

NACIE SUBCOMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

October 16, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Taken at:
Hotel Captain Cook
Voyager Room
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

NACIE Subcommittee:

Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison, Chair
Dr. Theresa John
Dr. Robin Butterfield
Patricia Whitefoot

Reported by: Sandra M. Mierop, FAPR, CRR, CPP

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PROCEEDINGS

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: I am Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison. I am the chair of the Advisory Council on Indian Education. With me today are two of the committee members that are also a part of the subcommittee that's been assigned to come here to Anchorage, Alaska. One is Theresa; and the other one is Robin. I'm going to give them a chance to also introduce themselves.

But I wanted to first say thank you to Theresa, especially, as well as Robin. I know they really pushed to have this particular public hearing for you all to be able to come forward, because one of the tasks that we have at hand on a yearly basis is to be able to report to Congress what's happening in Indian country as far as education is concerned; and we take that report very seriously.

We really want to give a true picture of what's happening and to make the recommendations to Secretary Duncan who also makes recommendations on to the President of the United States. And that's really our role.

That's our primary purpose and our primary role here as part of the National Advisory Council.

So what better place to do that than at conferences at NIEA. You came here for a reason. You're the primary stakeholders in the field of education. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here trying to figure out what's going on in whatever your role is as a parent or whatever subgroup you come from in Indian country to be here and learn more about how to better the education systems.

So, that's what we provided the chance for you -- that's what we're providing the chance for you to do today. We did this yesterday. We had about 15 speakers overall. There was kind of some interwoven themes that came out of listening yesterday.

We're not going to be responding back to your comments or concerns. I know that you can come up to us individually later, and I'm sure we'll give you some input as far as what we think. But the, really, primary purpose of yesterday and today is to provide you that opportunity to let us know what your thoughts are, what are your concerns, what are

some of the things that are happening that you feel like need to be addressed or need to be put into our report and into our recommendations.

We have done -- several -- I know Robin has been on for quite a while. I think Theresa and I have been on about the same amount of time, and we've done, as -- together we've done, maybe, four reports -- to the Secretary and to the -- to Congress.

We have had concerns that Congress never responds -- we don't know what they do with it. We've had concerns that the Secretary hasn't responded. But this past year we took a little different approach and we asked for responses back. We're a little bit more pointed with our approach than last time.

So this was even upping the ante a little bit by coming out to you -- giving us the information that you have. We take it very seriously, and we are going to get the transcriptions back, and go through that and present it back to the regular -- the whole council at some point soon. And then come back and see where we need to put that into our

report to also have it ready for both the Secretary of Education and Congress.

So, I'll give some time to -- I'll start with Robin, then we'll go to Theresa to introduce -- we also have Patricia with us, but she's doing a presentation over at NIEA. She'll be joining us in a few minutes.

Robin.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: Welcome, I'm Robin. I'm a Ho-Chunk Chippewa tribal -- member of both tribes, are in both sides of the United States. I live and work in the Northwest. I have been the president for three different states, Wisconsin, Oregon, Washington. I have, you know, worked in a wide variety of fields, but I've been a Title VII director. I used to work for a technical assistance center for Indian education, and so I've kind of seen Indian education from the classroom to Congress, basically. But I'm also currently working in Oregon reviewing about eight different Indian sites in our state that are using some State funds to improve Indian student achievement through language and culture grants.

So I'm still kind of out there in the field working with my colleagues.

So, I'm glad you're here, and I want to hear what you have to say.

I will add to what Deborah said. One of the other charges of NACIE, which is not just to advise the Department of Education, is to implement some of the requirements of the President's Executive Order on Indian Education. And that's sort of an expanded charge to actually look across the different federal agencies that have resources and programs to support Indian education. So, for example, in the Department of Agriculture there might be resources that could be used for education, or the Department of Justice, or the Department of the Interior that houses the BIE. So, we are supposed to be able to offer some support and insight around those kinds of issues, as well.

We haven't worked with them, really, at this point, but that is one of the charges out there that, you know, we're trying to pay attention to.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you,

Robin.

Theresa.

DR. JOHN: (Speaking Native language.)

I am humbled that you are here with us today. I'm Dr. Theresa John. I work for a graduate program center for cross-cultural studies, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and I would like to welcome one of my students who is here.

(Speaking Native language.)

President Obama selected us to be council members here, and I've been on since 2010. I would like to welcome this organization to the northernmost part of the United States. Thank you for being here.

And I teach -- I'm trying to indigenize the method of delivery, which is the Native language for an undergraduate and graduate program. The University is great with that. I partner with federal grants that are working with Yup'ik language and master's students. So we're trying to make some progress with the grants that we have.

We're very, very much looking

forward to your input, and welcome to Alaska.

Quayana.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: There's no particular order or anything. It's very informal, but we've been -- we've been letting people go ahead and speak. Sometimes they got up more than once yesterday. That's fine. We will end at 11:30 -- and then 1:30 to 3:30 --

DR. BUTTERFIELD: We're supposed to end at 11:00.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: We saw a different -- the one I saw was 9:00 to 11:00.

MS. LEONARD: The Federal Register notice said 9:30 to 11:30.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: Not the one that I read.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: I do have two people that have signed up, and some that have signed yesterday to talk today. But we'll go ahead and start with the two that I have. Jacquelyn Murray. So go ahead, Jacquelyn. I'll call you up.

Please introduce yourself and our reporter here will -- can I get a hug.

MS. CRACE-MURRAY:

J-a-c-q-u-e-l-y-n, C-r-a-c-e M-u-r-r-a-y.

So, (speaking Native language).

My name is Jackie Crace-Murray.

I grew up in Rural Alaska in primarily
Athabascan Indian and Yup'ik country.

I've lived in Pedro Bay -- I get
nervous -- Chignik Lagoon, Monokotak, Togiak
and Bethel. I'm getting ready for this thing.
(Speaking Native language.)

I'm Cossack on the outside, but
Yup'ik on the inside. I'm here today to
advocate for national support for indigenous
education. My story. I'm born in 1971. Four
years later a family of five drove the Al-Can
Highway to Alaska to start a new life of
adventure.

I grew up surrounded by
indigenous cultures and languages during my
formative years, and it's safe to say that my
identity was developed with a Native world
view. My story is simple, but it's important
because it's testimony that identity and
language are inextricably linked. We need to
support our languages and cultures by funding
schools with moneys for the development and

cultivation of indigenous education. We need to develop a culturally responsive curriculum that builds bridges between the Western and indigenous world views, and teaches our students in a way that is relevant to their lives.

We need to train our teachers to be culturally sensitive in a pervasive way, to reduce high turnover rates and address indigenous student needs.

Most of all, we need to continue to value and advocate for the inclusion and promotion of Native values and traditions so our students, in turn, feel validated and useful in today's technological world.

I currently work as the English language learner professional development coordinator for the Mat-Su School District and I'm pursuing my Ph.D. degree from UAF in applied linguistics which apply to revitalization. My particular training in language includes studying how the multilingual and bilingual brain leaps and jumps from language to language to create meaning; how students use language within their repertoire,

just like our students who live one foot in the indigenous world one in a western world. We need to find ways to mediate both in a way that leads to indigenous empowerment.

(Speaking Native language.)

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

The next one is M. Meeden.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: Mr. Meeden,
good morning.

MR. MEEDEN: My name is Marty Meeden, M-a-r-t-y, M-e-e-d-e-n, from California. I sit on the board of the California Teachers Association, an affiliate of the NEA, of which our dear Robin has retired from, and we do sorely miss her. It's so nice to see her walking the streets yesterday.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: Stopped me in the middle of traffic.

MR. MEEDEN: We did not see this in the program until late last night, so thank you for giving us a heads' up.

So I decided to speak today. And one of the issues is what our wonderful colleague here mentioned just a minute ago. It's heartfelt to hear those words.

MS. CRACE-MURRAY: Thank you.

MR. MEEDEN: I'm a 32-year veteran of the classroom, elementary school teacher. I'm here to speak on the conditions to keep Native speakers to become educators of our youth: college debt.

Most of our kids have no idea what they're experiencing once they get involved -- it's so easy for them to drop out when they start accumulating debt because it's easier to stay home than just get a job. So we
12 need to concentrate on how we can get tuition-free and/or interest-free loans, something for our kids and our tribes or the corporations, what have you, to start supporting our kids 100 percent. So it's not something that the kids are investing in; it's something that the communities are investing in.

The second is the lack of interest by the Administration in Washington, D.C. as our concerns continue. Doesn't matter whether they're Democrats or Republicans. It continues to be the same. Just not even lip service. Give us your input, and that's it.

I think we need to, you know, start flexing our muscles. I know NEA asked for the resignation of Arne Duncan, and I firmly believe that that caused some of the things to happen this last few months in regards to the waivers that are -- that were proposed by the Department again: Tuition costs, peer support and mentor support for our kids. Most of the time our kids are not in their home villages or communities. They have to leave, in many cases, hours away from home. So we need to work on something on -- some social network with our students on these campuses, be them a two-year campus or four-year campus. Our kids need to have support. We need to have our own representatives to give the kids the sites. Testing, testing, testing. None of us went to school to take a test. We went to school to learn something. These tests are killing our kids, keeping our kids from going to school. I'm still a poor reader, and I just looked forward to having that art class in the afternoon because I knew I could make the day if I made it -- after lunch, in the afternoon,

I had art. I could make the day. Now even art in many places has disappeared from our curriculum because of all this outrageous testing and culturally inappropriate -- I teach in Southern California. I don't teach many Native students. Even with the opportunities I do have, the Hispanic students and at-risk American students, many of those test questions are culturally inappropriate. I noticed that with the students I serve.

