

Statement by
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On the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Request for
Department of Education Programs Serving
Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

Delivered before the
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
March 5, 2003

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to appear before you to discuss the fiscal year 2004 budget request for major Department of Education programs that serve American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

Since this is my first opportunity to testify before this committee, I would like to begin by briefly mentioning my background. In September 2002, I was appointed as the director of the Office of Indian Education. In my new position, I serve as the principal point of contact within the Department for Indian education. Prior to that, I served as the executive director of the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities

I am proud to say that my understanding of the Indian culture and Indian issues began with my upbringing, and more importantly with my father, Ron Peralta, who served almost 20 years as Tribal Chairman of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians. Also, I must mention my mother who continually encouraged education – the basics – reading, writing, arithmetic. I am convinced that it was the learning of those basics that helped guide me through my teaching experience as a first- and second-grade teacher.

I have a strong commitment to education, especially Indian education, and have no doubt that this is an historic time to be in the education arena, especially since education is a national priority for President Bush. The principles of *No Child Left Behind* represent a milestone for the future of Indian education for over 600,000 Indian students. President Bush and Secretary Paige believe that every child should have access to a high quality education and that American Indian children are no exception.

In my capacity as the director of the Office of Indian Education, I oversee the programs that support the efforts of local educational agencies, Indian tribes, and organizations that assist American Indian and Alaska Native students in achieving to the same challenging standards as all students.

Working with you and the Committee on Indian Affairs, the Department wants to make it possible for every Indian child to be heard and ensure that the future generations of Indian students are not left behind.

Overview

The Bush Administration is strongly committed to ensuring that American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians receive every opportunity to achieve to high academic standards. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, enacted in January 2002, focuses on improving academic achievement by:

- ensuring that all children can read by the end of the third grade,
- improving teacher quality through high-quality professional development and innovative teacher recruitment and retention practices,
- increasing accountability for student achievement, and

- placing a stronger emphasis on teaching methods grounded in scientifically based research.

American Indians have made educational progress in recent decades, but continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty, low educational attainment, and fewer educational opportunities than other students. For example, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, in 2000, only 17 percent of American Indian fourth-graders scored at or above the proficient level in reading compared to 40 percent of white students and 32 percent of all students. In addition, while American Indians made progress overall on the SAT, in 2001, they scored 100 points below white students and 60 points below the general population.

The 2004 budget request for Department of Education programs serving Indians supports the President's commitment to providing more resources to help implement the No Child Left Behind Act and improve educational opportunities for all students, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Native American students will benefit from major initiatives in the act, and many programs at the Department of Education help to ensure that Indian students have full access to these and other reforms to improve education.

The 2004 budget request includes a number of programs and initiatives that focus specifically on helping Indian students achieve.

Indian Education Programs

The President's request for the Department's Indian Education programs for fiscal year 2004 is \$122.4 million. These programs include formula grants to school

districts, competitive programs, and national activities for research and evaluation on the educational needs and status of the Indian population.

Indian Education - Grants to Local Educational Agencies

We are requesting \$97.1 million for Indian Education formula grants to local educational agencies. This program is the Department's principal vehicle for addressing the unique educational and culturally related needs of Indian children. Grants supplement the regular school program, helping Indian children improve their academic skills, raise their self-confidence, and participate in enrichment programs and activities that would otherwise be unavailable. The requested level would provide an estimated per-pupil payment of \$206 for approximately 471,000 students, including more than 40,000 students in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools.

Special Programs for Indian Children

Our request for Special Programs for Indian Children is \$20 million. These funds will be used for two activities.

Approximately \$10.8 million will support an estimated 41 Demonstration grants that promote school readiness for Indian preschool children and increase the potential for learning among American Indian and Alaska Native students.

In addition, the 2004 request will provide approximately \$9.1 million to continue the American Indian Teacher Corps initiative, which trains Indian college students to become teachers, places them in schools with concentrations of Indian students, and provides professional development and in-service support as they begin teaching. In

addition, the program will provide professional development to teachers already in the field so that they can work more effectively with their Indian students.

National Activities

We are requesting \$5.2 million for research, evaluation, and data collection activities related to Indian Education.

The Department has used the National Activities appropriation to craft a comprehensive research agenda for Indian education, which was completed and publicly released in 2001. Funding from 2004 will be used to continue implementing that agenda. The agenda responds to the major national need for better information on the educational status and needs of Indian students, and for scientifically based research on what works most effectively in meeting the educational needs of this population.

Historically, educational research involving American Indian and Alaska Native students has been limited in applicability because of small sample size and the resulting inability to generalize from the results. We are beginning a new large-scale study involving representative samples that will establish baseline data on academic achievement and retention of American Indian and Alaska Native students. Fiscal year 2004 funds would be used to continue this study as well as to fund a study that examines the feasibility of determining the effectiveness of educational programs that incorporate Native language and culture. Fiscal year 2004 funds would also be used to continue research grants and data collections initiated in earlier years.

