

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

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TRIBAL CONSULTATION FOR STATE TRIBAL EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIPS (STEP) AND AMERICAN RESCUE
PLAN (ARP) FOR TRIBAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (TEAS)

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MONDAY
APRIL 26, 2021

+ + + + +

The meeting convened via
Videoconference, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Ron
Lessard, Acting Executive Director, White House
Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native
Education, presiding.

PRESENT

RON LESSARD, Acting Executive Director, White
House Initiative on American Indian and
Alaska Native Education
JULIAN GUERRERO, JR., Director, Office of Indian
Education
SHAHLA ORTEGA, STEP Program Lead, Office of
Indian Education
MARDELLA RICHARDSON, Tribal Tech, LLC
RUTH RYDER, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office
of Elementary and Secondary Education
DONNA SABIS-BURNS, Group Leader - Discretionary
Grants, Office of Indian Education

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C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

ARP-TEA Agenda

Welcome and Introductions 2

Background and Overview 5

Tribal Consultation Questions 8

Tribal Leader Comments 29

Public Comments 72

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

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:35 p.m. and resumed at 2:45 p.m.)

MS. RICHARDSON: Welcome back to the Tribal Consultation Session. The remainder of the Tribal Consultation Session will focus on the American Rescue Plan for Tribal Education Agency Program.

Just as a review, this program is authorized by the American Rescue Plan of 2021. First ever competition for this grant program, eligible applicants, tribal education agencies only, grants to improve educational opportunities

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and achievement of Indian children and youth, includes a specific list of authorized activities.

Grants do fund direct services eligible to, I'm sorry, grants do fund direct services to eligible Indian students. Next slide.

Once again, this is the American Rescue Plan for Tribal Education Agencies. Next slide.

Just to review the housekeeping items for today, all lines have been muted. This tribal consultation session is being recorded.

Participants will be given an opportunity to present remarks and comments following the presentation of consultation questions.

Comments will be received first from tribal government officials. Comments from the public will be received following all tribal government officials online.

When speaking, please state your first

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and last name along with your title and organization/entity you represent before delivering your comments.

Comments must be limited to the consultation questions. If you need technical assistance, please contact us at 866-648-0654 and press 0, or contact Mark Taylor at mtaylor@tribaltechllc.com. Next slide.

In the event a technical issue arises that compromises the Zoom platform, we will switch to a traditional conference call line.

An email with conference call number and additional information will be sent out to all registered participants for the remainder of the tribal consultation. Next slide.

A review of the agenda for ARP-TEA. We'll have a welcome and introductions, backgrounds and overview, tribal consultation questions, tribal leader comments, public comments, and the conclusion. Next slide.

At this time, I would like to pass the presentation over to our moderator, Mr. Ron

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Lessard.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Mardella, and thank you everyone for coming back to this consultation or joining us new. We're really excited to have you join us today.

At this point, I would like to introduce Julian Guerrero, Jr., who is the Director of the Office of Education that will provide you with the background and overview. Julian?

MR. GUERRERO: Hi. Thank you so much, Ron. (Native language spoken.) Hello everybody and thank you for being on the line or staying on the line, and for those who are new to this consultation process, welcome.

I just wanted to say briefly that the Office of Indian Education is excited to advance this work and advance the work of government-to-government relationships.

So again, for this last remainder of today's consultation, we're going to go through some of the background and overview, which, to be

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honest with you, are pretty brief. So we will soon get into the questions. So next slide, please.

So again, there are two separate programs we're consulting today about. This is again for the American Rescue Plan for Tribal Education Agencies. Next slide, please.

So ARP-TEA was a program authorized by Section 11006(1) of the American Rescue Plan. It provides \$20 million for, quote, awards to tribal education agencies for activities authorized under Section 6121(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Next slide, please.

So before we embark into our questions, just a reminder on kind of the protocols at play here.

The first is that all lines have been muted. This tribal consultation and the webinar audio visual is being recorded.

Participants will be given the opportunity to present remarks and comments following the presentation of the questions.

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So again, just to reiterate that point is that we have a series of questions. We're going to work through each of those questions and then there will be an opportunity for the verbal comments if you choose to give a verbal comment.

However, there will be input for each of the questions along the way, just like we did for STEP. So there will be polls, there'll be some opportunities to put text in the chat box.

But if you're really wanting to give input verbally, there'll be an opportunity for that verbal input after we do the series of questions.

Comments will be received first from tribal government officials, and then comments from the public will be received following those of all tribal government officials online.

Whenever speaking, please state your first and last name, along with your title and organization/entity that you represent before delivering your comments.

And comments must be limited to the

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consultation questions. Next slide.

So we're going to go ahead and jump into our consultation questions. And the first one is, along the lines of the definition that we should use for what a TEA ought to be.

So the question is, should the Department use the following definition for a tribal education agency, which comes from the STEP program?

Quote, the agency, the Department, or instrumentality of an Indian tribe that is primarily responsible for supporting tribal students' elementary and secondary education.

And before we put the poll up on the screen, I wanted to give a little bit of extra context, and that the ARP, the American Rescue Plan, does not provide a definition of TEA.

So that gives a lot of flexibility to choose what the definition of a TEA ought to be.

And we have an existing definition of a TEA in STEP.

So the proposal, the purpose of this

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question, is should we use that STEP definition and just kind of like copy and paste, if you will?

So should the Department adopt that definition for TEA? So if you select yes, you're agreeing that we should use the same definition of TEA as we use in STEP, or you can comment no, or you can select the option no.

So let's go ahead and open that polling feature for this and give an opportunity for input. So you have two choices in front of you, yes, to use the same definition of TEA as used in STEP, or no, not to use that definition.

And I think it'd be really advantageous to say if you do select no, feel free to put in your sort of reasoning behind why you selected no, or other things we should consider in the definition of that TEA that is perhaps not listed in the quotations here.

And I'll go ahead and read that quotation one more time. So the definition for TEA, TEA in the STEP program is, quote, the

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agency, department, or instrumentality of an Indian tribe that is primarily responsible for supporting tribal students' elementary and secondary education, end quote.