I'm sure it's worse for our Native students, the lack of respect by the continued use of stereotypes. If our kids don't feel good about themselves, how are they going to feel as adults?

I believe this Administration needs to take a stand that we need to abide by civil rights for everyone. No more mascots. No derogatory images. And the lack of truth in sharing our common history.

All of us have our own history, and our kids, in many cases, know that history. But they are never exposed to that history once they walk into the classroom.

So with that, I thank you, and I

would love to hear your comments. But I know you said you couldn't comment. But hopefully we'll get something.

Thank you very much.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

Rose Miller. Is she here?

Vivian DelaRosa?

Roberta Strong?

DR. BUTTERFIELD: They're not here.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: The floor is open for whoever would like to speak.

MS. LEVY: My name is Mery Levy, L-e-v-y. Mery, M-e-r-y.

My home is Hopi in Arizona. I live in Southern California. I am a first-grade teacher in a public school. I work a lot with the California Teachers' Association in -- along with the National Education Association, and I have been up and down California looking at our public schools.

In California, our public schools have a large amount of urban students, Native American students who have a tendency to not want to identify, but are now slowly coming out

and being identified.

They are connected to their home by leaving school on a Friday to go out for a ceremony on a weekend, or they're out of school because they go home and stay at home for a little while and come back to the public schools.

The problem is that they do not see Native teachers in our public schools. We have a lack of Native teachers or the interest of our students getting into education. We are experiencing -- which I think is fabulous -- trying to get into our sciences and getting into our health. Getting into the law degrees. But we're not endorsing and we're not emphasizing Native educators to be coming back and teaching in our Native schools on reservations, off reservations, in our public setting, and at home.

And that's a big concern for us.

Big concern is we're seeing that we want you to learn, we want you to learn our Native language, we want you to learn our Native culture, but we're not -- our Native people are not the educators educating them.

And I feel that we need to start supporting our teacher education credentialing programs in all of the states to get more emphasis on having those teachers being in a -- having a Native component in all teacher education credentialing.

That's all that I had to say.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: The floor is open.

MS. CROCI: Do you do early education?

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Sure.

MS. CROCI: Diana Croci,
D-i-a-n-a, C-r-o-c-i. I'm from Las Vegas.

I work for intertribal in Nevada, Child Care Development Fund, and I would like to see an increase in funds for tribal child care. They do focus a lot of -- you know, a lot of money goes to the State, but no focus really on tribal child care. And for me, I live on a reservation for six years, and the quality of the day cares, they're not good.

Even Head Start wasn't good.

I thought Head Start was going to prepare my daughter to be prepared for kindergarten. That's what they were saying, they were going to be focused to start kindergarten.

I volunteered to see what was actually being taught. It was mostly social. I thought my daughter on -- I thought she was reading. I thought she was a lot more than just colors. They kept focusing, we're preparing our kids for kindergarten. But I didn't see that there.

So, I would like to see more focus on getting our children ready for school -- for reading, four years old, three, four years old. And if we can focus the moneys to get our teachers educated and focus on that versus the social and the emotional, to get them ready, that will decrease dropout rates. That will decrease a whole wide -- just -- it would increase our children's self-esteem, you know. No more putting us in special education, you know. So, I'm a parent also, too.

So, thank you.

(Applause.)

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

The floor is open.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: My name is Quinton Roman Nose, two words, R-o-m-a-n N-o-s-e. Cheyenne. I'm a citizen of the Cheyenne Arapaho Tribes. I serve as the Executive Director of the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly, also known as TEDNA, and I just wanted to say a few words.

We were going to prepare a statement, but we didn't have enough time due to the lateness of the notice.

But I really want to say thanks to the Department of Education and thanks to NACIE for doing this. Unfortunately, the parents that really should be speaking up, they're not here. I mean, of course, you can't go to every community, but I can guarantee you, you can go to some communities, and you'd need a room, you know, five, ten the size to accommodate all the parents.

So, I appreciate you're trying to do this effort, even though the late date. And I appreciate the Office of Civil Rights producing the report last spring that dealt

with several issues. But I personally have an experience as being a Title VII Indian education director for about 16 years, was a tribal education department director for six years. I have several children. I have grandchildren in public school. I was a product of public school myself. But there's so many issues to talk about that, you know, there's really not a lot of time to discuss this.

Unfortunately, you know, the more intense discussions will be held by those parents who are called to a school system because their child is in trouble.

Unfortunately, in the public system that I came from, that's usually what happened. It wasn't until the child has a discipline issue and they had to call the parent that the parent came up and then, you know, the reason they're there is because of the adversarial relationship. They were not able to have a good, continuing relationship.

So, I think before it got to that point, there are some things public schools could have done on behalf of the parents. They

could have involved parents in many, many ways.

And it appears to me that just by observation that some administrators in public schools recognize this.

They recognize that you do need to involve all communities, certainly the Native American community, and some school districts have done real good involving Native American parent representation through a lot of avenues. But some schools, you know, are back to that, you know, we're not going to have a discussion about it until your child is in trouble, and then we're going to discuss discipline issues.

It shouldn't come to that. You know, there should be ways to address these issues prior to that.

I think it goes back to parental feelings of ownership of their school. I think a lot of Native American parents don't feel like it's their school. There is no ownership that they feel that, you know, it's partly of my school that I'm going to bring my kids in. So, I'm required to send my kids to that school.

And so once you get the parents more involved in all areas, I think a lot of discipline issues can be avoided.

So, I would like to say that the reporting system probably needs improvement. I think it's good. Some of the reporting mechanisms, issues were discussed needs to be expanded. I think there's some discipline issues that take place that are not reported. I think the ones that are reported are usually the ones that go to the head office, to the principal's office; not the ones that occur inside the classroom.

Certainly, at an elementary level, and going back to my own personal experiences years and years ago when I was in elementary, I've seen my share of Native children, and children of color, you know, receiving their fair share of discipline actions by their teacher.

Every once in a while you get a really good teacher who will work with you. But I think a lot of times, you know, if it was some discretion on the teacher's part, usually it went against the student of color.

So, I think those kind of issues, I don't know that it's reportable. Certainly, at an elementary level inside the classroom, but I wish there was that -- some sort of system, maybe a student survey, feedback system, anonymous feedback system that students can have to show those -- to report those issues.

But, going back to the reporting system, I wish that school districts that have a substantial number of Native American students would be required -- and I say required to involve their local tribal administration. Granted that some tribes may not have the capacity to deal with these issues, but there are some tribes that do have a lot of services who would like to get involved with the school system. And they're not invited to some of the meetings. But certainly in the reporting system, this type of data could be reported to the local tribes.

And that brings me to the reporting system and data.

There's a great need to -- you know, not only do we report them to the tribes

by students' tribal membership, there's a great need to look at how it's reported. Working in the public school and certainly in Oklahoma public schools, there are five Native American student lists within the public school district -- at least five. There might be more. Certainly, the official enrollment list, student walks in the door, enrolls, there's a box and sometimes students don't check they're Native American; they may sign the Title VII form to become a Title VII student. They sign the form for Johnson O'Malley. They may be identified through Impact aid. They may be identified as Native American through the free and reduced-lunch program. I don't know if that data is incorporated in the report. I think that the lists that I would use would probably be the Title VII Indian education list, because you look at most school districts, the Title VII Indian education students, that's a higher number than the official enrollment lists that a school may produce.

So I would like to see that included that the reporting is based on Title

VII Indian education lists, and not just the official enrollment lists that they do have.

I would like to ask that, you know, school districts be encouraged to continually try to partner with the tribes and tribal organizations, and also to encourage listening sessions locally.

I know the NEA and OEA held a listening session at one of the public schools in Western Oklahoma, and they did a really good job. They invited administrators and teachers to sit at tables with Native American students to talk about issues. I think that really worked out really well for them.

But I think in getting Native population, Native communities, Native parents involved at every level, I think it's such a positive influence. And I think you can -- if there was some way to measure community partnership with the Indian community, you would probably be able to correlate it to the data of those schools who have high incidents of disciplinary action.

So -- and those are the comments I have so far. And if I get a chance, I'll

come back.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

DR. JOHN: Quayana.

(Applause.)

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: 25 more minutes, then we'll close the morning session. If there's anyone who wants to speak, the floor's open.

MS. FRANK: Donna Frank. My name -- Donna Frank, F-r-a-n-k.

I just want -- I'm an administrator in Clark County School District. I used to work really close with Title IV. The Title IV 21st Century After-School Grant had a component where 25 percent of the money was allowed for parents -- to be used on parents. And I just want to echo everything that he said, too, that the more parent involvement that we see, the more successful our kids are going to be.

And I'm working now with Title VII and Johnson O'Malley, and that -- those two grants call for a parent advisory board, but I don't see a lot of that money being used to actually -- we have the information, but I

don't see a lot of it being allocated or used or allowed to be used for parents' involvement to get them more involved.

So, we need to do something about maybe giving more money to involve parents, and to keep tribal education committees and the tribal councils more involved with the education, with the district. I'm always pushing them to be more aggressively involved with what we're doing. But to get involvement, parent involvement is really tough on the reservation. So I'd like to see a little bit more effort by the grant to do that, or being allowed to do that, I should say.

That's all I have to say. Thank you.

(Applause.)

A SPEAKER: Will you do an update if they do respond? Will you do a follow-up to your questions?

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: To your questions, what we'll do is summarize it. We'll figure out a way to get it to the rest of the council. It will go into the reports that we do in June -- they're due in June to the

Secretary and to Congress.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: And then you give them a cutoff as to when you want a response?

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: We did, but we haven't received anything.

A SPEAKER: So if you do, you'll somehow get the word out?

DR. JOHN: Always feel free to check our Web site to read up on the reports that happen.

A SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. CRACE-MURRAY: Jacquelyn, Jacquelyn, J-a-c-q-u-e-l-y-n, Crace-Murray.

I spoke a little bit before as a Ph.D. student and administrator, but I think I need to speak from my heart as a parent, as well.

I married an Juaneno Indian from Southern California, so our two children, Jacob and Betsey, which is Aamauk and Mauveq for their Yugton names, they have Native blood, and I've heard comments in their schools that are just really disconcerting, and I know it comes from administration, as well.

So I'm just going to categorize it like this: I think that the State needs to do something about the overreferral of people who speak another language or come from another culture to special education services. I know that was alluded to a lot. Even in Mat-Su Title III, ESL population, it's just a really large number of overreferral for special education services for anyone that needs or speaks another language. It's not a disability. They should be referred to gifted and talented. It takes a very interesting perspective on life to have that. I want to put that out there as a mother, as well, that we should appreciate it and cultivate it.

Quayana.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: My name is Flora Sly. I'm educational liason for Cherokee Nation. I want to speak to the language issues; that we need to advocate for more funding. Many of the tribes across the nation now, we need funding for the language nest, but we also need funding for -- more funding for archival activities, because even with my tribe, the Cherokee Nation, and the number of

speakers we have, we're not producing speakers as fast as we're losing them. And so we're losing all kinds of information, and ways of doing by losing our first-language speakers. And so we're just needing more money. And I'm looking at the tribes who don't have the discretionary funding sometimes that we do, because they have no funding to do that. They're wondering how when they get down to their fifth, fourth, third remaining speaker, what can we do. And so I want to do that, but I really like, if we're going to create speakers and if somebody is going to do that, then they're going to have to work with the language. They need a mentor-apprenticeship program, and they need to be able to -- especially the apprentice, they need to support that apprentice so they can stay with that mentor two, three, four hours a day, instead of working, instead of being in a classroom. Because that's prohibitive to be on -- you know, they can't support their families and learn the language, and tribes don't have the money to support them with them learning their language.

And so those are just some things. But I really want to advocate for however a tribe might want to use it, that we have more funding and that it fund those language nests or language survival schools. We just need more. I just see people who are struggling with that. Thank you.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Good morning, Quinton Roman Nose, a director of TEDNA.

Thank you for allowing me to come back up here. I have a few more points I'd like to state, as I was sitting back there.

To get more community -- Native American community involvement, especially with tribes, I think that -- and I have to say I don't quite understand all the proponents of the new promise -- is it promise -- stop the promise zone designation.

From what I understand, the Choctwa Nation has applied for extra grants, they get extra plan because they are a promise zone designated tribe. So I would like to see the concept for those schools who have high incidents of disciplinary issues if they would involve the tribal -- local tribes in their

efforts to resolve these issues, and that they would be given additional points of consideration for any kind of discretionary grants that they may be applying for through all agencies in federal government.

And also the schools that have high incidents of disciplinary issues, I think that the federal government should require through their federal funding avenues, the Title programs to the school districts, that they should be required to meet with the local tribal education entities, whether it be the tribal education department or other social services, that they be required to have a regular meeting to deal with these issues. Disciplinary action in school usually happens when confined to the classroom or school building. I'm sure the students have issues outside the realm of the school jurisdiction and the time they're in school. That's why you definitely need to invite other tribal agencies and other social service agencies in the local area.

Secondly, I think that the states should be rewarded -- some states should be

rewarded for being more involved in Indian education.

Recent survey showed that some states with high number of Native American students they only have one person designated to work with Indian education -- Oklahoma and Arizona come to mind as I mention it. I've yet to find an Indian education office at the state level with more than three people assigned to the task. And so their offices and their capabilities need to be developed.

So, I would encourage that the states look at this issue and involve the tribes. I would encourage tribes to look at using their compact moneys to -- whenever they renegotiate compacts to include education, Indian education in their compact agreements with the states. I think this would certainly help resolve the issue.

And thank you. And that's all.

MS. MILLER: Rosemary,
R-o-s-e-m-a-r-y, Miller, M-i-l-l-e-r.

(Speaking Native language.)

Good afternoon. My name is
Rosemary Miller from the Confederated Tribes

and Bands of the Yakama Nation in Toppenish, Washington.

I am a public school educator, teaching my cultural language of the Yakama people tribal sovereignty and English. I've been in education about 40 years, from preschool through high school.

I've been with my district now for 26 years.

Previous to that, I was with the Head Start program for the tribe -- for the Yakama tribe for 12 years.

During that time, I've watched our children grow up many times not knowing who they were. I feel that the research has proven that our Native American children, our Yakama children need to be taught their culture, as well as their language in order for them to be successful -- to be more successful in the European mode of education.

The education that we have now seems to be inflexible. It does not meet the needs of our children. Instead of closing the generation gap -- or not the generation gap -- the educational gap, it's getting harder to do

that.

The way society is now, there's so many things that our children have to put up with. Their involvement -- their involvement of things that are pulling them away from their family. Things that are not giving them the tools that they need to be successful in this country or in this world. It's time that we paid attention to the needs of our families. We need to find a way to unite our families, all generations -- all generations with the school, as well as with the government.

There's much healing that needs to be done across Indian country, including my own reservation. We need to empower our parents. We need to show them that the Government is going to be true to their treaty, which they have failed on many occasions.

I watch these children grow up. Children that I taught in Head Start are now parents, and some of them are grandparents. Some of them have not gone any farther in the school system except maybe high school. And they are blessed to have graduated high school.

There is such a need on the

reservation for us to be able to go in there and build up our people and let them know that they are important to the education of their children. But the grandparents are not forgotten, our Elders are not forgotten, but are an integral part of the education of our young people.

One of the best ways to do this is through our language. We need to build up our Elders, once again, to let them know the power that they hold in their hand because they know the language of the ancestors.

So, today I hope that this will just give you an idea -- the children that I have in my language class, they're all wonderful children. And their parents are proud of them for speaking the language. One young man went home and he challenged his mother. He said something to her and she couldn't respond. So he chided her and he said you're older than me and you don't know what that means.

But if we can touch our young ones, it's going to start -- it will start a spark in the generations that were forced to

give up their language. And now is the time to do that.

Now is the time for the Government to truly live up to their so-called agreement, their treaty on -- their treaty that we did not negotiate. The treaty that was forced upon us. If it wasn't signed then, our people's blood would be spread on the earth.

It's time for the Native Americans to be recognized as the original people of this land.

We're not somebody that is "other" on Government forms.

We are the Native American people of this country. And we have a voice. And we have a right for our children to succeed as Native Americans, as well as the education that the schools would provide.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

(Hearing adjourned at 11:00 a.m. and resumed at 1:30 p.m.)

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to get started now, and it is 1:30.

I'm Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison, chair of the NACIE. With me today are two of our Council members: Theresa John and Patricia Whitefoot. We're all here mainly to just listen to you all. We wanted to provide a time to have a chance to hear from the stakeholders in Indian country to hear about maybe concerns or issues or areas that you think we need to consider in the challenges that we have to confront as far as informing -- I shouldn't say challenges -- but the duties we have to confront, and the tasks we have at hand to yearly report on the status of Indian education to Congress, and then the recommendations to the Secretary of Education on how we might want to make things better for our Indian children out in Indian America. That's what we're doing these last couple of days.

Yesterday we had two sessions. We had about 15 people all together yesterday.

This morning we had about five more that came forward. Maybe -- so right around 20 people have spoken. And that's a pretty significant number compared to what we've heard in the past.

So we're very interested to hear what you have to say. And we're not going to respond back to you, because that's not what we're here to do. We don't necessarily on -- we may have some of the answers for you, but at the same time, that's not what we're here for right now. We're trying to get it -- a lot of things that have been spoken about already or expressed to us have been areas that we have included in our previous reports to Congress and our previous recommendations to Secretary Duncan.

If you'd like to see those reports, you can go on-line on the Web site and see what's on-line, see what's discussed already, and what's been provided to both the Secretary and to Congress.

And so we're wanting to go even deeper.

And so I want to thank my colleagues, as well, that are on the Council, because I know they made the extra effort more so than I was even aware of to have this here during NIEA. We've tried it also with NCIA in the past, but it seems to me it seems to have

been more positively to have it for NCIA. The only thing is to have it where the conference is going on in the future, for you to have to figure out where we are, all of us. There would be more people if we were right there on the conference site. That might be something we'll consider in the future.

I want to say these words. We're also coming from different perspectives because we're all educators, but we're all coming from a different location. So you know that we don't necessarily have the same background, is what I'm trying to say.

For me, I'm coming from the public school sector as a superintendent for 14 years, and as a teacher in the secondary level and also at the community-college level. The tribally controlled college level I've taught. I'm coming from that background. I'm a member of the Navajo Nation. That's who I am. And I'm going to go ahead and let Robin -- we'll start with Theresa, and we'll go back to Robin.

DR. JOHN: I'm Dr. Theresa John. I'm a professor at the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at the University of

Alaska Fairbanks. I am from a Yup'ik tribe, which is along the Bering Sea coast.

I am humbled that this event is conducted here. And I also come from a large family where my father is a tribal chief of 60 villages in the Yup'ik region. And I've been with the University system for over 30 years all together, and have been involved in partnership grants that work with nontribal organizations, as well as the university. So, we believe in bridging, you know, organizations that apply to indigenous pedagogy, and development, professional development.

Thank you for coming.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Patricia.

MS. WHITEFOOT: Good afternoon.

My name is Patricia Whitefoot. I'm a member of the Yakama Nation, and I work in Toppenish School District in Central Washington. And I've been on NACIE -- I think I've been on NACIE about two, three years now.

I was appointed by President Obama to this role, and have been very appreciative of that appointment.

