

Statement by
Statement by Darla Marburger
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

On the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Request for
Department of Education Programs Serving
American Indians and Alaska Natives

Delivered before the
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
February 14, 2006

Ms. Marburger is accompanied by
Cathie Carothers, Acting Director, Office of Indian Education

Thomas M. Corwin, Director, Division of Elementary,
Secondary, and Vocational Analysis, Budget Service

U.S. Department of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statement by Darla Marburger
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

before the

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
on the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget for
Department of Education Programs Serving
American Indians and Alaska Natives

February 14, 2006

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, on behalf of Secretary Spellings, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss our fiscal year 2007 budget request for Department of Education programs that address and serve the needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

My name is Darla Marburger, and I am Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. I am here with my colleagues, Cathie Carothers, the Acting Director of the Office of Indian Education, and Tom Corwin, the Director of the Division of Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Analysis, Budget Service.

The Bush Administration is strongly committed to ensuring that federally and non-federally recognized American Indians and Alaska Natives benefit from national education reforms and receive every opportunity to achieve to high academic standards. Recent data suggest that our investments in Indian education are beginning to pay off. We know that more Indian students are pursuing postsecondary education than ever before; the number of Indian students enrolling in colleges and universities has more than doubled in the last two and a half decades. American Indian and Alaska Native

students scored higher than other minority groups on the 2003 and 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 4th- and 8th-grade reading and mathematics. However, significant achievement gaps persist between the American Indian and Alaska Native student population and the general population. These students continue to be subject to significant risk factors that threaten their ability to improve their academic achievement and their general well-being, and continue to need support from Federal programs that address the specific educational needs of the population.

Overview

When President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law four years ago, our Nation embarked on a landmark effort to reform education and improve student achievement for all students. The President believed then, and believes now, that if we provide school systems with resources and the flexibility to direct them to where they are most needed, ensure that we have highly qualified teachers in our classrooms, set rigorous standards for students, and hold schools accountable for teaching, our children will learn and achievement gaps among students will decrease and eventually disappear.

Today, States and school districts are completing implementation of many of the ground-breaking changes NCLB requires of school systems. By the end of the current school year, 2005-06, States will have put in place assessments that test all students annually in grades 3 through 8, and once in high school, in reading and mathematics. The current school year is also the deadline for meeting the NCLB requirement that all teachers of the core academic subjects be highly qualified, and most States already

report that highly qualified teachers teach the great majority of their core academic classes.

These changes are producing results. The most recent NAEP shows that reading scores for 9-year-olds increased more over the last five years than in the previous two decades. In math, 9- and 13-year-old scores also reached all-time highs.

The President's fiscal year 2007 budget requests funds to build on the success of the NCLB Act by extending its principles and reforms to the high school level in order to strengthen high schools and ensure that all students, especially at-risk students, are academically prepared for the transition to postsecondary education and the workforce. The proposed \$1.5 billion for a High School Reform program is one of three major initiatives contained in the Department of Education's 2007 budget request. Each of these initiatives would have important implications for the education of Indian students.

The Budget also requests for \$380 million in new spending at the Department of Education for a second initiative, the President's American Competitiveness Initiative. The Department of Education elements of this initiative focus on improving elementary and secondary instruction in mathematics and science. Notwithstanding the academic improvement we have seen under No Child Left Behind, we know that we need to vastly improve K-12 mathematics and science education across the country. Students need a strong foundation in mathematics and science skills in order to compete in the 21st century economy, and the building of that foundation starts in the early grades. The Math Now for Elementary School Students and Math Now for Middle School Students programs would help elementary and middle school students obtain the knowledge they need to succeed in high school mathematics courses.

The Math Now for Elementary Students program, modeled after our existing Reading First program, would support efforts to implement proven practices in math instruction that focus on preparing K-7 students for the more rigorous courses they will encounter in middle and high school. The Math Now for Middle School Students program is based on the principles of the current Striving Readers program and would support research-based math interventions in middle schools.

Finally, the President's budget contains a request for \$35 million in new funding for the Department of Education's components of a third initiative, the multi-agency National Security Language Initiative. This request would fund Department activities to increase significantly the number of American students learning the foreign languages that are critical for our national security and global competitiveness.

The 2007 budget request for the Department of Education supports the President's commitment to provide resources to help improve educational opportunities for all students. American Indian students will continue to benefit from implementation of the NCLB Act, as well as new initiatives to improve the quality of secondary, math, science, and foreign language education. Overall, Department programs would, under the FY 2007 budget, provide approximately \$1 billion in direct support specifically for Indians and Alaska Natives. In addition, significant funds are provided to Indian students who receive services through broader Federal programs, such as ESEA Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies and IDEA State Grants. The BIA would receive over \$215 million of Department of Education funds to support Indian education programs operated by that agency. We work closely with the BIA on program implementation issues and to improve the quality of the services the agency provides to Indian students.

