going to get wealthy working in Tribal Colleges.

And so we're looking at how we might be better able to provide professional development opportunities for Tribal College personnel either through buyback programs or scholarships or something to provide an incentive for college faculty and employees to further their education and know that they'll be able to pay back the loans and other things that they accumulate in seeking advanced degrees.

The other thing is, as we're moving into, and this is a dual issue, but a dual issue, and it's going to be dual. You'll hear it. Schools, K 12, the high schools are looking and asking more for dual enrollment and early college opportunities.

I think all of us think those are very important. And we really want to reach out and give that opportunity to high school students that are juniors and seniors, who really could benefit from these programs.

But they come with an ethical discussion. And the discussion doesn't happen very easily, at least in our state. And I know it isn't happening at the national level either. And that has to do with funding.

Students who are in high school receive no funding to go to college as a dual enrollment high school student or as an early college student. That's not my issue.

My issue is that when you start taking those courses, whoever pays for them, and they're put on your transcript, once you matriculate and you begin going to regular college those credits you took as a high school student count in your financial aid cap and count in your financial aid timeclock.

That's great, unless you've had no advising or you were put into some vocational track and you got a one year certificate in Forest Technology where, really, what you wanted to be was a Forester. And so you have used up a year, at least, of your financial aid eligibility and now you're not on track at all for a four year degree.

And so you have to backtrack and do some additional work to get to that four year degree. And by the time you're a senior you have maxed your financial aid capability.

Now it's a equity issue, it's a ethical issue for me. Because if you are a student that is not economically disadvantaged it doesn't matter. But if you are, it does. And our students are, in great numbers.

And so I would like to see if somehow the Department of Ed can look at creating some sort of identification of those early credits and having them not count in their cap for financial aid. Because it's something that's meant to be a benefit and had unintended consequences.

So for Montana Indian Education Association, a couple things I would like to say. We support the Impact Aid request for full funding and the Johnson O'Malley programs and all of those for their full funding, Title VII as well.

And we would like, and I know, Joyce, you've been working on this but I'm just going to back you here, we'd really like some stronger language in Title VII about how the eligibility for that works. Because I know you're redoing the Form 506 but right now it says, "Tribal idea, if readily available."

I'd know you're changing that but the school districts have been having ongoing battles with Title VII directors about what that means.

And also, that it is intentionally to provide services to American Indian students, period. Right now a lot of school districts, as their funding gets tighter, they look at Title VII and JOM and a whole bunch of other funding that's for Native students and they want to spread it out amongst everyone because they need services too.

But this money is specifically for American Indian children and it needs to be, the integrity of that needs to be maintained.

And then the other thing is early childhood education. Early childhood education is incredibly important. And right now it's not always funded at a full level in programs like Head Start and Early Head Start.

And also in the school districts that choose to run full day kindergarten and some of those earlier kind of programs in the public schools, because if they're Impact Aid dependent those programs are not going to be, early childhood programs funded by the school district are not going to be as much of a priority as meeting the needs of their K 12 students.

And so those are some issues that we have that I'd like to share, and thank you very much.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Sandra. Next on the list we have Mr. Stephen McCoy, also from Salish Kootenai College.

MR. MENDOZA: Mr. McCoy, before you take the mic, I just want to try to bow out here, leaving you in good hands, of course, with Director Silverthorne.

We have the matter of record, of course, that I will be reviewing with our team and others. And also going to have my Chief of Staff, Ron Lasarte, who I neglected to introduce at the beginning of my remarks take my place here at the table.

I will be around throughout tonight and tomorrow and just look forward to the continued conversation. And thank you so much for being here today. Thank you.

MR. MCCOY: So again, I'm Stephen McCoy, Director of Academic Success at Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, Montana.

This issue has been touched on a couple of times already today, but I am going to cover it again because I feel it is of great importance for Indian Country.

And I apologize, Carmen, I have a different date. My date says 1996 was when the federal government zeroed out all federal appropriations for Adult Basic Education that we're targeting in Indian communities and Tribal Colleges.

You're probably right but, either way, it was a long time ago that this happened. In Montana there were just a couple of Tribal Colleges that were able to secure AEFLA funding under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act and operate federal and state funded Adult Basic Education programs.

Unfortunately, neither one of those two colleges continue to receive those funds and haven't for the past couple of years. As has been mentioned, we're hoping that it would be possible to create a set aside or, I've been told it may be more politically correct to say a reservation of funds, ironically, so that Tribal Colleges and Tribal communities can have direct access to these important monies.