As was shared earlier, we did

have input also from tribal leaders at the National Congress of American Indians. I thought it was very positive to have the tribal leaders participate during our NACIE consultation that we had because, as a former tribal leader, I know how important it is. I'd been on my own tribal council, as well, and I want to make sure that as tribal leaders that our voices are heard, as well. I think it's positive that we're here with the National Indian Education Association. I appreciate the support that we get from the Department of Education with the Office of Indian Designation, and our Federal Representative Jenelle Leonard.

Every meeting we have to make sure we have a federally designated representative to have support and make sure that we're also following the intent of the law by listening to what you have to say toward making improvements in Indian country education.

Thank you.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: I'm Robin Butterfield. I'm a Ho-Chunk Chippewa. This is

about my 43rd year in Indian education.

Doesn't seem like it could possibly be that long.

I'm kind of semi-retired working in Oregon. I'm working on a project with the Oregon Department of Indian Education following up with grants that the State put out across the state to encourage our Native communities to use their language and culture for improving student achievement. So, that's just a brand-new effort.

I'm also very happy to be here. Did you mention about the White House -- the President's Executive Order?

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Go ahead.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: Because one of the other charges of NACIE is not only to oversee all of the programs and funding streams that impact the U.S. Department of Education, but even beyond that, under the President's Executive Order, there's supposed to be an interagency task force that is charged with looking at the resources available from all the federal agencies.

So, for example, the Department

of Transportation, the Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, all of those Departments also have funds and resources that could be utilized probably more effectively by our Indian communities. And to this point, there, I think, has not been much activity on that aspect of the Executive Order. But NACIE is mentioned in the law as having some sort of oversight of those efforts. So, we've been looking forward to sort of seeing where that's going to go. Because so far it hasn't gone anywhere. But we're hoping that it will.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: We're four members of a group of 20 that should make up the NACIE Council. We have 15 filled positions, and five vacancies that are currently being filled. So that's just to let you know.

What we'll do is when you provide your information to us, we will -- we have a transcriber here, so that we ask when you come up to speak, that you say your name and spell it out for her. Because I know some of us have long, long or hard-to-pronounce names, and we

want to make certain that you're correctly documented in the transcriptions.

And what we'll do with those transcriptions is summarize them and give them back to the whole council, and then also use that information to produce our report to Congress, as well as recommendations to the Secretary, and then also to reflect back on the Executive Order and see if some of those areas are also a part of what we're trying to work toward, as far as accomplishments and making certain -- holding Administration accountable, I guess, is in a sense what our efforts are.

So, you will have five minutes to speak, or longer. We've been letting people go longer. You can come up twice if you want to. But we're designated to have two hours to hear from our stakeholders in Indian country about education. How to make education better.

So you're welcome. I have about four names that I've been given. I'll go in the order that I've received them. If you're not ready, you can wait and come up later, like has been done in previous sessions.

This is our last session. So

here we go. We'll start with Kristin English.

There's no microphone, but we've been presenting from there.

MS. WHITEFOOT: State your tribe, too. You may want to spell out your tribe.

THE WITNESS: My name is Kristin, K-r-i-s-t-i-n, English. I am the chief operating officer for Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

I am a lifelong Alaska -- Alaskan Native. My family is from Southeast Alaska. I'm Tlingit from the Eagle-Whale Clan. My personal tribal affiliation is the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida, although I'm here representing my organization, Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

We will be submitting written testimony. I'm just going to speak to some of the summary recommendations from that.

Cook Inlet region is organized through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and recognized under Section 4(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. We are not a tribe. The structure here in Alaska is different in some way than in the

Lower 48, the states. We're a tribal organization and get tribal authority granted to us under the Native Claims Settlement Act through Cook Inlet Region, Incorporated.

With regards to comments about education, CITC offers the following suggestions: We think that the Department needs to increase the focus on early learning and work towards universal, voluntary prekindergarten education. We've done a lot of analysis in this area, and kindergarten readiness seems to be a very determinant factor in lifelong education outcomes.

We would like the Department to make a commitment to equalizing technology resources as a means to close achievement gaps, and we recognize that those technology and culture feed Native student success. A lot of our communities don't have the same access to technology, whether it's bandwidth or the cost of access here in Anchorage, but there's so much available through technology, and many of our families don't have wide access to that.

We would like to have new conversations about this to engage parents and

families. It seems that at all of the tribal conferences and at the listening sessions that is a theme that runs throughout our nation, and we are all working to increase family engagement in their children's education.

As part of the preK efforts, we'd like to see some second-generation learning and have the parents involved in learning how to be teachers of their children.

Another item, on the boring side, but we would like to get some assistance in recognizing tribes and tribal organization the federally negotiated indirect rate in lieu of the current administrative cap on most DOE grants. We go through a rigorous process to get our organization examined through the BIA and come up with a federally negotiated rate, and so when you have some funding come in that accepts that rate and others that are lower, it just puts a stress on the whole organization. We feel like the federally recognized rate is fair and equitable across organizations.

We want to see continued support of programs that show demonstrable results for at-risk students. I know with our organization

we often get three- or four-year grants, and just get chugging along on really showing results and outcomes, and then the priorities change and the RFPs change, and we have a hard time sometimes continuing doing what we know works and have to shift our focus according to the various Departments' priorities.

We'd like some continued attention on the priority and program goals listed in Title VII, part (b), the Alaska Native Equity Program or ANEP. It's distinct funding for Alaska Natives, and it is in there in part because the State of Alaska does not get BIE funding for education. And we worked with different education organizations and with our State Senators so that ANEP stays true to how it's written in that tribal organizations receive priority funding under that.

And that is it for the suggestions from CITC.

Thank you.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you, Kristin.

Second on the list is Agatha Shields.

MS. JOHN-SHIELDS: I'm Agatha
John-Shields. A-g-a-t-h-a, John,
S-h-i-e-l-d-s.

Thank you for being here. Thank
you for coming. I'm going to be speaking as a
parent, as an educator, teacher, a principal, a
former principal, and now currently a
university professor.

So as a parent, I raised my
children to speak our Native language, and I
got involved in the immersion program where we
integrated our language and culture for
revitalization. Then moved into being a
principal and worked with both the non-Natives
and our Native teachers to create a culturally
responsive curriculum, as well as a successful
program both for our Yugton language, our
Native language, and the academic standards.

And now moving into the
University level, I'm seeing that -- as retired
Native educators or as educators that are very
much familiar with our student population, we
still -- there's still a big need for
culturally responsive professional development,
not just at the public school level, but at the

university level, as well. We all recognize that there is an achievement gap between the other population and the Caucasians. We recognize that.

But we don't have the professional development within the university or the public school system, or we aren't utilizing our resources, which are Native educators, successful Native educators to become better able to connect with our student population. So that is one thing that I try to work on at the university level.

And then going to the next level with me being a student in a Ph.D. program, we need that financial support. I have tried working with the university level as a minority to increase the Alaska Native population within the University, but the funding is always the issue. We may get the people, but the funding or the professional development lacks support. Therefore, we end up not being as successful as we want to be. So just coming from the parent to the professional level and wanting successful children for all the other, mainly the population, we certainly need some sort of

financial support, as well as support to recognize Native professional educators to be part of the professional development within the nation.

So, Quayana.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

Thank you, Agatha.

Next on our list is Robert Cook.

MR. COOK: R-o-b-e-r-t C-o-o-k, Oglala, O-g-l-a-l-a, South Tribe.

First of all, I want to thank the NACIE Council for coming to the convention here in Anchorage and allowing this listening session. I think it's really important. Thank you for this opportunity.

I work for an education nonprofit called Teach for America. Teach for America was founded in 1990 by a college student who really felt that there was an inequity in education, basically, based on where people lived and where they grew up and created an imbalance in educational opportunities and resources. So Teach for America was launched.

Today, there's nearly 40,000 alumni and 11,000 teachers teaching in 48

regions across the country. In 2010, through the work of regions in New Mexico, South Dakota, Oklahoma and Hawaii, the regional directors started the Native Alliance Initiative to bring awareness to Native education issues throughout the organization. And so in 2010 the initiative was launched, and I was hired as a senior managing director.

So within our Native Alliance for Teach for America, we really have specific focus goals, and that's a lot of it was based on my work in Indian education as a former teacher for 20 years in our tribal schools in South Dakota, and also a high school principal, been a parent active in the community throughout our tribal education in South Dakota that we really struggled to bring teachers in our rural communities, and many times when I taught at a school, we continued to have open teaching positions. And so the priorities of the Native Alliance is of -- one is to recruit Native teachers. Prior to the Alliance, we had about 20 that have joined Teach for America. Today we have over 100. So we're becoming a strong recruiter of Native teachers across the

country. Also, focusing on culturally responsive teachers as a core response of the teachers that work in the Native communities.

I do have some recommendations that I would like the NACIE Council to hear. Because of the teacher shortages in many of our rural communities, we'd like to see a teacher loan forgiveness program. So teachers who would opt to serve in a Native in-school serving Native students, a high-density population of Native students, that for every year that they serve at the school, 20, 25 percent of their federal student loans could be forgiven. So if they stay four, five years, which would also address some of the retention issues of teachers, they could have most or all of their federal student loans forgiven. I think that would be a great benefit and incentive to bring teachers into, you know, our profession. Definitely be a preference for Native students. I know as a parent, my older boy, Lamont, is a junior at Black Hills State, he wants to be a high school teacher and he's taken out loans, you know, to pay for his education. So that would be, you know,

something to look at for him so he doesn't have to go into so much debt as he goes into the teaching profession.