So I'll give it a few seconds to give you an opportunity to think about your answer. How are we doing on the poll so far, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have received a total of 29 responses, and the responses have slowed down.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. We'll probably give just a few more seconds for an opportunity to make your selection, either yes or no.

And if you do select no, feel free to put in the chat box some additional considerations on why you selected no.

Okay, Mardella, let's go ahead and do the results now.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir. So we have 74 percent for yes and 26 percent for no.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you. Next slide. Yeah, let's go ahead and move to question number

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two.

So the second question to think about is, and the important thing to know is that this is an open-ended question, so even though there's no polling option, this is where we would use the chat box to provide input.

So the second question reads as, are there other considerations for how TEA should be defined in this new grant program?

So for those of you who have already given input for your selection of no, again, it's another opportunity to give other considerations that we need to keep in mind.

So the question is, are there other considerations for how TEAs should be defined in this new grant program?

I see some comments about including post-secondary. Thank you. And hi, Hollie, good to -- good to see you virtually.

Thank you, Noreen, for your input. Thank you, Terri, for your input. Thank you, Chris, for your input.

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Thank you, Laurie, for your input. Good to see you virtually. Tesia, thank you so much. Chief Darby Weaver, thank you for your input.

We'll just give a few more seconds and we'll close this opportunity. Thank you Council Member Whitefoot. Thank you, Dr. Sherry Johnson.

Thank you, Quinton. Good to see you virtually.

Okay, Mardella, let's go ahead and close that and we'll move on to the next question. Thank you, Alice.

So question number three is along the lines of the duration of the award performance period. So examples are three-year, four-year, five-year.

And the question is, how long should the award performance period be? And this is a polling option here. So go ahead, Mardella, and let's get that poll option.

And again, the question is how long should the award performance period be? Three years? Four years? Or five years?

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And if you're just joining, we're currently on question number three, how long should the award performance period be? You have three options, three years, four years, or five years.

How are we looking on the poll?

MS. RICHARDSON: We've received a total of 29 responses at this time.

MR. GUERRERO: Great.

MS. RICHARDSON: There's still a few more trickling in.

MR. GUERRERO: Sure. You guys are doing great. I'm seeing a comment from Joyce McFarland on maybe some technical issues on a submission of the poll. We'll get you taken care of, Joyce.

Okay, and we'll give one more opportunity. The question is, how long should the award performance period be, three years, four years, or five years?

Okay, Mardella, let's close it and see the results.

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MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir. All right, we have three years, 31 percent, four years, 23 percent, five years, 46 percent.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Thank you. Let's go ahead to the next question. So this one takes quite a bit of reading, so take your time and we'll make sure to allocate enough time for you to look at this question and the options in front of you.

Question number four is, we are considering prioritizing from the list of activities in ESEA Section 6121(c) for Pre-K through 12, American Indian and Alaskan Native Students. Which two activities most interest your tribal nation?

So in this option, you have a list here of seven options, and I'm going to read them down this list.

The first is compensatory educational services, such as tutoring or summer school. Number two, native language programs.

Three, counseling services. Four,

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services to assist and encourage students to enter, remain in, or reenter school.

Five, mental health services. Six, pre-kindergarten programs. Or seven, incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogy into local school curricula via partnership with local schools.

And in this one, in this poll you'll be able to select two options. So out of your list of seven options, please select two.

So go ahead and let's get that poll up, Mardella. And for those just joining, I'm going to go ahead and read the question one more time.

We are considering prioritizing from the list of activities in ESEA Section 6121(c) for Pre-k through 12, American Indian and Alaskan Native Students. Which two activities most interest your tribal nation?

There's seven options in front of you, and please select two of those seven options. Each option, I'm going to read them down the

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list, is compensatory educational services, such as -- such as tutoring or summer school. Native language programs.

Number three, counseling services. Four, services to assist and encourage students to enter, remain in, or reenter school.

Five, mental health services. Six, pre-kindergarten programs. Seven, incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogy into local school curricula via partnership with local schools.

And again, please select two out of the seven options. How are we looking on the poll now, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have a total of 33 responses so far.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Give it a few more seconds because I know this one is a little bit longer.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir, and some people are sending in their responses in the chat box.

MR. GUERRERO: Oh, good. Okay.

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Charlene said it was difficult to pick two, so I picked three. Choices, choices, right? Noreen, thank you for your comment.

Okay, let's go ahead and wrap this up, Mardella, and let's see the results.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir. Compensatory educational services such as tutoring or summer school, 23 percent; native language programs, 45 percent; counseling services, 10 percent; services to assist and encourage students to enter, remain in, or reenter school, 45 percent; mental health services, 25 percent; pre-kindergarten programs, 15 percent; incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogy into local school curricula via partnership with local schools, 53 percent.

MR. GUERRERO: Wonderful. Let's go to -- go the next question. Thank you, Chieftain, I mean, excuse me, Chief Darby Weaver for your comment.

Question number five is, should the department prioritize novice applicants by

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including a competitive preference priority that allows additional points?

For example, to TEAs that have not received a previous grant from the education department.

So an important thing to know about number five is this could mean that novice applicants, if you're new and you're novice, right?

That's what the word novice means, that you have a competitive advantage in this process, applying for these funds.

So this is a yes or no opportunity. Mardella, let's go ahead and get that on the screen. And again, if you're just joining, I'm going to read the question one more time.

It's that, should the department prioritize novice applicants by including a competitive preference priority that allows for additional points?

Example, two TEAs that have not received a previous grant from Education. Again,

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the competitive preference priority and the novice piece of it is that if you're novice that you have a competitive advantage.

And you have two options, yes or no. Thank you, Joyce, for your input. How are we looking on the progress so far, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have 35 responses so far.

MR. GUERRERO: Oh, great.

MS. RICHARDSON: Looks like the responses have slowed.

MR. GUERRERO: Okay. We'll give it just a few more seconds and then we'll go ahead and close it. Thank you, Charlene, for your comment.

Okay, Mardella, let's go ahead and close it.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, 62 percent, no, 38 percent.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you. Next question. So question number six is multiple choice. You just select one.

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How should the department measure the success of these projects? So when we think about measuring success, these are some options to consider.