As you all know, Native communities often have the highest dropout rates, the highest poverty rates. And it is very vital that they receive funds targeting helping students improve basic skills, helping them earn high school equivalency diplomas, et cetera.

My department at Salish Kootenai College, our department, also serves students who need developmental education or remediation. And, as has been mentioned, that's a high percentage nationally of Native students.

At Salish Kootenai College it varies between 70 to 80 percent of our incoming students very year require developmental education in at least one subject.

And Adult Basic Education could be a potential solution for this problem, especially compounded now by the fact that with the federal financial aid timeclocks it's more and more difficult for students that need to start in developmental education to finish their education before they run out of funding.

And if the tribal communities had better access to Adult Basic Education funding it would certainly help with that issue as well. Thank you.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Stephen. Next I'd like to see if there are any comments on the phone. Anybody on the phone line?

OPERATOR: There are no comments at this time. If anyone would like to ask a comment please press star 1 on your telephone keypad.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Okay, then. I don't know if there are any other folks in the audience who would like to provide comment. Please step up to the microphone.

We'll take the gentleman up here first. And if you'd please state your name, where you're from for the record.

DR. SMITH: I'm Dr. Charles Smith. I'm the Acting Superintendent at Heart Butte Schools. I'd like to talk to you about Title I also.

Title I was set up to offset taxes, which we've already been told, for reservations, also large federal tracks of land that do not have a tax base.

In my previous profession I was a First Sergeant so I understand the military side of the Impact Aid also. We are damaging our children if we do not fund Impact Aid, both our Indian children and our military children.

But the thing that really appalled me was last year, when Secretary of Defense, Hagel, stated as a cut in the military budget he was going to do away with Impact Aid.

Well, I think that we need to take back to President Obama a suggestion that his cabinet members talk to each other, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Education.

They all need to be on the same page when it comes to our children. And we need the Impact Aid because, as has been stated earlier, we cannot operate several of our schools if we do not have this money because we do not have that tax base. And I'd like to thank you all for allowing me to speak.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, sir. Next we'll go with Linda Brien, who is the Principal and Superintendent of Wyola School.

MS. BRIEN: Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm Linda Pease Brien. I'm a graduate of the ILEAD program.

I wanted to thank the Department of Education for that opportunity to become a educational leader and now a school superintendent at Wyola on the southern end of the Crow reservation.

We are very isolated there. We are more a part of Wyoming than we are of Montana economically and with transportation and those kinds of things.

I also wanted to quickly clarify that my Tribal Leader who needed to go, Dana Wilson, I wanted to clarify that we, the school that I'm superintendent of now and I've been in Cheyenne Country. It was a wonderful five year tour of the northern Cheyenne and I'm back to my own country again.

We did make AYP and the elementary and 11, 12, but we dropped a couple points and we fell out of AYP and back into restructuring. And if you follow that story, if you make a whole bunch of gain you get into safe harbor, and then you make AYP and you get a lot of press about it.

But truly, to make AYP is to make the big scores up in the 80s, 90s percent now. And that's very difficult for anyone in school, any of the schools on our reservation.

We are the school that has the highest scores and most high in math because we believe in a program we have worked with, it's Everyday Math, and some professional development there.

But mostly I wanted to talk about Impact Aid today. Mostly I wanted to talk about the status of the buildings that were built in the 50s.

That's all we have. We have 30 taxpayers in Wyola 30. And we have no way to raise money through tax dollars to expand our school.

We have 60 children coming from Lodge Grass which is 13 miles north of us because our school is much more safe and has academically served the Crow people in a much better way, much better outcomes. And so they find every way to get their kids there.

And our school is burgeoning at every corner. We're using in between two classrooms, in front of two bathrooms, in kind of a foyer in a really old modular we have a little classroom set up. The group that goes out there that does their group work in reading because the classroom is so small.

We have anywhere from 20 down to 10 in each grade, but mostly up in the 20 range. I had to split two grades this year in order to serve them because it was getting too big. It was a combined classroom.

And we have to find ways to even have counseling sessions that are confidential. We don't even have a space for that, much less a closet or the corner of the gym when it's not being used.

In the same series, we didn't look, or my predecessors years ago weren't looking at building a new school when everyone got their wonderful new schools in the 90s and 80s. They were just fine and happy with our little old 1955 school.