Also, as a 20-year veteran of education, 16 years of my teaching career was spent living in teacher housing in tribal schools. Many of the housing that our teachers live in, housing as provided by the schools, are in pretty rough shape. There's definitely a shortage of housing throughout our reservations. But we'd like NACIE to forward a recommendation that there should be some type of programs or funding for the construction of teacher housing to attract and retain teachers. That's definitely a benefit and an incentive for teachers to come in and teach and stay in our communities.

Also -- one of the things that's really a struggle for a program such as the one I work with in Teach for America is we've applied for the I-3 grant throughout the years, but it's really competitive. But we're finding out in a lot of those I-3 grants that there's really no programs that are focusing on Native education, and that if possible we'd like to

increase the number and scope of Native preferences in the education competitive grant programs, and I-3 would be an example of that.

Thank you.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Cook. We have Ronalda Tome.

MS. TOME: My name is Ronalda Tome, and I represent a silent group of people, and that's one reason why I'm here.

I want to talk on behalf of our children with disabilities, and our families who have to provide supports for our kids, and find resources to provide for their child who may have a disability.

The one area -- there's a couple of areas that I'm really concerned about, and No. 1 is our dropout rate for our Native children with disabilities.

On the national average, there's a 30-percent graduation rate for our children with disabilities; but I can also tell you for our Native children, it's probably half of that, maybe 15 percent.

So you have to question -- what

is going on with the other 85 percent?

And the sad reality within special education is there's funding, there are laws and policies, there's an IEP, an education plan, and there are these supports that should be provided for our children. But you have to ask with all of that going on, why are they not graduating?

So, my case here is what are school districts doing to make sure that those provisions are being made?

I come from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and I work for an agency called Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs. We work with the 22 tribes within the state of New Mexico helping parents understand the rights and how to advocate for their children with a disability.

We also, last year, in October received a national grant. So we're a national agency, the Native American Technical and Assistance Center. We help the 50 parent centers to reach out to the Native American population. That's our role currently, and also in a -- statewide, you know -- we're

working statewide to do those provisions for our own people.

So, I attend over 100 IEPs a year. These are just Native IEPs. I get phone calls from across this nation. I also attend various IEPs, and I can tell you that what I am seeing in these communities is sad. And the other thing about graduation, you know, I want to also state that there's a big issue with the Bureau of Indian Education, with this retransformation of how they want to take schools and give them back to the tribes.

But there's a big question with -- I know that the Bureau has divided three departments to have these local education agencies. But with this transformation, they're losing sight of their state agencies. So what I want to state to you is how is our federal funding going to transpire if we have no state agency down to these local agencies?

The big question that I have put on the table for this transformation is: What is happening to our children with disabilities? Because the funding stream is not going to work with this new transformation.

And as I've gone to these public forums and have asked tribes and leaders do we know enough about IDA and its funding principles to make sure that these children are going to get what they need? But what I'm also seeing in the Bureau system is there are huge abuse cases with our children with disabilities.

And so our organization ethics is partnering with the Native American Disability Law Center to cite the areas that we are seeing as huge, and hopefully that those areas will help not only NIEA, but also the Bureau to really say are we taking care of these things? Because I really feel right now we're going to push this off to the tribes, but we're not being accountable for what we've already done. And are these children getting the services they need?

So my question to you is: Are we really making the Bureau accountable for our children with disabilities and the funding stream? What's going on with that money?

The other thing is that Impact aid -- Impact aid is a huge issue within our

schools and our district because a portion of that money should be coming back to our children with disabilities. But I can tell you, it's not happening. I was part of a parent advisory committee for Albuquerque School District, got the budget, saw what was going on, saw the amount of \$94,968 was acquired for Impact aid. I specifically asked the question: How are we bringing that back to the Indian children? They say, oh, no, that's a small portion; we're using that for supplies.

How many school districts are taking that money and using it and not putting it back to our children with disabilities? Because there's so much money here, especially with IDA funding. I see it based on school districts that are misappropriating that funding, and it's not coming down to those kids and the services they need.

The other area I have a great concern about is our parents. When parents learn their laws and rights and how to advocate for their children, the district finds out, but what happens when they get to the place of standing up for their rights, retaliation

happens. Then I hear school districts, social services, coming on the parent, calling the police, and they're actually putting them in jail for the right for speaking up, asking for basic services for their children. That was one area that was a hot line or something to create. I know right now with our agency and what we're trying to do is we're trying to create a parent mentoring program. Right now that is going to help our parents get to the next streamline of advocacy, understand their rights, understand how to work with tribal education departments, but also their school districts and to become these unique collaborators in making sure that they not only get their voice met, but how do you generate a community to be a voice for our children with disabilities? Because our tribal departments are not carrying that forth for just having basic jobs for our kids with disabilities.

That's another area we're asking our tribal leaders is if we want all children to succeed, ask me. How are we doing that for our children with a disability? Do we have work programs? Do we have places where they

can go to be these reliable citizens within their communities?

Am I five minutes?

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Keep going. You're okay.

MS. TOME: I can keep going?

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: We're not timing you.

MS. TOME: I want you to know that I'm also a parent. My son, he's currently 22 years old and he's a senior at the University of New Mexico. When he graduated, we were like yes, you are the top 1 percent of these Native kids who are graduating. Now I can tell you he's a senior at the University of New Mexico, having a disability, and I can't tell you how hard it has been to also advocate for him. My daughter is 21; she's only gifted. But I've had to advocate for her. And then my youngest son is 18 who is very close to getting into gifted, but he was my mainstream kid. But I have had to advocate for him even harder. And that's one thing where we -- as a parent, what I do and how I service and the needs and basically learning about what my children have

gone through, I feel for those parents, especially your Native parents, who don't even have a voice. Who go through these struggles every day and it's -- it hurts me when a parent comes up to me and tells me, "My child can't read, he's going to graduate, and he's only a first-grade level. What am I going to do? How can I find a job for him? What is the school district responsible for?"

And that's why I am here. Because my children are succeeding. But I'm also doing the work to help find those resources, the ways to communicate, and the way to work a system that has been so hard on us.

That is why I'm here. And I hope that with my voice and what I'm doing that I keep spreading the word that we are forgetting our children with disabilities. And I ask that you just continually on -- also within Indian education, is that we speak for those, all our kids, but we're not speaking for those who are sitting on the wall that don't even have a voice. And that's our children with disabilities.

So, I am -- thank you for this

opportunity and time. And I was talking to the lady back there, she says I seen you before. I've been in Arizona, I've been Oklahoma, now I'm in Alaska.

But -- and I hope one day that I'm not the sole person that is having this message, because we're raising up families. And I'm hoping that one day you're not just going to see me here. You're going to see a room full of families that are going to start speaking on behalf -- not only for children of disabilities, but also be changing the system.

So I thank you for this opportunity and this time. And if you need my card and number, I'm more than happy to give it to you.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

Leslie Harper.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Leslie Harper, L-e-s-l-i-e, H-a-r-p-e-r. Leech Lake Band of Ojibewa.

(Speaking Native language.)

Thank you for being here, and having your time for us to come in here and give our suggestions for improvements.

We were over at the NIEA meeting this morning, and there were some resolutions passed. Some of the resolutions went through there. So, again, I'd like to emphasize those and present them here, as well, if -- for your records. For your listening session.

Some of our very important priorities at home we have a Native language immersion school, and we work with a national coalition of other Native language immersion educators and Native language medium educators who operate on a Hopi 22 continuum with our other partners in Native language immersion sites. Some of us work in the early-childhood setting, some of us have an elementary school setting, some have an entire span through elementary and secondary. Some have a university setting. But we are all focused on asserting our identities as Native nations, as indigenous nations, and continuing our understanding of ourselves through our very own indigenous lens.

A lot of folks here are doing the same thing, and that we feel is the essence of culture-based education.

So I would just like to reiterate a couple of the resolutions that were passed at the NIEA meeting this morning. And there will be more, so we'll be back.

One, we also would like to support the evaluation of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. The idea came up today, and it was passed and we understand that that initiative came out of an executive order that is several years old. How are we doing on that? We would like to present that we feel the White House initiative should be evaluated, as well. Let's see how we're doing. How are we serving our folks? How are we responding to it? And we think that will give us a good picture of where to go in the future. So I'll present that resolution to you.

Additionally, at our Leech Lake Ojibewa we have a school, that's K-12 English medium school. Within that school, they host the language immersion school, which is a kindergarten -- Ojibewa language immersion track, it's a 9-10 language immersion track. Ten years old. The BIE is underfunded. We

would like to support BIE demonstration project for Native language immersion schools that are set in BIE settings.

There are a handful of elementary-level sites that are operating within BIE schools right now. And when I say a handful, I mean very few sites out of the 143 schools -- 1100 -- how many do they have?

DR. BUTTERFIELD: 184.

MS. HARPER: There are literally a handful operating, but what we hear, the ones who are enacted and fully enacted language schools. What we look for -- ours, they're looking for ways to express themselves. There are going to be more Native language immersion schools that are in BIE settings or in public school settings, but what we would like to do is propose a demonstration project within the BIE settings so that the schools that are doing this and enacting this are able to give some product, are able to give some advice, and are able to demonstrate another pathway to what we can call educational success for our students. Because right now it's underfunded. If we look at the ISEP funding stream, that comes in, it's

minimal. It's minimal.

There is nothing set aside.

There is no prioritization within the BIE right now. There is no prioritization in the reform plans of Native language immersion education. Although they say they would like to see culture-based initiatives embedded into an AYP program, there's been no supportive technical assistance, there has been no supportive funding for development of those initiatives. So, we say a demonstration project would help out with that, and then we can get some structure, some advice, some steps on how to grow this within there. Because right now we're being told just re-prioritize what you're doing and we're almost cannibalizing our own selves within our own communities. So that is one more recommendation.