And option E is another, so if you do select option E, I would go ahead and put that information into the chat box.

But I'm going to read down the options for you. Option A, the number and percentage of participating students who demonstrate an increase in attendance rate.

Option B, increase in graduation rate.

Option C, improved academic performance. Option D, improved social, emotional, and mental health.

Or option E. Again, if you select option E, I'd encourage you to put your justification, your reasoning, into the chat box on this -- on this webinar.

So let's go ahead and get that poll up, Mardella. And for those of you who are just joining, I'm going to read the question again, and you select one.

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How should the department measure the success of these projects?

Option A, the number and percentage of participating students who demonstrate an increase in attendance rate.

Option B, increase in graduation rate.

Option C, improved academic performance. Option D, improved social, emotional, and mental health.

Or option E, other. And if you do select other, I encourage you to put your reasoning and justification or considerations into the chat box.

How are we looking on the progress there, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have a total of 26 responses so far.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. I see a comment from Joyce saying that she's still getting error.

So if we can kind of get her taken care of there, Mark, or somebody from Tribal Tech.

MS. RICHARDSON: Joyce, Mark will reach out to you via the chat box.

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MR. GUERRERO: Is it kind of slowing down, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir, we're up to 39 responses.

MR. GUERRERO: 39? Great. Okay. We'll just give it a few more seconds and we'll close. Okay, let's go ahead and close it, Mardella.

MS. RICHARDSON: The number and percentage of participating students who demonstrate an increase in attendance rate, 22 percent; increase in graduation rate, 10 percent; improved academic performance, 39 percent; improved social, emotional, and mental health, 27 percent; other, 32 percent.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Thank you. Next question. So question seven is two-parter. And, Mardella, do we have two separate polls for this, or is it one?

MS. RICHARDSON: It's one poll. If yes, then the yes, the additional part A should go into the chat box.

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MR. GUERRERO: Part A. Okay. Great. Okay. So the question is, should the department require grantees to track measures such as graduation rate or student level performance data? Yes or no.

And as Mardella just said, if yes, should such tracking be for a longer term than the grant period itself, which, in this case, budgets would include extra funds for data collection.

So, Mardella, let's go ahead and get the poll up. And again, the meaning behind this is that after the grant term, for those familiar with the grant process, after that term is up, grantees could have funding for additional years to track data.

So the question is, should the department require grantees to track measures such as graduation rate or student level data? Yes or no.

And if yes, go ahead and submit your yes, but then also provide additional

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considerations in the chat box.

Well, I'm glad to see that, Joyce, leaving and reentering helped. Thank you for coming back. Thank you, Bernie, for your comment. Thank you, Cheri, for your comment.

How are we looking on the poll, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: The responses have slowed down. We have a total of 37 responses.

MR. GUERRERO: 37, okay. Thank you Council Member Whitefoot. Thank you, Charlene. Okay, Mardella, let's go ahead and close it and see the results.

MS. RICHARDSON: We have yes at 87 percent, no at 13 percent.

MR. GUERRERO: 87 yes, 13 percent no? Okay. Oh, I see it on my screen now.

MS. RICHARDSON: I apologize. I didn't share it.

MR. GUERRERO: It's okay. I'm nosy about these results, so I want -- I'm wanting to see myself, as well.

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MS. RICHARDSON: Understandable.

MR. GUERRERO: Okay, so let's go ahead and go to the next question. The next question is, should the department require TEAs to enter into a written data sharing agreement with partner schools prior to submitting an application to ensure those schools' cooperation with TEAs?

This is a yes/no question. And again, if you're not familiar with what partner schools could be, those could be school districts as a school district or it could be a school site such as a specific elementary or secondary school site.

Those are important things to keep in mind as well. But the question is, should the department require TEAs to enter into a written data sharing agreement with partner schools prior to submitting an application to ensure those schools' cooperation with the TEAs?

Let's go ahead and get the poll open. And you have two choices, yes or no. And as

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always, after you make your vote, feel free to provide additional considerations in the chat box.

And for those of you just joining, the question is, should the department require TEAs to enter into a written data sharing agreement with partner schools prior to submitting an application to ensure those schools' cooperation with the TEAs?

There are two options, yes or no. How are we looking on the progress there, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: We've received a total of 35 responses so far.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Just give it a few more seconds for any folks who are still thinking about their answer.

Thank you, Quinton, for your input. Thank you, Bernie, for your input. Thank you, Juliana, for your input. Thank you, Chief Darby Weaver, for your input.

Okay, let's go ahead and close the poll and see the results.

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MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, 58 percent, no, 42 percent.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Thank you so much. Let's go ahead and go to the next question.

So question number nine is, is there anything else related to application requirements or program requirements that the Department of Education, or Ed, should consider?

And this is, do we have a yes or no set up for this? Or is it --

MS. RICHARDSON: This is an open-ended response to be left in the chat box.

MR. GUERRERO: Okay. Great. Thank you. So just as Mardella said, go ahead and put your answer into the chat box. We are not going to have a poll for this one.

And if you're just joining, question number nine is, is there anything else related to the application requirements or program requirements that the Department of Education, or Ed, should consider?

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And for the record, I see a comment from Charlene saying that she would like to retract her answer for question eight, saying I don't think an agreement is necessary prior to the application. Thank you, Charlene, for your comment. So for those answering question number nine on your screen, it is, is there anything else related to application requirements or program requirements that the Department of Education, or Ed, should consider?

Thank you, Tesia. Thank you, Juliana.

Thank you, Bernie. Thank you, Quinton. Thank you, Joyce, for your input. Give a few more seconds for an opportunity for you to finish typing your answers.

Thank you, Chief Darby Weaver, for your input. Thank you, Songtree, for your input.

Thank you, Barbara.

Okay, great. So this concludes the series of questions, and I'm going to hand it back to Ron to go ahead and at this time take it away for tribal leader comments. Next slide.

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MR. LESSARD: Great. Thank you, Julian. Thank you, everyone, for commenting. Some really wonderful comments that we need to address.

So at this point, we want to go to our tribal leader comments. You have seen the questions. I believe in the chat box, you'd be able to access the slides.