Indian Education Programs

The President's request for the Department's Indian Education programs for fiscal year 2007 is \$118.7 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 \$95.3 million for Indian Education formula grants to local educational agencies (LEAs). This program is the Department's principal vehicle for addressing the unique educational and culturally related needs of Indian children. These 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 \$198 for approximately 481,700 students, including nearly 48,000 students in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools.

Special Programs for Indian Children

Our request for Special Programs for Indian Children is \$19.4 million. These funds would be used for three activities.

Approximately \$5.7 million would support an estimated 23 demonstration grants that focus on two types of activities. First, we would fund school readiness programs that provide age-appropriate educational programs and enhance the language skills of American Indian and Alaska Native 3- and 4-year-old children to prepare them for successful entry into school at the kindergarten level. Second, we would fund college-

preparatory programs for American Indian and Alaska Native secondary students that are designed to increase competency and skills in academic subjects, including mathematics and science, to enable these students to successfully go on to postsecondary education.

In addition, the 2007 request would provide over \$13 million to continue two training efforts under our Professional Development program, the American Indian Teacher Corps and the American Indian Administrator Corps initiatives. Approximately \$9.2 million of these funds would be used to support the American Indian Teacher Corps, which trains Indian individuals for teaching positions in schools with concentrations of Indian students. The 2007 request would also provide approximately \$4.3 million for the Administrator Corps to train Indian individuals at the master's- degree level to become new school administrators in Indian communities. Both programs are designed to provide on-going professional development and in-service support to these new Indian teachers and administrators in their first year of work.

National Activities

We are requesting \$4 million for research, evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance related to Indian education.

Fiscal year 2007 funds would be used to include a sufficient number of American Indian and Alaska Native students in the 2007 NAEP of 4th- and 8th-grade students in reading and mathematics. This project provides the Department with reliable, national-level data on Indian students' performance in reading and mathematics. Funds would also continue to support data collections initiated in earlier years, such as a special NAEP study designed to collect data on the educational experiences of American

Indian/Alaska Native students and the role of Indian culture in their education, and to promote ongoing program improvement for Indian Education Grants to LEAs and Special Programs.

High School Reform Program

The Administration is proposing a High School Reform program to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of targeted interventions that: (1) increase the achievement of high school students, particularly students at risk of failing to meet challenging State academic content standards; (2) eliminate gaps in achievement among students from different ethnic and racial groups and between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers; and (3) enable all high school students to graduate with the education, skills, and knowledge necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and in a demanding, high- technology economy. In 2007, the Administration is requesting \$1.5 billion for this program. Of this amount, \$535.5 million would be used for continuation grants for programs expiring under the Higher Education Act and \$939.5 million would be available for State formula grants and national activities. Under the proposal, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) would receive 0.5 percent of the formula grant allocation, approximately \$4.7 million in FY 2007.

Title I: Education for the Disadvantaged

Title I Grants to LEAs

Title I provides supplemental education funding to LEAs and schools, particularly those in high-poverty areas, to help the more than 16.5 million educationally disadvantaged students, including eligible Indian children, learn to the same high standards as other students. Title I funds may be used, for example, to provide eligible students with supplemental instructional programs at all grade levels, extended-day

kindergarten programs, learning laboratories in math and science, and intensive summer programs.

The Department is requesting \$12.7 billion for Title I Grants to LEAs in fiscal year 2007, the same amount as the 2006 appropriation and a 45 percent increase since the passage of the NCLB Act. 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 \$88.6 million. These funds would serve almost 46,000 children in BIA schools, in addition to Indian children served in regular public schools.

School Improvement Grants

Our budget request would provide first-time funding for formula-based Title I School Improvement Grants, authorized under section 1003(g) of the ESEA. These funds would help ensure that States have sufficient resources to build their capacity to provide effective improvement support to LEAs and schools identified for improvement. Under this program, the BIA would receive a share of the School Improvement Grants funds equivalent to its share of national allocations for Title I Grants to LEAs, Migrant Education, and Neglected and Delinquent funds combined. The fiscal year 2007 request of \$200 million would provide the BIA with approximately \$1.4 million for school improvement activities.