And then one last resolution on which I'd like to speak, which you guys were there, but this is for the record. We would like to talk about aligning the Native American Languages Act of 1990 and to support our Native American -- our Native language, medium education, so we want to bring that in line.

We want to align that with ESEA priorities.

What goes on there is we find that there are a lot of barriers for our favorite language immersion sites, our Native language medium sites. If we were to more strongly align the NALA with ESEA priorities, we would give more strength to NALA priorities that were written out and that were drawn out that would support our entire structure in Native language immersion schools.

We would have better support for our pedagogy. We would have better support for our professional development efforts. We would have better support -- we would address the standards of teacher certification when we are educating through the medium of a Native language. We would be addressing the idea of standards for the -- standards for the students in achievement when they are being taught through a Native language instead of an English site. We would align -- we would have better aligned assessment indicators, and we would have -- we would have a lot better data on how our kids are doing if we were able to align the assessments with the language of instruction at

our Native language medium sites. Because right now we are not allowed to assess in the language of instruction in a Native language, which is not giving us any good data on student achievement. And don't -- that's what everybody in here wants to know. We all want to know about student achievement. What makes the most sense to identify indicators of achievement is to assess exactly what you're teaching. When we are having to assess in a language other than the medium of instruction, we are not measuring that. We're not able to show our communities; we're not able to show our own kids how they're doing; we're not able to show their parents or grandparents; and we certainly aren't able to show state or federal monitoring agencies how they're doing.

So we would like to support -- you know, strengthen the NALA to align our priorities in there.

I think that's my statement on that. I think I covered what I wanted to say.

I'll give you copies of these three resolutions, and I'll be back with more.

On that last topic about aligning

NALA with the ESEA, I'm very supportive of that also. I think that's excellent. But where you're at in the school system that you're working and you are testing in whatever your state -- whatever your requirements are in English, are your students showing already that -- I'm just doing a comparison from where I'm coming from to an immersion school that we have that shows that the students that are immersed into the language are outscoring the students who are -- who were on the traditional system.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Are you seeing similar?

MS. HARPER: Thank you for asking, because I got so worked up I forgot to go over that point.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Okay. The reason I'm asking is because as a superintendent when I go before people in my state, which is very English only and hard to convince that immersion works, that's the kind of data they ask for. So I'm asking you, do you have that kind of data already to show significant alignment needed, but then you

could do better if you had the -- if you're able to assess in the language that you're using to instruct in both English and also --

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Some of the points that I brought up, I presented three differing resolutions, and I kind of talked about them. These issues interlock like this. And what you're asking about is we need longitudinal data in order to show that. Many of our sites need a longitudinal study. And so, again, we would -- let me toss this into my comments, then. We need more funding for longitudinal studies on student achievement at Native language medium sites. There are some limited data coming out of some of our sites. Can I produce it from our Leech Lake Ojibewa sites? Not yet. We need that funding there. And that's what we would like to show.

What we are also finding is that we support waivers. We support ways of describing a waiver of the English language medium assessments until the students are functionally bilingual. And that if they are not being educated in English, don't test them in English. You are asking how their language

levels are English language measurements of English. If they've never been taught in English language, then they're not going to do well on the tests. Maybe they will. What is going to make more sense is to assess them in the language of -- assessments at the language of the sites until you have put up the bilingualism in the students and they have had appropriate levels of instruction. So we would say putting it off, right now our students are supposed to start them at 3rd grade, and 4th grade, and 5th grade, and 6th grade, and on up. In some sites that is not an appropriate assessment for the students to be taken. So if we had a longitudinal study that could track our kids and talk about all these different --

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: How long has immersion been --

MR. ROMAN NOSE: At our site? Ten years. They started with a kindergarten cohort.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Those kindergarten students have started? What grade are they in now?

MS. HARPER: They're in 10th

grade now.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: I guess the question I'm trying to get answered, have you seen that that cohort of children that started -- that have stuck with the program, at what grade -- I'm sure you have tested them in English. What grade do they start to say -- are you doing a comparison between that cohort and maybe other students that aren't in the immersion? Are you doing that? Are they all in immersion? I guess is there a comparison that you're able to show?

MS. HARPER: We have a really small population at our site. We're just informally tracking them. We haven't got a -- have a research parameter set up. I can tell you anecdotally, by the time they're 8th grade or not, our children are 8th continually. After they graduated, by the time they're 8th, they're at or about their mono-lingually counterparts.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: That would be very strong to report. Because I know it's convincing others that don't believe it.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Well, we need

the funding, and we need the folks on board, you know, from all of our sites to be able to do that. But in our long-term setting, I can tell you all about how great our kids are doing at home, and then statisticians come back and they say, that's five kids. You know, what difference does that make? It's really -- we say it makes all the difference in the world for our community. It truly, truly does. They are becoming leaders. They are leaders amongst their peers. They're student council. They are ambassadors. They're getting into the early university program. They're in the AP classes. When other kids their age may not be. You know, that's five for us at 10th grade. It changes. It really does change lives, is what we hear. That's anecdotal.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Great.

Thank you.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Thank you.

MS. WHITEFOOT: Thank you,

Leslie.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

Awesome.

The floor is open. If anyone

would like to come up and speak, you're welcome.

MS. REWLINS: N-a-m-a-k-a
R-e-w-l-i-n-s. K-a-l-e-h-u-a K-r-u-g.

So, we wanted to -- we heard what your questions were. And so we wanted to share a little bit, and we have this opportunity, because we have some people here with our programs in Hawaii. So in the state of Hawaii we have our two official languages, Hawaiian and English are official languages of the state, and your children are able to go to school in our language. And so when you asked about some of these assessments and what the longitudinal studies might look like, we're talking about that right now. I thought it would be an opportunity to introduce our state of -- we have Kauai Sang, K-a-u-i S-a-n-g, and Kalehua Krug from our University of Hawaii, and from our state of Hawaii. I'll let them kind of talk about what we're doing at home.

MR. KRUG: Well, I want to first address the question you posed to -- at home we have some of that data. Our immersion programs have been running for 30 years now. And --

excuse my voice, I'm getting over a cold.

But the students that -- the interesting point I wanted to make is that we are compiling data of the students that are in medium programs that come from Hawaiian-speaking houses, homes. And that by -- that they're meeting English proficiency. I'm going to speak about English proficiency, too, in a little bit. But they're achieving in English at earlier and much more proficient rates because of their understanding the philosophy behind their language development is that they become skilled in a language, and the skills acquired in their Native language are transferred over into English. I would also like to propose, because Kauai can speak a lot more. She's a representative of the Department of Education for our immersion programs -- because we also start to speak about at our states in our official capacities that we start to challenge our own question, our own philosophy, because we always need to compare our language programs and the success of our language programs on English achievement. It almost derails the foundation of the immersion

programs of the language programs, which are to set successful academic foundations for the children to progress through student achievement, through their educational experience. Whereas, we have foundations, we have data at home, that over the last seven years, our educational system only in English has not changed. The statistic has not changed. So when you talk about data, there is data there to contradict that comparison. If we always found our philosophy on a comparison between English and Native language learning -- I understand the rationale, but there is the opposite side of that that we have data, that English language medium education has not served in your community. And so that's also another avenue to look at.

MS. SANG: And then I just wanted to speak on the same question in terms of the longitudinal data. We have several K-12 programs in the Hawaii Department of Education, some of them are charter, some of them are part of the Hawaii Department of Education.

And while it may not necessarily be culturally appropriate to compare the

student achievement rates based on the demographics of Hawaiian language immersion schools and similar populations demographically in the English mainstream schools, we did do sort of a look at how students were performing at grades 6, 8 and 10 on English language proficiency tests. We call it the Hawaii State Assessment. Internally, in my office, we took a look at how students were achieving. There are three contexts. We had the K-12 full immersion; we had a K-12 immersion school where the students from 7 to 8 were mainly being instructed in English because of a lack of resources in terms of Hawaiian-language-speaking teachers. So that set that portion of the school staffs with whatever they could get in terms of teaching staff. And then -- sorry, 7-12 school that had the same demographics in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic status and those kind of things. We did a comparison across the three schools. Both of the immersion schools, whether it was a full 100 percent immersion site or the sort of 7-12 English immersion sites were performing above the rates of the students that were in an

English mainstream school. And that's over the -- that's happened over the course of the last three years.

So, each year I've taken a look at how these same schools have performed on the English assessment, because all of our students, 6 to 8 in the Hawaiian language immersion schools are required to take an English assessment, and they've outperformed the students with similar demographics in a school system that has instructed these students K-12 in English. So if you're asking whether or not our students can do the English proficiency side of it, the answer is yes, based on the data over the last three years.

As Kalehua has spoken to earlier, the Hawaii Department of Education is really faced with the issue of how to deal appropriately with addressing students in the language of instruction while meeting the demands of elementary, secondary education.

We do have a package, sort of assessment plan that the Hawaii Department of Education has submitted, and that requires that all of our students in the state meet the

English language proficiencies, we're in the midst of a memorandum of agreement with the University of Hawaii Manoa, to take a look at the development of a more appropriate testing tool. And we're hoping that we can get enough space to get that work done to be able to produce appropriate data on how our students are performing and the supports that we would need to make sure that we can continue to strengthen the program that we have within the Hawaii Department of Education.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you for that. That's exactly what I'm getting at, because I'm coming from -- you may have heard, we've sent representatives to your system there from Window Rock, and we have that same data that shows the same thing you're saying. So I'm trying to share that with Leslie, that it is possible. And what I'm saying is that it's a battle. And she's absolutely right about strengthening NALA essentially for states like Arizona who believe English only. We really fight that. It is a hard battle to prove that it just does so much to a child to their self-identity to be able to -- even if it's

their second language that they're learning, to revitalize their language and their identity. It does so much more. We've seen those same results. And that's why I agree with what's being presented. And it's just a matter of working to -- we talked a long time this morning about how -- just sidebar conversations that we've been having about how it's important to -- and this is where our task comes in -- to, in a sense, educate those that are already educated, but I think maybe -- a way to approach it without saying they're ignorant, because that doesn't do us any good to go in and say that kind of thing. It's a matter of using data to show that. This is what works for Native American, Alaska Native, Hawaiian, language that we're trying to revitalize our culture and our community in this way, and this is what it's shown to prove. That's the kind of thing that I think we really need to show is the data from schools that have tried this already instead of saying we want this, we want this, give us more money.