So our tribal leader comments are open. We ask you to please raise your hand to be recognized. State first name, your last name, and title, tribal affiliation, of course, and state the question to which you are referring.

So with that, we'll open it up, Mardella.

MS. RICHARDSON: If you would like to provide a public comment at this time, please raise your hand. All right, Ron, we have Laurie Harper. Your line has -- you should be able to unmute your line.

MS. HARPER: I'm Laurie Harper. I am the designated authority for the Tribal Education

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Department here at Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe recommends that the new ARP-TEA awards be directed at activities to help TEAs build their capacity to exercise our sovereignty over education and sustain our sovereignty within education.

Some of those capacity building activities should include tribally defined, so defined by us as tribal nations, professional qualifications and training of TEA administrators and staff, the development of TEA student and educational electronic data systems, and the integration of those systems within the partnerships of the SEAs and the LEAs.

Those are the major pieces that Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe would recommend. Again, ensuring that the tribal nations are defining what our needs are and that it's not being defined by the SEA or the LEA.

(Native language spoken.)

MS. RICHARDSON: Next, we have Bernie

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Thomas.

MR. LESSARD: Hi, Bernie. Thank you.

MR. THOMAS: Good afternoon. I'm Bernie Thomas, Pahalucktun. (Native language spoken.) My name is Pahalucktun, my ancestral name.

It's no accident, however, that I'm speaking to you in English. The federal government had contrived over the centuries to steal our language away.

And so now we're in the process of revitalizing our languages and restoring our curriculum in such a way to validate and recognize tribal ways of knowing.

But we want the federal government's financial support so that we can build out our curriculum.

And the Article 14 of the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855 calls for the development and operation of a trade school.

But instead of getting a trade school, our ancestors were sent off to boarding schools

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over a 70-year period of time.

And then from the boarding schools to day schools, in which we were forbidden and punished for speaking our own language and practicing any sign of our cultural heritage.

And so we want the recognition of the need for the restitution of our culture and our language from the federal government, our federal trustee, to make sure that the tribal governments receive the needed support to increase tribal member students' culture and identity, which are closely linked with education empirically.

And in addition, we know that bilingual kids are smarter. We know this empirically. And we want to be able to have language immersion schools fully supported in our own tribal languages.

And we believe this to be a part, a fundamental part of the role of the federal trustee, the U.S. Department of Education, need to begin to recognize that the standards that currently exist are not culturally responsive to

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the 565 tribes to which you are obligated to stake an understanding of and implementation of policies which genuinely reflects the government-to-government relationship that we intend.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you for that comment. I also want to mention again that during this time, we're accepting tribal leader comments and also designees of tribal leaders, those folks that have been designated by the tribal leader to take part in this now.

So thank you very much. Next question. Anything else in the chat box?

MS. RICHARDSON: The next hand raised, the individual is labeled as comblues. You should be able to unmute yourself at this time.

Please leave a comment in the chat box if you're having issues, and we can try to work with you, with your audio.

The next individual is Barbara Cadiente-Nelson.

MS. CADIENTE-NELSON: (Native language spoken). Can you hear me?

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MR. LESSARD: We can hear you, yes.

MS. CADIENTE-NELSON: (Native language spoken). My name is Barbara Cadiente-Nelson. I am Tlingit and I am with the Douglas Indian Association Tribe. I'm the council representative for our education department.

As I mentioned, I am Tlingit. My Tlingit names are (Native language spoken). In Tlingit country here in Alaska, when words are so powerfully stated as were by the previous persons who spoke, we don't let them fall to the ground without catching them.

And I wanted to first and foremost acknowledge and let them know I stand in solidarity with their comments.

My mother is 94 years old and she is a survivor now of the pandemic, not only the pandemic, but also a student who was removed from her community to go to a mission school where she received punishment for speaking Tlingit.

And like the previous speaker, I'm an evidence of that mission to scrub her language

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from her mouth in that I can tell you what my name is but I'm limited.

So I was greatly encouraged when I saw on the list of priorities, should these grants be allocated for the acquisition of our heritage languages. And my spirit just leaped when I saw that.

We have so many needs, but as was said by our previous speakers, fundamentally and basically, our languages are our world view.

And if we don't have those anchored, then in our -- in our villages and our tribes, then we can't go forward as a people. So I wanted to say that.

Ultimately, I do want to say that what we have experienced in our community through the years of having grants, Department of Indian Ed grants funneled through our community and working arduously to culturally sensitize the LEAs in the state, et cetera, that while we have advocated for family and community involvement, that we're at a threshold now where our teachers are more

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culturally responsive than our own families.

And that is of grave concern. And so when we look at these grants, we need to hold ourselves accountable for our own measurements of how our people are moving forward.

And we are bridging that gap from many persons like myself who are survivors of their parent having been removed from their community, their village.

So again, (Native language spoken) for this opportunity to speak on behalf of a tribe of Douglas Indian Association. I wish you all well and stay safe.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you so much. Thank you. Anyone else, tribal leader comments?

MS. RICHARDSON: We're going to go back to Comblues and see if they were able to get their audio fixed.

MR. LESSARD: Oh, good.

MS. RICHARDSON: I see that your line is unmuted. Okay, please reach out to Mark Taylor for additional assistance.

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At this time, we'll go to Dr. Sherry Johnson next.

DR. JOHNSON: Hi, there. I'm Dr. Sherry Johnson. I'm the education director for the Sisseton Wahpeton Ovate in Sisseton, South Dakota.

I am also the tribal consultation designee on behalf of education, appointed tribal consultation representative.

On this, I'd like to say, on the -- on the new ARP tribal education awards, I want to say (Native language spoken) for this opportunity. I want to say a big thank you for this opportunity for additional funding for our TEAs.

I think this is a huge effort and it's vastly needed. There's been very minimal funding for the tribal education agencies, departments available, and it's a struggle.

A lot of need out there, so I want to say really a big thank you for thinking about this and providing this extra opportunity.

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We have our local educational entities reaching out to us on a regular basis of trying to figure out how to include and make a difference to our native learners in everything from educational improvement to actually having regular school attendance, which affects our education.