In addition to the Indian Education programs, the Department also supports the education of Indians through other programs.

Title I: Education for the Disadvantaged

Title I Grants to LEAs

Title I provides supplemental education funding to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools, especially in high-poverty areas, to help some 15 million disadvantaged students, including an estimated 250,000 Indian children and youth, learn to the same high standards as other students. Title I funds may be used, for example, to provide extra instruction at all grade levels, extended-day kindergarten programs, learning laboratories in math and science, and intensive summer programs. States are required to create a framework to integrate Title I with State and local reforms stressing high performance for all children. In addition, the No Child Left Behind Act requires stronger accountability for helping all students, including Indian students, make adequate yearly progress toward State standards.

The Department is requesting \$12.4 billion for Title I Grants to LEAs in fiscal year 2004, a 41 percent increase since the passage of No Child Left Behind. Under the statute, the BIA and the Outlying Areas receive 1 percent of these funds. The BIA share of the set-aside would be approximately \$85 million. These funds will serve almost 50,000 children in BIA schools, in addition to Indian children served in regular public schools.

Reading First State Grants

Reading First is a comprehensive effort to implement the findings of high-quality scientifically based research on reading and reading instruction. It is one of the Administration's highest priorities for education. Providing consistent support for reading success from the earliest age has critically important benefits. Under this formula

program, the BIA will receive 0.5 percent of the State Grants appropriation. Our 2004 budget request of \$1.05 billion would provide approximately \$5.25 million to BIA schools for this program.

Even Start

Even Start is an educational program for low-income families that is designed to improve the academic outcomes of parents and their young children, including Indian families, by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy, parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities. The Department is requesting \$175 million for Even Start in 2004, which would provide approximately \$2.6 million for Even Start programs conducted by Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

Improving Teacher Quality State Grants

The President's budget request emphasizes the importance of good teaching for all students. The Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program provides flexible funds to State and local educational agencies to develop and support a high-quality teaching force through activities that are grounded in scientifically based research. Funds are used to strengthen the skills and knowledge of teachers and administrators to enable them to improve student achievement in the core academic subjects and for teacher and principal recruitment, development, and retention. The No Child Left Behind Act created this program by consolidating the former Eisenhower Professional Development and Class-Size Reduction programs. Under the statute, the BIA receives a set-aside of 0.5 percent.

The Department's fiscal year 2004 request of \$2.85 billion would provide the BIA with an allocation of almost \$14.2 million.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program is designed to help create and maintain drug-free, safe, and orderly environments for learning in and around schools by supporting effective, research-based approaches to drug and violence prevention. Of the appropriation for State grants, 1 percent or \$4.75 million (whichever is greater) is reserved for drug and violence prevention programs serving Indian children in BIA-operated or -supported schools, and 0.2 percent is reserved for programs serving Native Hawaiians.

The 2004 budget request of \$422 million for Safe and Drug-Free Schools includes \$4.75 million for the BIA and \$844,000 for Native Hawaiian programs.

Impact Aid

Basic Support Payments

Impact Aid provides financial assistance to school districts affected by Federal activities. The Basic Support Payments program is the primary vehicle for providing assistance for general operating expenses to many LEAs that educate Indian children. The 2004 budget request of \$867.5 million would provide approximately \$476.9 million to support the education of almost 123,500 children living on Indian lands.

Payments for Children with Disabilities

Impact Aid Payments for Children with Disabilities help federally affected school districts to provide the special education services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for federally connected children, including children residing on

Indian lands. The budget request of \$40 million would provide approximately \$21 million for services to approximately 19,000 children living on Indian lands.

Construction

The Impact Aid Construction program provides formula and competitive funds to support school construction and renovation in school districts that educate federally connected students or have federally owned land. Under the budget request, \$9 million in formula grants will go to districts on behalf of students residing on Indian lands. Funds can be used for such purposes as construction and renovation of school facilities and debt service related to the construction of school facilities. In addition, districts with high concentrations of students living on Indian lands would be eligible for \$27 million in competitive construction grants.

English Language Acquisition

English Language Acquisition programs (formerly Bilingual Education) support the education of limited English proficient students through a State formula grant program that helps to ensure that these students learn English and meet the same high academic standards as other students. The No Child Left Behind Act established a set-aside of 0.5 percent or \$5 million (whichever is greater) for schools operated predominantly for Native American and Alaska Native children. The 2004 budget request would include \$5 million for these schools. In addition, the Department estimates that approximately \$45 million in English Language Acquisition State formula grant funds would serve Indian students enrolled in public schools.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program enables communities to establish or expand centers that provide activities offering extended learning opportunities (such as before- and after-school programs) for students and related services to their families. The No Child Left Behind Act converted this activity from a national competition to a State formula grant program, with State educational agencies making competitive subgrants within their States. The Department may reserve up to a total of 1 percent for grants to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Outlying Areas. The fiscal year 2004 request of \$600 million would provide approximately \$4.3 million to the BIA.