And now are so stretched on the sides. And we have one old modular, one other old modular, one new stick building that's built crooked and the doors are going sideways that was built with a construction grant from Impact Aid in the early 2000s.

And then we have a modular, a newer modular that's kind of starting to tip. It's not a modular, you see them manufactured. And it's just on stands and on a gravel bed. And that is where our library is.

We devoted that to a public library so we would have a place for people to go and read. And so when that's open in the evening for a public library.

So we've given our space for a community and our children deserve some place nice to learn. We have no space to go anywhere more. And on top of that we have no housing for the teachers. And there's no way that we can get I'm commuting.

I gave up the house for the special education teacher. She's much more important than me to the survival of that school. And so I gave up the superintendent's house for the special ed teacher.

She's wonderful. She's Yakama Indian and Nez Perce, and it's exciting to have a person of that talent in my district. And I'm commuting 50 miles each way, 100 miles every single day so I'm pretty much cross eyed now by the end of the school year, after the winter we had.

But I can't even provide housing for my teachers. And so I can't get teachers. We have expanding expectations in middle school funding. I need to find three or four more teachers.

Maybe financially I can do it this year with Impact Aid. But I could never do it if we lost the Impact Aid funding or if it was greatly, greatly reduced.

We need construction grants. We need ways to expand, even in small ways, that we can bring in some matching money. But I'm here today to ask that Impact Aid make us aware that there will be construction grants this year available in a timely manner.

There were some last summer that got introduced and eaten up between the former superintendent of Wyola, Jason Cummins, and myself. There was a month there in between and no one knew it, for our school.

So we really would like to see the construction grant program open up again for this year, and hoping that the people at the Department of Education will hear this. Thank you very much.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Linda. We have one more on the list, Mister, excuse, Dr. Richard Littlebear, Northern Cheyenne. He's the President of Chief Dull Knife College in Lama Deer, Montana.

DR. LITTLEBEAR: My name is Richard Littlebear and I'm President of Chief Dull Knife College on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Lama Deer, Montana.

Many of the issues that concern Tribal Colleges have already been discussed and one of them that's frequently discussed, though, are the operational costs.

The funding that you hear about from 1978, that was legislated, \$8,000.00. The one thing that isn't mentioned is that that \$8,000.00 are 1978 dollars. If that were calibrated to today's funding, it would probably be three or four times as much. So I want you to be aware of that to whomever the funding questions go to.

And even though it's been repeated quite often by Dr. Kipp and Carmen, I've been with the Tribal College movement since 1995 and I've heard this at least five times every year and nothing has been done.

Probably, as long as I am here with the Tribal Colleges, I'll probably be hearing this again and again. In the meantime, money goes to somebody, as Robert has said, it goes to Ukraine. And according to some of the whatever questions were asked of people, citizens of the United States that were asked, where's Ukraine? Some of them put it out in the middle of the ocean, some of them put it out in South of St. Louis. So maybe that's the kind of questions we need to ask. Where are our Indian Reservations? Where are our Tribal Colleges?

The other thing is, and this, I don't know if you have anything to do with this or if you have anything to talk to, if you ever have any occasion to talk to Senator Tester's committee.

One of the disturbing things that is coming out is that other Tribal Colleges, any student complaint will be settled by the Tribal Council. So it will be directed to a Tribal Council. That's going to tear up the autonomy that was granted to Tribal Colleges if that goes through. I don't know under what funding it is, but I know it's going to be directed towards 1994 grant/non grant colleges. That's going to be devastating for our Tribal Colleges because most Tribal Colleges B all Tribal Colleges already have mechanisms for dealing with student complaints. Why this is coming up, I do not know but if you have anything to do about it, I wish you would head it off.

The other thing, I have my back turned towards the timekeeper so I don't get to see him.

The other thing that is we're always hearing about sequestration and all of that and it seems to me like we should be exempted from that because of our special relationship with the United States Government. We are the only minority mentioned referred to in the Constitution and we have ceded a lot of land, we have ceded a lot of culture, we have ceded a lot of languages for the privileges that we do have, if you can call them privileges. But it seems to me like every year we have to go begging for whatever we get.

So if there's any way of strengthening this tie that was started by the treaties, all of which were broken by the United States Government. So somehow those have to be strengthened so that we can be exempted or whatever the appropriate word is for not being part of the sequestration.

Thank you for allowing me to talk.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Dr. Littlebear.

I think we have one more, please state your name and where you're from.