And as a result, we're struggling as how to meet all these needs, and lack some resources in funding that can reach out that we can reach out to and provide that to them.

And we also would like to say the opportunity that I believe that this opportunity should be at least five years, three years of capacity building and then the two years of data support afterwards, at a minimum.

There needs to be a real effort of mentoring and connecting and networking people together, because there's many people out there that have expertise that we all could use, and just by sharing data and sharing resources. That's huge because we learn from each other.

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And with that, I'd like to say thank you again for this opportunity and that (Native language spoken).

MR. LESSARD: Okay, Mardella, do we have anyone else? Thank you, Dr. Johnson.

MS. RICHARDSON: At this time, we don't have any additional hands raised. Please feel free to raise your hand if you would like to provide a comment.

It looks like we have one more hand that just went up from Quinton Roman Nose.

MR. LESSARD: Hi, Quinton.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Good afternoon, again. I just wanted to say, technically, when I first tried to get on, I couldn't get on, and I found out that, at a local level, it was my bandwidth, wouldn't allow me to get on to the consultation.

So I had to switch to another source of bandwidth. So I was able to finally get on. So I don't know if that's an issue with other people listening.

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But I want to thank you, Ron, and Julian and OIE staff for having this opportunity to make comments.

Unfortunately, it's the result of COVID making these funds available, and it's welcome. I want to go ahead and make a few comments to speak on behalf of those tribes who never had a TEA or TED or have never had the ability or the capacity of resources to actually form one.

And once again, there are more of the 570 plus tribes that do not have a TED or TEA. So with that being said, I think everyone needs to apply for a grant based upon their needs.

However, I would like to see those small tribes who've never been able to put together a grant application, whether it be a single tribe or a consortium of tribes, I'd like to see that available and I am in favor of the five-year grant.

I think that's long enough to build capacity. Once again, the history of the STEP

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program, it has shown that grantees have a better success rate in moving their Ed forward if there's someone at the SEA level.

And it appears that if there's an Indian education director at the state level who's full-time and not a person who has assigned duties as an Ed contact, there seems to be more success.

So I don't know if that would give any advantage to any of the states that do or don't have Indian staff. I think it's very important to have that SEA contact.

And I would very much promote, and it's been proven in other OIE grants, that MOUs, MOAs, memorandums of understanding, memorandums of agreement, between the TEA, the tribe, and the LEA, even SEA, many times in public school, the personnel lead, superintendents lead, teachers lead, and even TEA directors, TED directors, they lead.

I think an important part of multi-year grants is that we start with an MOU and

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amend it as needed, as you go forth.

Then also, I think some of the original STEP grantees will support to say that a lot of times, the initial part of the grant is a learning situation between the TEA and the LEA or SEA.

I think the very first time our STEP grants were awarded, I spent a lot of time having the LEA, SEA get to know the tribe, but they had what they can do or can't do, and then also spent a lot of time where the tribe got to know what the LEA was capable of or can do as well as the SEA.

So I think that's part of this process, that they get to know each other. Also, there needs to be a professional development component, where additional training, not only for the TEA directors.

In my experience, which is almost 20 years with TED now, there hasn't been but maybe a few new TED directors who can just walk in and already know all the components or all the

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aspects of being a TEA director. So professional development of TEA directors, TEA staff, is very important, as well as professional development for LEAs.

I think LEA staff, teachers, superintendents, administrators, it's important for them to receive professional development.

I think that issue can be extended many more times and different topics and maybe different areas. I would like to see new grantees in some capacity.

And if you are going to award grantees to the ones who've already received seen them, I would like to see some component where they give back, participate in workshops to new tribes, new TEAs, somehow to give them their experiences and their journey to be an effective TEA.

And lastly, the data journey is so important. We never really touched the issue of acquiring tribal data.

Here in Oklahoma, they recently passed a state law where they're now going to be able to

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designate which tribe they're affiliated with from pre-K to 12.

I know the state of Washington has already had that. But I think there's probably less than five states in the United States that have that ability through the SEA to tell their skills you need to separate.

You can't just check a box for Native American. You go down and you'll say what tribe they're affiliated with.

And that would be very much helpful if data component development, series of workshops, TEAs, whether or not you get a grant.

I think data enhancement, sharing ideals, how to acquire data. Tribes really need to know where their students are at. I mean, not just physically, they need to know what their progress is.

And I know in the time of COVID, the issue of students being engaged, where are they at? Are they actually participating?

Even before COVID, we lost a lot of

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students because they would go between public school, VIE, homeschool or even not even go to school.

So I think the issue of data acquisition enhancement and the professional development is so important for tribes to move forward.

And actually, I've got more to say, Rob, but I'm going to quit and address it in writing. So thank you very much.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Quinton, and be sure if you can, send any additional things in writing, and next, after we're finished, I'll put that screen up to where to send that to.

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Okay.

MR. LESSARD: I think we had some other folks, Mardella. I just want to ensure that the tribal leaders have the opportunity to go first before others.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, we have asked tribal leaders to identify themselves and raise their hand to speak. Chris Meyer was next on the

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list of individuals.

MS. MEYER: This is Chris Meyer, Coeur d'Alene member, and the Director of Education for the Coeur d'Alene tribe.

And I am speaking on behalf of our tribal leadership. I'm glad that these dollars have been designated for TEAs.

And last week, we attended the OIE training. And tribal sovereignty was stressed throughout those three days.

And for us to be able to exercise our tribal sovereignty, it is important, out of the seven possible options, it's important for each tribe to be able to select where they have the greatest need and to be able to design the grant around the greatest need.

Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to share our thoughts.

MR. LESSARD: Well, thank you, Chris. Thank you very much. Mardella, who's next?

MS. RICHARDSON: Next I have Joyce McFarland.

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MS. MCFARLAND: Hello, this is Joyce McFarland and I'm with the Nez Perce Tribe Education Department.

And I just want to make sure that it's understood I'm commenting during the public comment because I'm not a tribal government representative designee, which I understood the first part was those ones.

But I understood that it was open to general. So basically, I'm just getting confused when we're talking about established TEAs, new TEAs, and STEP, because as far as I know, this is the America Rescue Plan, and it's not STEP 2.0.