Education Technology State Grants

The Education Technology State Grants program supports efforts to integrate technology into curricula to improve teaching and learning. By statute, three-quarters of 1 percent of the amount available for States is reserved for schools operated or funded by the BIA. The Department is requesting \$700 million for the program, which would provide approximately \$5.1 million for BIA schools.

Grants for State Assessments

The Grants for State Assessments program helps States develop and implement the additional assessments required by the No Child Left Behind Act. Under the funding formula, 0.5 percent of the appropriation for formula grants is reserved for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For 2004, the Administration is requesting \$390 million for this program, \$1.95 million of which would go to the BIA.

Education for Native Hawaiians

We are requesting \$18.3 million for Education for Native Hawaiians. These funds support a wide array of education services to improve the educational status of Native Hawaiians, including curriculum development, teacher training and recruitment, higher education, special education, community-based learning centers, family-based education, and gifted and talented programs. The funds would be sufficient to continue high-priority projects.

Alaska Native Education Equity

We are requesting \$14.2 million for Alaska Native Education Equity, to continue projects begun in earlier years. These funds support an array of education services to improve the educational status of Alaska Natives, including student enrichment, preschool programs, and teacher training, recruitment, and curriculum development.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Secretary is required to transfer 1 percent of the appropriation for Education for Homeless Children and Youth to the BIA for services to Indian students in BIA-operated and funded schools. Our 2004 budget request of \$50 million includes \$500,000 for the BIA to provide services to homeless children and youth to enable them to attend and excel in school.

Vocational Education

Vocational Education State Grants, authorized under the Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, supports education programs designed to develop the academic, vocational, and technical skills of students in high schools and community colleges. The current program has a 1.25 percent set aside for competitive grants to

federally recognized Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Alaska Native entities, and 0.25 percent is set aside for grants to organizations that serve and represent Native Hawaiians. However, funding shares have not yet been estimated, since the Administration is proposing overall changes for the 2004 reauthorization of the program.

Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational and Technical Institutions

This program, also authorized by the Perkins Act, provides competitive grants for the operation and improvement of tribally controlled postsecondary vocational and technical institutions. Funds provide continued and expanded educational opportunities and training for Indian students attending those institutions. Under the budget request, the Department would provide \$6.5 million for these grants.

Higher Education Aid for Institutional Development

The Aid for Institutional Development programs, under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, are designed to strengthen institutions of higher education that enroll large proportions of minority students and students from low-income backgrounds. The programs provide financial assistance to help institutions solve problems that threaten their ability to survive, improve their management and fiscal operations, build endowments, and make effective use of technology.

The Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs) program authorizes 1-year planning and 5-year development grants that enable these institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve American Indian students. Under the budget request, the Department would award \$19 million for activities to strengthen TCCUs. In the past two years, a portion of funds has supported construction

and renovation activities, and the fiscal year 2004 budget request would provide approximately \$8 million for these purposes.

The Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions program authorizes 1-year planning and 5-year development grants that enable these institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students. The Department's 2004 budget request includes \$4 million for this program.

Special Education

Grants to States

The Special Education Grants to States program provides formula grants to meet the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. Of the funds allocated to the Department of the Interior, 80 percent is used for the education of children 5-21 years old and 20 percent is distributed to tribes and tribal organizations for the education of children 3-5 years old.

Under the budget request of \$9.5 billion, the Department would provide approximately \$82.5 million to BIA to help serve approximately 8,600 Indian students.

Grants for Infants and Families

The Grants for Infants and Families program provides formula grants to assist States in implementing statewide systems of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs to make available early intervention services to all children with disabilities, aged birth through 2, and their families. An amount

equivalent to 1.25 percent is allocated to the BIA. Under the 2004 budget request of \$447 million, the BIA would receive approximately \$5.5 million.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program provides services designed to help persons with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment to the extent of their capabilities. Nationally, this program provides services to about 9,000 American Indians with disabilities each year. In addition, the Rehabilitation Act requires that between 1.0 percent and 1.5 percent of the funds appropriated for the VR State Grants program be set aside for competitive grants to Indian tribes to provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities living on or near reservations. For 2004, the Department requests approximately \$2.7 billion for the VR State Grants program. The amount set aside for grants to Indian tribes would be approximately \$27.6 million and would fund a total of 69 projects, serving over 5,000 American Indians with disabilities.

Conclusion

The 2004 budget request for Department of Education programs serving Indians supports the President's overall goal of ensuring educational opportunities for all students, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. My colleague and I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.