MS. GUARDIPEE HALL: Corrina Guardipee Hall and I'm the Superintendent in Frazer. I'm Blackfeet, Little Shell and Caucasian, an identity crisis, huh?

I'd just like to I'm a product, a homegrown product of Browning High School. I also had a scholarship to get my Masters through Browning public schools and I'm also a scholarship from the I-LEAD Program. I have had the opportunity to be a Superintendent in Alaska. And in Alaska, they had a strong Parents as Teachers Program and I believe that's something that can help Montana as well as the rest of the nation.

And studies have shown across the nation that if our children are not reading at grade three, that they are going to be behind and they'll never be able to catch up.

So my support is for Parents as Teachers, early childhood education and for a strong parental volunteer program.

I'm one of the lucky ones. In Frazer we did make AYP through Safe Harbor as well in our middle school and high school. When I started, our attendance was at 75 percent, it is now at 90 percent and that's a lot. And that's a combination of our School of Promise Grant and the funding that we have received there.

It's also a combination of our commitment of our stakeholders. We have a School Improvement Team that meets with all stakeholders and it's very strong. It's one of the strongest in the School of Promises.

So I'd just like to thank you for the support that we have.

We did put in for a construction grant last year and we were excuse me we were denied because we had 90 percent of our bonding capacity in our reservation school without taxes. However, we took the ball and we went for a bond and we passed it.

Luckily, we have Burlington Northern and some oil money that we were able to utilize. So we did pass our bond and we are fixing our roof and we are fixing our teacherage and doing some other remodeling.

So I just continue to ask that we all work together. And one of the reasons that we did get our attendance up so high is that we do have a strong partnership with Fort Peck Tribal Board and they have

a truancy court now that has really helped. It's probably one of the biggest things that have helped our school. It's not there yet, but it's made a big effort and they have a great Department of Education there.

So I just thank you for everything that you've done so far to support Native education in our schools and I hope you continue to do that.

Thank you.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you.

I just want to check one final time and see if there's anyone on the telephone like to provide any comment or feedback.

OPERATOR: There are no comments in the queue at this time.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Okay. I think we're about ready to wrap up with the open comment period and

MS. BOHAM: Can I say one more thing?

DR. ST. PIERRE: Oh, sure.

MS. BOHAM: I'm sorry, I just remembered something that I was going to mention that's kind of important for Tribal Colleges and that has to do with Relondi Fault calculations and I know you're going to hear more about this but, there aren't very many Tribal Colleges that do federal loans. But like Salish Kootenai does, and there's a couple others, if you get a 30 percent loan default rate for more than if you get it three years in a row, you become ineligible for all Title IV funds.

For a Tribal College, if you have ten students that get a loan, that means three of them, and you're there.

When you have a large institution that isn't heavily economically disadvantaged, the impact on your institution isn't that significant. But when you have the kind of student body that we have that's smaller, that tends to be almost 100 percent receiving some kid of financial aid, those loan default rates will kill us in a very short order. You can hit it literally with one student.

So just something to consider. Thank you.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you again, Sandra. Well, as we bring closure to today's Tribal Consultation I'd like to call up did you have something, Norma?

MS. BIXBY: So sorry.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Oh, okay. One final comment or feedback and then we'll move to the summary and closing remarks. So thank you.

MS. BIXBY: It'll be short. My name is Norma Bixby. And I'm the Tribal Education Director for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. And I've also been a state legislator and I fought for Indian education for a number of years now.

And I just want to say that I know that you have heard other, at other meetings, about TEDNA. And TEDNA is a very strong organization. And I believe I am the only Tribal Ed Department in Montana who is a part of the TEDNA organization.

It's a very strong organization. And with TEDNA's support and working with the National Indian Education Association, the Congress of American Indians and AIHEC and all the other organizations, we have been able to make change in education.

The STEP program is one of those changes. And it's a beginning. And I appreciate all the remarks where we can work together, Tribal Ed Departments, public schools, contract schools, everybody can work together.

And I know the dollars is what splits us. And so one of my recommendations is why don't I don't think Tribal Education Departments have really had the opportunity to work with our educational systems.

And I would like to propose, just like we did in Montana with Indian Education For All, we could not get Indian Education For All in our school systems because there was no money. We had no money.

And so we couldn't get the support of the school systems to implement Indian Education For All until Governor Schweitzer gave us a budget. And we were able to get money into implementing Indian Education For All. Well, the same with Tribal Education departments. Give us some dollars.