Because as an established TEA, COVID has hit us hard just the same as everyone else. We've had students, and that's why I think one of the indicators should be the impact of loss of educational progress this school year, because we have students that have gone to school half time. They haven't even met a 1.0 FTE.

We have students who have gone all distance learning. We don't even talk about the

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loss of summertime. All of us are experienced students, parents are concerned. Like, what, are they ready for college now? Because this whole year of education.

So really, I'm concerned when we start talking about established TEAs or priorities of those who aren't.

I understand the situation and I just think it's you, as the Department of Education, don't make the application so burdensome and so technical that a first-time applicant can't get through it. Give plenty of time. Like, we've got STEP announcements with 30 days to get it in, and you're talking about agreements that need to be done.

Some of those things just, because it's the ARP, is there that flexibility where it doesn't have to be too technical? It doesn't have to be too burdensome. And then your TEAs that don't have as much experience and they're able to write.

I do think, though, it would be a good

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idea, and I've seen other grants do this, to give some priority points to maybe an established TEA who mentors a new TEA. And actually, that's what we did with STEP because we did have, Nez Perce Tribe had two STEP grants, 2012 and 2015.

And so when we weren't able to apply, I just reached out to some of the tribes that we worked with in our state and in our region, Washington, Idaho, and say, we'd be willing to help you get that -- get that funds. Because we are concerned about our tribal students in our area, but then also we're investing across the state and region as well.

So that may be something when you talk about mentorship, maybe that's a priority point where there's a consortium between an established TEA and a new TEA. I understand the need to get the money out, but also then I feel like we're kind of, as established TEAs with some success, then we're getting pushed down. It's like, well, isn't this the American Rescue Plan? Isn't it about the impact of COVID?

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I just -- I just think that needs to --
- anyway, that's what I would say just as my
public opinion for the Tribal Education
Department.

But that's the main thing I want to
say. I could probably say more but I want to
give other people more time. Thank you.

MR. LESSARD: No, thank you for that.

That was a great comment. So, please, if you
have more to say, I'm going to put up the slide
pretty soon of where to send those comments.

So we want to hear from everyone. So,
okay, next, Mardella, do we have other folks,
tribal leaders or designees on the line?

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, we have Chief
Darby Weaver.

MR. LESSARD: Yep. Hi, Chief. Hello,
Chief?

MS. RICHARDSON: Your line is unmuted.
Okay. We'll move to Bryce In the Woods.

MR. IN THE WOODS: Yes.

MR. LESSARD: Hello, Bryce, how are

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you?

MR. IN THE WOODS: Ah, (Native language spoken).

MR. LESSARD: (Native language spoken).

MR. IN THE WOODS: (Native language spoken). I give you guys a good greeting and I gave you my Lakota name. And we're supposed to be under consultation, which is good.

Ever since President Obama come up with that in 2010, he wanted all the secretaries to come up with consultation policy.

And I see that President Biden also is shaking that tree so that the tribal governments will be heard and all the functions that we have as tribal governments hopefully will be addressed some day in a good way.

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

MR. IN THE WOODS: And my concern here, I'm on my fourth term with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe located here in South Dakota.

We have nine sister and brother tribes

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here in South Dakota. And education, we had to come up with the education code.

I'm pushing for WoLakota education, which I'm the WoLakota Committee chair. And that's regarding our language, our culture, our history.

(Native language spoken), that word (Native language spoken), you can say several words in English. One would be culture. But the main one is a way of life.

And our language and our history is critical today. We have two public schools here.

One has 80 percent Lakota children and the other 55 percent Lakota children, two grant schools and a BIE school.

And this curriculum that I believe we've had consultations with the public schools, they're very receptive. Some are ahead of the curve. Our grant schools are doing good things.

But I believe curriculum is what's critical. And since e-learning came, since this pandemic, stay at home, and all this stuff, and

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this global situation that transpired upon everybody, I believe it opened up some new doors in e-learning, which some of the students are having difficulty in.

But once that catches on, it opens it up where all communities to have an education arm from the baby, the pregnant mother, to the oldest one in that community.

And I believe that with some of the passing of our fluent speakers, it became critical that our language is paramount and always has been.

So I think if this community development and education, starting with the family in the communities, basically with the language and culture and history, we're working on curriculum through the WoLakota Committee.

So if you look at science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics to incorporate a holistic approach in these schools, a lot of our young people are different learning styles. And we have to address all those learning styles.

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So it's critical that our language is spoken and understood.

I'll give you a case in point. In World War I and II our language was used also, with many other native languages, to win those battles at those battles in the front, through the radio, through our language, back to the rear where they could assess what has to happen in that battlefield and those battles were won because of our language.

That didn't come out until 1996, and I'm glad a lot of the World War II veterans received a gold medal. They should have received it earlier. But we pushed those issues back then, '96, and we did, they did receive it, some posthumously. They should have received them when they were alive.

But that's how critical our language is today. And a lot of our people don't know that. And a lot of South Dakota citizens don't know that.

They have a Oceti Sakowin curriculum

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presented last year to the South Dakota Legislature. They didn't support it. It was presented again this year and they didn't support it this year.

But they're starting a charter school there in Rapid City where what I'm talking about is going to happen.

And here, with our -- with our fluent speakers, we have a list of our elders that are fluent speakers, we want to capitalize on them now and develop this curriculum.

With that curriculum that we develop, I wanted to also incorporate it in schools. So a lot of the administrators I believe are open to this.

They need that type of guidance, also, from the correct pronunciation and understanding, like what I said about (Native language spoken).

But I think if this money does come down, it should look at this e-learning that the students are going through, because now they're going back into the classroom on a choice, either

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go to face to face or stay home with your tablet.

And some are having difficulty on that. So there's a bridge that needs to be gapped between the e-learning, the technology, to get that communication out there. We were getting out to the communities. There was some gigs with our telephone attorney, but we're working those out. So hopefully, we'll be connected in all our communities. That's where this curriculum will be critical.