It's going to be: Here's what we have, here's what we've done with what we have:

Here's what we want to do. That's why I ask that question, because I know it's possible.

MS. SANG: I think it would be helpful to get clarifications between the different federal policies, especially for our Department of Education who is trying to be supportive of the progress of Hawaiian language immersion that has been done for the last 30 years. And to really sort of get those clarifications so that we can expand on the work that's been done.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: If you strengthen NALA and you have NALA aligned with ESEA, the state policies -- it's up to us to say, hey, that's been my push as a superintendent is the federal policies -- I mean, the NALA says this, it's a law, but I've learned NALA has no teeth. I've been told so many times when you're trying to fight that battle. That's where I'm coming from.

MS. HARPER: The part we wanted to showcase here at the NACIE is that we have been having these discussions.

MS. SANG: So kind of what Leslie was saying earlier about the resolutions that

came out in aligning that together, we hear about our students that are taking the exams and they've done the comparisons, but we do have a significant number of families that have refused to do these exams in English language. And so with that refusal, we have this group, this gap of we want to be able to see on -- to demonstrate the opportunities for learning in the language of instruction, so that kind of bubbles up to the top at this point where we have a continued -- we do offer the exams to our parents, to the children. And the parents will say until you get it in our language of instruction, we're not going to have this. So we don't have a full data. But we do have -- and we have anecdotal, you know for some of our schools that have graduated, we have graduate students, 100 percent graduation rates. Attendance in college, 80 percent from the students, from the same demographic group of children in mainstream monolingual English education, those rates are lower, I think 70-something percent for the same group of students, and that's data, but it's not the data on the assessment of the education of the

students. We kind of bring that up here and bubble that up.

MR. KRUG: I want to point out, we think ESEA are conflicting titles, Title I, it conflicts with Title VII because you always have our state education agency reminding us that there's one set of standards, one assessment. So because of that, we're always trying to fit ourself into their bubble, into their box. So with the assessment that's going on right now with the contract, is that we're trying to align crosswork between common core. That's what we've adopted. But I think we're going to come into some -- when it goes to federal peer review when it comes to the sociometric, we're going to have issues of reliability, which is the other programs' assessment.

If we're always trying to tell the story through the English exam, there's no room for movements to assess in our language. That's a harder story to say. So the story comes if this is a legitimate assessment of the children, how does it align to this? We're always creating the comparison. That's the

hardest part for me. We're never really legitimately assessing our children as an educational decision.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: It becomes over assessing to do both.

MR. KRUG: There's a lot there.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you. Very good.

MS. JOHN-SHIELDS: Because they're talking about the immersion program data, I want to include the Yup'ik data that I have worked with in the past with our immersion program students. Going back to that question: Are students at the upper grade level? Our English formal instruction starts at third grade.

The data up to 5th and 6th grade, our Native students outperform both at the state and the district level in English. So -- and to go past that, when our students graduate -- and I can't say 100 percent -- but when our students that have gone through the immersion program compared to the traditional English programs, we have noticed some of our students do graduate as valedictorians and

salutatorians, not just in one site, but in other places, as well.

So, before the immersion program started, we did not have a lot of Native representation in sports, academics, leadership. So from building that foundation through the immersion program, which I call the meat, which, you know, they are referring to, that is the story, the most important story aside from just the academics. So when I did my report to the regional board, I added that meat to show that connection that we had with the community. And not just basing it academically.

So the holistic way that we teach is very important. And due to time, that's where the culturally responsive teaching was the part that I was talking about, how we need to include place-based, the funds of knowledge in our educational programs to help our students of the Alaska -- the Native population, as well as the other population, to be more successful academically.

And earlier I was talking about the upper -- the higher-level education. I

also want to make a little on -- make an addition where I was trying to recruit Alaska Native leaders into our program, but due to funding it's very difficult to recruit students who are -- who can go to school as they're teaching at the same time. So the funding is not there for them to continue on. And I have another colleague who is trying to start research on -- in Alaska Native education, but, of course, without the funding it's -- we're having a hard time developing that.

And due to our small population of Native population, within the old states and nation, it makes it difficult when it comes down to numbers. We don't have a lot of numbers. Therefore, we can't get the support because we're not equal to the population. So getting that support, financial support for -- to start something or to maintain something would be something that I would like to put forth along the line of professional development.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: That's awesome. Thank you.

Interesting discussion. The

floor's open.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Brenda Frank.

So, this is my first federal public comment. But I know two of the board people, so that's good. So listening to the earlier conversations of special needs students and being a parent of special needs -- and also a grandmother of a special needs student, it is critical that we have the resources available in our schools, and that the counts that they get, that they also be included in the Title VII database count. But therein lies the problem. Because with the database count, I think at the federal level, that our students are being miscounted or fall off, because in the state of Oregon, where I'm from, there are 199 school districts, and 199 different ways to count our Native students.

So, if we had a formalized, regulated process so that if a student chooses to mark that they might be Hispanic or they might be Costa Rican that they suddenly don't disappear. That they stay stable. We know where our Native students are at. We know a lot of our students are of other ethnic groups.

That's fine. That's great. Diversity is a good thing.

However, we can't lose that count. If we lose that count, we lose our money. And it's critical that that database is strong across the board.

I think that as a district overall they lose money in Title VII because of the way the formula reads and the lack of money that goes into it. And there needs to be added support to ensure that that happens.

I also believe that the federal schools, the BIE schools need to report back to the SEAs or the LEAs that a child has left their school and returned back to their home district. We lose too many children. We see too many of our students walking down the street. We know that they're supposed to be in school, but the local school districts don't even know that they're back. So we need that communication piece to open up between our federal BIE schools and the local school districts within the states that those students reside. And it's important. So these are just my pet peeves.

That we expand the disability services to tribal community colleges and universities to accommodate our students of need. We have many returning Veterans coming back. We have students who have graduated from high school, but may not be able to read at a certain level. Digital readers are available. The schools themselves, the universities, the institutions and community colleges and universities, those institutions need to be able to have access to assist that student or at least notify either the tribal vocational rehabilitation program, or the state vocational rehabilitation program, so that those accommodations can be met.

And it means of needs to be more. We'll give you extra testing time, or we'll let you use a digital recorder in the classroom. Some of our students actually need recorders. They have them nojadas. It's remarkable. That student too can hear the book being read from a digital reader and at the same time read the book. It improves their reading. They've shown it. It's great. It's wonderful. The students can't afford such an expensive piece

of equipment, and our local VRs, the state of Oregon only has five. Alaska has 11 vocational rehabilitation programs. I'm not sure about Washington. You have several, I know.

If they can get connected or, you know, if their student is residing in a different state and going to Montana, then we can provide that service. But we don't know if the student doesn't tell us.

So we don't know. What we don't know hurts us. It would be great to see those services expanded beyond the school into the post secondaries.

Thank you.

MS. RUSSELL: Gabrielle Russell, I wasn't thinking of testifying today, but I met you ladies on the street, and this is what's going on. I said I'm going to skip the session. I had a few things that I thought were important.

I have -- my name is Gabrielle Russell. I'm an adviser with the rural student services program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Our program is actually set up by students, Alaska Native and rural students who

came to the school and thought that there wasn't a support for their transition from -- basically, from rural Alaska to the college setting. And it's a completely different culture and environment. And they felt that there needed to be a support program. So we were actually set up in 1969 by students. And so I'm privileged to work there.

One of the things on -- this is a small detailed example, but I think it could be something that could be addressed on the national level. I work with students who want to be education majors. They come into school; we pick their classes; and within a year, year and a half, they no longer want to be teachers. They don't want to be in the education system. And I see it, and I've been doing this for 15 years now. And I think it's -- this is what our school of education at the university has told us. There's, you know, the set standard of courses they need to take. To get -- especially bachelor's of elementary education. There's an art appreciation course on the list of that. For all the other students doing a bachelor of arts degree, they can do esthetic

appreciation of Alaska Native performance, or if they want to do a humanities class, which is like a western art history class, or if they want to do art appreciation through theater or music, it's mostly from a western frame point.

But the school of education students who are doing an elementary education degree, they cannot take the Alaska Native appreciation of art as part of their curriculum. And the reason we're told this is because the State -- national -- national -- to be nationally accredited, they need to take a western appreciation art class. Just like art is this huge expression of culture, just as language is, I think that, you know, if the students are in this program, they want to be teachers, a lot of the students want to be teachers back at the village they came from. They're not validated or valued or respected, and they can see what they want to come back and teach. Why would they want to teach in an elementary school about, I don't know, Da Vinci? It seems that they should be able to be certified and teach with a program that validates the students that they're actually

teaching. I know this is a very specific example of our school at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. But on the larger scale, we're told the reason they don't approve this class in their required curriculum is because they can't be nationally accredited if they do. So I think just -- not because it has to be Alaska Native appreciation, but there should be some way that that particular section could be whatever, you know, would make it so that people would want to be educators and go back to their -- wherever they're from and teach. That's just one of the things that I thought was important.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

The floor is open. Anyone else would like to speak.

40 minutes. We can sit here and wait if you think of something.