Reading First Grants

Reading First is a comprehensive effort to implement the findings of high-quality scientifically based research on reading and reading instruction. Helping all children read well by the end of the 3rd grade 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 receives 0.5 percent of the State Grants appropriation. Our 2007 budget request of \$1 billion would provide approximately \$5.2 million to BIA schools.

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 States and LEAs 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. States and the BIA also use the funds to achieve the NCLB objective of ensuring that all teachers of the core academic subjects are highly qualified. Under the statute, the BIA receives a set-aside of 0.5 percent.

The Department's fiscal year 2007 request of \$2.9 billion would provide the BIA with an allocation of \$14.6 million.

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 Federal assistance to many LEAs that educate Indian children. The 2007 budget request of \$1.1 billion would provide approximately \$519 million to support the education of almost 125,000 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 approximately \$50 million would provide \$20.5 million for services to almost 20,000 children with disabilities living on Indian lands.

English Language Acquisition

English Language Acquisition programs 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 NCLB Act established a set-aside of the greater of 0.5 percent or \$5 million for schools operated predominantly for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children. The 2007 budget request would include \$5 million for these schools. In addition, English Language Acquisition State formula grant funds serve limited English proficient American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian 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 NCLB Act converted this activity from a national competition to a State formula- grant program, with State educational agencies making competitive subgrants within their States. Under this program, the Department may

reserve up to 1 percent of the appropriation for grants to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Outlying Areas. The fiscal year 2007 request of \$981.2 million would provide approximately \$7.1 million to the BIA.

Grants for State Assessments

The Grants for State Assessments program helps States develop and implement the additional assessments required by the NCLB Act. Under the funding formula, 0.5 percent of the appropriation for formula grants is reserved for the BIA. For 2007, the Administration is requesting \$400 million for the formula grants portion of this program, \$2 million of which would go to the BIA.

Alaska Native Education Equity

We are requesting \$33.9 million for Alaska Native Education Equity. These funds support an array of education services to improve the educational status of Alaska Natives, including student enrichment, preschool programs, teacher training, 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 2007 budget request of \$61.9 million includes almost \$620,000 for the BIA to provide services to homeless children and youth to enable them to attend and excel in school.

Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational and Technical Institutions

This program, currently authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act and proposed for reauthorization under the Higher Education Act of 1965, provides competitive grants for the operation and improvement of certain tribally controlled postsecondary vocational and technical institutions. Funds provide continued and expanded educational opportunities and training for Indian students attending those institutions, along with basic institutional support of vocational and technical education programs. Under the budget request, the Department would provide \$7.4 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 households. 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 \$23.6 million for activities to strengthen TCCUs. Since fiscal year 2001, a portion of funds has supported construction and renovation activities, and the fiscal year 2007 budget request would provide approximately \$8.3 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 2007 budget request includes \$9.2 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. Under the budget request of \$10.7 billion, the Department would provide approximately \$87 million to the BIA, an increase of approximately \$800,000, to help serve approximately 8,200 Indian students. The BIA would use 80 percent of those funds for the education of children 5 through 21 years old and distribute 20 percent to tribes and tribal organizations for the education of children 3 through 5 years old.

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 2007 budget request of \$436.4 million, the BIA would receive approximately \$5.4 million.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants program provides services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that these individuals may prepare for, and engage in, gainful employment. 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 2007, the Department requests approximately \$2.8 billion for the VR State Grants program. The amount set aside for grants to Indian tribes would be approximately \$34.4 million, approximately \$6 million more than the minimum amount required by law to be reserved for this purpose, and would serve approximately 6,100 American Indians with disabilities.

Program Eliminations

The 2007 request also continues our policy of proposing to eliminate or consolidate funding for programs, including some that have set-asides for Native Americans, that have achieved their original purpose, that duplicate other programs, that may be carried out with flexible State formula grant funds, that are ineffective, or that involve activities that are better or more appropriately supported through State, local, or private resources. Programs for which the Department is not requesting funding, and for which there is a set-aside for Indian programs or for the BIA, include Even Start, Educational Technology State Grants, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants, and Vocational Education State Grants.

Program Performance

Our programs can work even more effectively than they do today. We expect to be held accountable for spending the taxpayers' money more efficiently and effectively every year. To assist you, the Administration has launched ExpectMore.gov, a website that provides candid information about programs that are successful and programs that fall short, and, in both situations, what agencies are doing to improve their performance next year. I encourage the members of this Committee and others interested in our programs to visit ExpectMore.gov, see how we are doing, and hold us accountable for improving.

Conclusion

The 2007 budget request for the Department of Education programs serving American Indians and Alaska Natives supports the President's overall goal of ensuring educational opportunities for all students.

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