So I'm hoping that something like our WoLakota education effort could be funded. It's not much money, I guess. Is it \$20 million or something? But something like that would capitalize on some of the concerns of some of our fluent speakers being taken by this COVID, and who's replacing them?

So it's critical now that we get this curriculum together and video, audio, using all the technology we can, because that's the generation that's growing up now in this technology. And we need to capitalize from that

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pregnant mother to the oldest one in those communities.

So to me, education is critical at all ages and the K-12, we're rethinking our Ordinance 66, which is our language education code.

We're going to update it to the realities of today and make it more broader and more --- hopefully the curriculum will refer to what's happening with NASA and our planetary exploration and our star knowledge.

Some of these things can bridge that gap between the public school and our schools and our elders and our fluent speakers.

I'm hoping something like that would happen. We're working on it. It would really give us a boost if that was incorporated in those elements that I mentioned. (Native language spoken.)

MR. LESSARD: (Native language spoken.) Thank you so much. Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir. At this time, we're going to go back to Chief Weaver.

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MR. LESSARD: Okay.

CHIEF WEAVER: Hello, this is Chief Darby Weaver. I think I have my audio issues resolved.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes.

MR. LESSARD: Hi, Chief, how are you?

CHIEF WEAVER: Okay. Excellent. So I would like to comment on some of the questions that were presented.

We're in favor of the five-year program, then the concept of the novice applicant being awarded addition points.

We like the idea of data access and we believe that data access should be made available from the LEAs or SEAs to the TEAs, and it should also be available transparently, it should be available publicly.

We can go ED Facts and find older criteria, but we need to have that information more readily available to us, even if it's just to us individually as tribes so that we can access that data in a more meaningful manner and

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be able to capitalize on it, not just at one point in the year but perhaps throughout the year.

In projects, we might call this an agile type project management as opposed to a waterfall type approach.

And we also believe that the -- that the tribe should be able to make it as tribal sovereignty and be able to select the greatest need of what level of program it needs. We have, like, seven different programs there, and we believe tribal language is one of the things we're trying to achieve as well as our cultural history, as well as the actual history.

We've been -- we've been taught American history for most of our lives now, and we find that since we've done our own research on ourselves, we've found that that may not be necessarily our history.

So we want to verify with that. And we're doing that. And we've done that. And that's how we've come to be here today.

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Now, I've heard some of the -- some of the other tribes' representatives speak about mentorship.

Would that be something that would be considered? And if it would be, would it be something that's offered by each tribe or either entity, each TEA's perspective? Or would that be something that might be offered from the OIE's perspective or the EIE's perspectives? Something along those lines.

Now, in our -- in our community, we have an issue with attendance. That's what we were told. And our attendance, we're a rural community, so what we find is when our children leave the community to go for a, let's say a death in the family, and we're very highly related. I mean, we have about 98 percent remarriage rate here. So we've got, everybody here is interconnected and interrelated. There's 10 to 14 generations that we -- that we account for, that we -- that we can actually account for.

And whenever somebody passes away or gets sick

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or if there's an accident or anything unforeseen, somehow that might affect the children's attendance.

Now, what we found also statistically is that our children are above average in the first three grades, grades one through three. So they're getting a good foundation at the pre-K and K level. Then when they go through grades 1-3, they're above average and they top the charts.

But that tends to drift off a little bit as we -- as we proceed -- as we proceed and stuff.

So what ends up happening is -- what ends up happening is that we have to account for this as we go -- as we get -- as we're -- our children are getting older and going through the higher grades of the school system.

So what ends up -- so we want to capitalize on that at the older levels where we -- where we take advantage of language and culture in their earlier years of their OIE education.

But those are some of the things that I thought would be important as far as, like

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missionaries.

We've had missionaries teaching us -- teaching us out of our language and out of our culture and out of norms that as a tribe, the last missionaries left here in I think 2018 to one of our more remote communities.

MR. LESSARD: Wow, really?

CHIEF WEAVER: Yeah, the Quakers. The Friends' Society. But we've had missionaries here, the Catholics started as early as 1856.

But we had it all the way back to the American Board of Foreign Missionaries. And we're documented in conversations on the Choctaw Nation, for example.

You'll see our people listed there. But what to do is, you'll find all this and we've been -- we've been -- we've learned our ways out of our -- out of our tribal languages.

We've learned our ways out of some of our -- some of our culturalisms. But our community, as rural as we are, we've been able to maintain our family -- our family, our culture,

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from that perspective. And we pretty much still do things the way we've been doing them, farming, different aspects like that, almost since as long as it's been documented.

But this is Chief Darby Weaver, Choctaw Nation of Indians, and I was trying to give some input there on how we might try to take advantage of some of this program if it's made available to us.

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

CHIEF WEAVER: And we would be a novice applicant applying. We've just been approved for the OIE program for Title VI, some of the Title VII, so we'd like to be considered for this as well. Thank you, sir.

MR. LESSARD: Well, thank you so much. That's amazing, you know that we're talking about initially first STEP program and then the ARP program.

But those of you that are familiar with the Office of Indian Education, we do have the Native American Language grants, we have the

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professional development, we have Native Youth Community Projects, the NYCP.

So there are opportunities to include, when those grants come available to apply for those to include culture and preservation of native languages into that, which is an important thing that we at the Department of Ed has been able to add over the years.

So next, Mardella, I was going to ask you if you could put up the slide with the written comments so while we're talking people can see that? Great. Okay, do we have any other tribal leader folks that would like to comment?

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir, we have, Leona Williams has her hand raised to provide comment.

MR. LESSARD: Okay.

MS. RICHARDSON: You should be able to unmute your line.

MS. JAMES: Good afternoon. This is actually Angela James. I serve as the Vice Chairperson for Pinoleville Pomo Nation.

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MR. LESSARD: Hello.

MS. JAMES: Leona Williams is our chairperson and I'm on her laptop.

MR. LESSARD: Great, Angela. How are you?

MS. JAMES: Hi, I'm good.

MR. LESSARD: Good.

MS. JAMES: I wanted to just make a comment referring to question one on the first page of the questions we received.

Pinoleville Pomo Nation does not support the definition as presented in question one.

Pinoleville also has a Head Start, an Early Head Start program that might develop a post-secondary education in the future.