MS. ORTIZ: Sara Marie Ortiz.

Highline Public Schools, which is in Washington state.

(Speaking Native language.)

I am a Title VII Native education program manager of bilingual public schools in

Washington state, serving deep south Seattle area, SeaTac airport area, Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park. And I wanted to -- I spoke at the very first session about some of the barriers that we're facing specifically within the sphere of Title VII administering services and programs to our Native student population in our district. It's kind of a brief overview, again, of our district.

It's a fairly large district, sort of mixed urban. Our northern part of our district is similar to the Seattle -- Seattle proper, high rates of poverty, homelessness, substance abuse. And our southern part of our district is actually a bit more affluent, a little bit more diverse in terms of its spectrum of socioeconomic factors.

I wanted to -- because I've heard so many amazing points from various educators from Alaska to Hawaii, and districts that have similar situations as ours, and a lot seems to be very deficit-based, I wanted to speak about some of the positive things that are happening within our district, and then speak about some of the systemic barriers that are still

occurring even amid some progress. I just wanted to get on the record some of the things that are happening within our district, because I think that that will help with the comprehensiveness of the report.

We established our first Native education Title VII policy for Highline Public Schools, and this is fairly seminal for our district because, like many districts, though we have the guidance from OIE and the statute is clear, there aren't new local-level policies and complementary procedural directors to help us administer programs and carry out our work in a comprehensive way.

So, we developed this document with the guidance from the Native American Law Alliance, some guidance and reports and documents from NIEA, local Native education stakeholders, Western Washington Native American Education Consortium, various Elders and community people, and a huge part of the effort was led by our Native Family Advisory Council, which is our federally mandated parent advisory committee, Title VII.

We have enacted sort of a

systemwide approach to education about the intent of Title VII. Some of the federally protected rights of our Native students, it's an effort that's been primarily led by me, but also bolstered by our Native Family Advisory Council, a core contingent of only three members, but who have been consistent participants in improving our progress in communications, getting the message out to our superintendent, our board of directors, our directors across departments, director of instruction and innovation, director of language learning, director of student advancement, and our director of assessment and accountability. This being a key measure to just improving the visibility of our program, but also highlighting the glaring somewhat devastating opportunity gap that's still present for our students and has been for a number of years.

I think somebody mentioned on a couple of occasions here today the deep necessity for a longitudinal study, and a fairly comprehensive needs assessment. That's something that hasn't been a priority within

our district and actually impossible to do in our district because guidance -- our data systems manager, we don't have data available before 2010. And so we start now doing what we can to gather our data in a different way. But a lot of the improvements, I would say, is me being connected with our Department of Assessment and Accountability, and I think that that's a fairly new step in a good direction, because I haven't heard a lot of Title VII folks saying that they even have a connection with those directors.

I would say a huge step in the right direction for our program has been bolstered by the development of our policy and those complementary procedural directors, many of them coming straight from the Office of Indian Education being sort of the source document for the rest of those, and they're still in draft form being the result of an audit that we faced in September of 2012. And I came in mid-audit, so that actually was a pretty critical piece for the improvement of our program, mixed bag. Audits can be scary, but it helped us to get to the next level.

I would say that a lot of the oversight, a lot of the internal audits or internal monitoring systems that we're trying to put into place now are being driven entirely by myself, so I want to get that in even though I'm speaking about all the positive things I've seen across the spectrum of Title VII programs, the diversity of programs and services offered, that often the primary and most meaningful oversight has to be internal because the Office of Indian Education and state Offices of Native Education are ill-equipped or are just completely incapable of providing the oversight and technical assistance that's needed for our Title VII programs. And so we have to put those measures in place to take ourselves to the next level and hold ourselves to a higher standard.

A lot of people have told me, and I've had the internal reflection that I'm essentially working myself out of a job, that I've put several measures in place that could backfire and actually come back on me to show sort of the ineffectual equality of our programs and services, but if all goes as I

plan, that will be a necessary by-product because I say if our program isn't doing what it is federally and philosophically intended to do, then we're failing if we're providing a high level of cultural education and our students' academic outcomes aren't improving, then we're failing at many levels.

One of the great improvements that we've made to the program is your strategic partnerships framework building, reaching out to everybody in our community there is -- there are just a serious lack of any kind of social, behavioral health services available to our Native families in our district. And there are some in the Seattle area. There's inequity and there's misperception that Seattle is quite resourced, but when it comes to the Native population, we piece it together the best we can. We're reaching out to our local Native-run, Native-serving foundations, nonprofits, some of our tribal partners. We even have a tribal partner that's not federally recognized, but they're hugely important to our program.

I have worked hard in the past

year to build capacity and think much bigger and broader than Title VII, and I encourage all of our Title VII family to do the same. We managed to triple our capacity for our program in the past year, reaching out to your private partners, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, looking around at other Title funding, and we received a small tribal grant from Muckleshoot Tribe, which was hugely important to our plans for Native success efforts.

We hosted something called a Native Student Success Forum in January of 20 -- January of this year, 2014, where we took a hard look at our Native student data, what we had available. We thank our data systems analysis person for that and also a private consultant who worked for free to help us compile the data into a cohesive format who had worked on a report sort of mid-audit and came back to help us with the articulation of some of our key data points.

There aren't a whole lot of surprises, but we at least had a starting point to begin working in a more data-driven outcomes-based way. And we invited community

members, some of our tribal partners, some key stakeholders, and there are lots of district staff present to sort of just help us to -- help articulate the fact that we -- that we wanted to work in this way, even though nobody was mandating that -- that's before we got the word from Office of Indian Education that we would be required to submit an annual performance report.

I would say that one of the things -- number of notes here -- but one of the things that I'm still lacking and I would say is even a crisis in many ways for specifically urban-centered LEAs, public education, Title VII programs is family engagement. Because there are some ways to measure the efficacy of time and effort spent on family engagement efforts, but they're often inadequate or they're not valued enough, even though they're the key piece to us helping to gather data, communicate data, we often take our Native families for granted or we have a spectrum of ways to gather feedback or the voices and needs of our families, but we -- it's a lot of it is just lip service, and we

don't actually adequately integrate that information into our programs and services.

I would say that one of the huge barriers to engaging our Native families, particularly in high-need, high-poverty urban districts is that some of our families who most need to be at the table, whose voices most need to be represented in programming decisions and at the level of policy and procedure, especially when it comes to issues regarding special services, IEPs, interface with Indian Child Welfare, those are often the families who feel the least respected within the process and feel like there's not even an open door for them to contribute or participate in a meaningful way.

There are often transportation issues, lack of adequate access to technology, which helps us to communicate, and they just don't come to our meetings because they don't feel that their voice is going to be heard anyway.

I would also like to just leave off about sort of the communication or the collaboration between Title VII managers across

Indian country and the great power and possibility that exists in there being a systemwide effort to create a consortium for us so we're not just coming together and sharing war stories and points of light once a year at NIEA, but that the Office of Indian Education or NACIE or some other body helps us to connect with one another in a meaningful way, leveraging our resources and helping the whole federal system, Department of Education and Title VII program get to the next level so it's not so insular, it's not just about internal review, and that we're actually evaluating each other's programs and helping all of us get to the next level. I'll leave there.

Thank you.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: Thank you.

The floor is open again.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: My name is Scott Butterfield. I'm a Winnebago Chippewa -- her brother.

This is a large audience here. I think you have a challenging responsibility on NACIE. Sometimes it's hard to interpret or understand just what I've been listening to,

because while the words all make sense, where they're really going or what they're trying to target so that you have an understandable way to translate into something meaningful in the way of policy recommendations can be quite the task.

I've been a public educator my whole career, with the exception of one private -- actually, it was a Title IV demonstration high school job assignment I had in the Menominee Indian Reservation, but the funding ran out, so that school ceased to exist. All the rest of my time has been in public schools, either as educator, teacher, principal for 22 years, superintendent for eight, and technical assistance provider here in -- not Alaska, but down in Seattle for the resource center back in the day when it used to be in Seattle. So I worked in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska.

Currently, I'm a principal in Selawik, Alaska, above the Arctic Circle. I have returned to Selawik. I was a principal there 26 years ago. And was a superintendent in the Chatham School District here in

Southeast Alaska.

One of the concerns I have is that based on the information I have is that it is very likely that we're going to be looking at declining federal dollars as our political structure seems to move more and more toward the conservative side. And programs such as all the Indian education programs seem to be easy targets for reduced funding.

My advice would be to try to advocate for at least maintenance or minimal loss of funding, where that's possible. There's different ways to do that, but NACIE is obviously one of the prime places because you have the ear of a President who is currently supportive of Native issues, and he's maintained the existence of NACIE in a time and era where some people thought there wasn't a place for it any longer.

So, I would say do what you can while you can. Be strong advocates for the different programs. We are constantly teaching ourselves as educators how to work within the system. People come and people go. And so not only do we have to reeducate the policymakers

about the tribal sovereignty or government-to-government relationships, but we have to constantly reeducate the educators at the top of our systems so that they understand what rights a parent Indian Advisory Committee has for the program dollars that are provided for Native students, whether it's Hawaii, Alaska, or in the Lower 48.

So, I commend you for the work that you do, and your willingness to listen to all the testimony that you've listened to. It was pretty diverse just in this one afternoon here. But it concerns me that sometimes when I listen, and I think I'm a reasonably good listener, I cannot for the life of me totally understand what's being said or where they're trying to go with the point they're trying to make. So, good luck, and thank you for your efforts.

DR. BUTTERFIELD: Thank you.

DR. JOHN: Quayana.

DR. JACKSON-DENNISON: I guess we'll sit here for the next 23 minutes. 22 now.

(NACIE Subcommittee Public

Hearing adjourned at 3:30 p.m.)