And I would like to propose a very unique idea, I think, that we, the Department of Education, maybe the Bureau of Indian Affairs, give us some Formula grant money, just separate from other funding.

Don't take it from anybody else's money. I know money's short. But we've got to come up with new money. And I agree with everyone, there's money there. Congress has just got to find it. Quit funding a few airplanes. Quit funding Ukraine.

In the words of Tommy Thompson, I always remember his words, we rebuilt Japan, we rebuilt Germany. Why not rebuild Tribal nations? We need to build Tribal nations and find those dollars through Congress.

And I think with support with the I should have brought some water with the support of the Department of Education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, you know, we can do this. But give us some extra dollars. Four programs isn't enough to create change, four Tribal programs isn't enough.

But I think we have shown that we can be successful through those grants that we do run, our Higher Education grants, our Johnson O'Malley programs, our Job Training money, that's what we run our programs on.

And we always try to help our school systems with what little dollars we have because education is a circle. It's a circle. And we can't be successful in higher education or job training or Tribal Colleges unless we put money into the circle, beginning with birth, through life. Because education is lifelong.

So I would like to propose that. But the other hat I wear, also, is the Higher Education hat and I'd like to reiterate some of the stuff that Sandra Boham talked about.

The credit limit is devastating for Indian kids. Our Indian kids get poor advice, they end up with a max, they don't have any funding. The loans are a problem. Higher education costs have skyrocketed.

And I would like to encourage you to keep the Pell Grant at as much money as you can give us because that helps us fund more students for college. And Northern Cheyenne, I'm proud to say, has one of the highest education rates of any tribe in Montana.

And so we graduate more college graduates than any other tribe in the state. So we're pretty proud of that. But we stretch our dollars and we make them count.

So please give those ideas some considerations, and appreciate your time. Thank you.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Thank you, Norma. Okay, I'd like to call on Mr. Ron Lasarte on behalf of William (Bill) Mendoza to provide some closing remarks.

MR. LASARTE: I just want to thank everyone for coming and on behalf of Bill Mendoza and the White House Initiative on American Indian & Alaska Native Education I want you to know that we hear your concerns. And we will take this back and work on these together.

And we are there for you, so please reach out to us if there's any way that we can assist. You have our contact information. So thank you again for coming out.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Joyce Silverthorne, if you'd like to provide some closing remarks.

MS. SILVERTHORNE: Thank you so much for everybody coming and staying. And I know this gets to be a long day of sitting and listening to people talk, but it's worthwhile.

As we're continuing to look at what the comments are that come in, some of them directly come to our programs, some of them are for other education entities that we work with. And we do have conversations with people as we go back.

This is probably the largest volume of comments that we have heard about Tribal Colleges today in the course of Consultations that I have attended. But it has been a good one and it's some of the overlapping issues.

Certainly our students K 12 are directly the students that attend the Tribal Colleges. We are connected, whether we're Bureau of Indian Education, public schools, whether we are doing the Immersion Program, Modified Immersion, interested in language, all of the programs that affect language have a relationship to one another and to the communities that they serve.

And so everything that we are looking at has an impact on another. As we continue to take this forward we will try to make sure that your comments, your words get into the conversation at the federal level.

I can't promise changes. I can't make it happen overnight. We didn't get to this situation that we are quickly. We don't unravel it quickly either.

I can say that being in the Office, being in the Department of Education, has been of critical interest, has been an interesting opportunity to be able to have conversations as simple as when you walk down the hallway.

We are looking for people to come to work in Washington, D.C. We are looking for people who are committed to education. If you are or know somebody of that interest please be sure to get us in touch.

Thank you for staying, and travel well. Anyone interested in Title VII, tomorrow at 10:45. Thank you.

DR. ST. PIERRE: Just a reminder also that if you would like to provide additional public comment you can go to the Web site www.edtribalconsultations.org.

And I'm not sure if there were other comment cards out on the front desk there or right outside the doorway. If you'd like to take one of those and provide written comment.

And I just want to say also that it's been a privilege for me to be sitting here and serving as a moderator. It's great to see such a wide range of educators and people from the different Native communities serving our children and our students throughout Montana.

I appreciate your interest and your time with us today and, certainly, your comment. And I would encourage you to keep this discussion going. We can inform others, we can learn from one another.

And we can help one another to make sure that our future is bright for our children and our families in our communities. So thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 4:15 p.m.)