The U.S. Department of Education handles everything from early childhood to post-secondary education, and we believe -- we believe that the Tribes' Department of Education should do the same.

We have noticed a trend with our,

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since establishing our Head Start program, and maybe about three years ago now, we established our Early Head Start program. The trend of the children leaving our program, they're immersed in their culture every day. We're a full-year program.

And so when they leave here and attend the local school district schools, elementary schools, they are actually testing at least halfway through their school year at that point.

And one thing that we noticed through the state standardized testing is that the same as the previous person who was speaking, our children through elementary school, they are actually testing at above grade level in their current grade levels.

And we do lose them about, I would say in the sixth grade, the test scores start dropping. And so here up in Pinoleville, through a Department of Education grant that we received previously, we developed a tutoring center for our local Native American students. And trying

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to capture that age group, junior high through high school, and to help keep them on track and towards graduation. And we also have documented the graduation rate and that graduation rate has increased since the funding of our Department of Education grant.

And so Pinoleville is in favor of a five-year, the five-year award. And also the things that we would like to focus on are continuing to provide more one-on-one tutoring and counseling support and also incorporation of culturally relevant materials into our local school district.

We partnered with our school district on the previous grant, and we have seen, I think, that we have seen, I think, success in that program.

And so today, we just wanted to make that comment. And --

MR. LESSARD: Well, thank you so much.

I appreciate your comments. And again, if you have additional things you would like to say in

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addition, please send them into the -- on your screen, you'll see the written comments into tribalconsultation@ed.gov.

And Julian's team will be going through everything and looking at all the comments.

MS. JAMES: Thank you.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Next, we're getting close to our time for ending today, folks, so I just want to check before I download.

Do we have maybe a couple more that we could take?

MS. RICHARDSON: Ron, it looks like Chris Meyer has their hand raised.

MR. LESSARD: Yes? Hi. Chris.

MS. MEYER: I'm sorry, that was a mistake.

MS. RICHARDSON: Okay.

MS. MEYER: I already spoke. Thank you.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. We didn't announce public comments, but I think we have

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been receiving some.

So if there aren't any other tribal leaders, if there is anyone else that would like to make a comment, please do so.

And as we get closer to the time, please send your comments in, written comments by tonight by 11:59 Eastern time. So, Mardella? Anyone else?

MS. RICHARDSON: At the moment, we don't have any other hands raised.

MR. LESSARD: That's great. I want to thank everyone for being with us today. Thank you for joining us.

Please, again, see the screen with the written comments. And I would like to ask Julian, if you're still with us, Julian, if you would like to say some closing comments for everyone?

MR. GUERRERO: Well, thank you, Ron. Here, let me get my camera on. Yeah, I'd be happy to provide just some brief closing comments.

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I just want to say I appreciate everybody for sticking through the entire duration of the webinar for today's consultation.

Again, this work that we're doing is meaningful in terms of gathering all of what you provided us and synthesizing how to make it meaningful and to the design of these programs.

These programs are essential to advancing tribal sovereignty. And the purpose of this is to just also advance that government-to-government relationship. And we're committed to that vision.

Please, continue to stay up to date on our website, as you see on the screen in front of you.

If you go to oese.ed.gov, you could just click on the subpage Programs, scroll down to OIE, or you can follow the hyperlink that you see on your screen.

I encourage you to visit our OIE webpage. We have been updating it a lot. And a lot of our programs now have new information on

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them. We have a lot of great opportunities to get engaged with our work.

I encourage you to sign up for our Listserv and get connected in many other ways as well.

We're committed to meaningful technical assistance, as well, and relationship building overall with all partners involved, all constituencies.

And it matters to us a great deal that we do so much to connect each of the silos and break down those barriers for the sake of the Native child.

The stakes are too great to settle for anything lower. So we at the OIE maintain high expectations in our work.

We maintain high expectations in the way we do business with tribal nations. And I'm just so glad that we could take this moment to connect with you all virtually and make sure that we hear what you have to say.

So if anything, I'm seeing, looks

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like, do we have another public comment waiting, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: There was a request in the chat box if we were open for public comment.

MR. GUERRERO: Oh, yes. Yes, of course. Who is that? The public comment?

MS. RICHARDSON: It was Songtree Pioche.

MR. GUERRERO: Okay. Go ahead, Songtree.

MS. PIOCHE: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Songtree Pioche. I'm Taos Pueblo and Oglala Lakota, married to Navajo, speaking as an indigenous scholar from the University of New Mexico Native American Studies Program.

And I just wanted to thank you guys all for the work that you're doing. However, I also wanted to point out that true tribal consultation is consulting with them individually, and there are, at last count that I saw, 576 federally recognized tribes, not

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including state recognized tribes.

So I'm wondering if this effort, if you're reaching out to them individually and allowing time or asking the same questions that you're asking in this webinar.

As a participant, I don't see how many people are logged on, but I know in my personal life, I have a lot of things I have to do.

So putting together a memo just as not a tribal leader is hard on me. So if you're asking tribal leaders to complete a really meaningful response submission to the questions that you're asking, how you can serve Native children, giving hours' notice deadline is probably going to be ineffective.

But I really do appreciate everything that I've heard. There was a lot of wisdom. But again, each tribe is unique and has its own language, needs, culture, customs that need to be honored.

And I feel like true tribal nation to nation consultation needs to be had. And if they

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are not here at this table, it is not a consent to what decisions are going to be made.

Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, Songtree. You need to join the federal government. Come help us out. We are committed to that vision as well.

There's only so much we can do with our limited resources, but we make sure to try to move mountains with the limited resources that we do have.

And releasing our notice 30 days in advance, making sure the questions were released 20 days in advance, and then having this opportunity on top of submitting written comments is every which way that we're committed to making sure that we remain as flexible as possible to take input.

So thank you, Songtree. Thank you, everybody, who has joined today and provided comments. We appreciate you. We appreciate

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everything you're doing for our Native children.

Please stay in touch. Stay connected to our work. We'll talk to you again at the next consultation. (Native language spoken.) That's the way. Thank you so much.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 4:14 p.m.)

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