

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statement by Michael Cohen

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before the

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

on the Fiscal Year 2001 Budget for

Department of Education Programs that Serve Indians

February 23, 2000

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My colleagues and I are pleased to appear before you to discuss the fiscal year 2001 budget request for major Department of Education programs that serve and benefit American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

The Clinton Administration is strongly committed to improving the educational opportunities of American Indians and Alaska Natives. It is this commitment that led the President to issue two Executive Orders. Executive Order 13021 on Tribal Colleges and Universities reaffirmed the special relationship of the Federal Government to American Indians and Alaska Natives and is designed to help strengthen tribal colleges and universities. This is an important step in providing high-quality post secondary educational opportunities for Indian students. Executive Order 13096 on American Indian and Alaska Native Education also reaffirms the special, historic responsibility the Federal Government has for the education of Native learners, recognizes the importance of providing high-quality educational opportunities to American Indian and Alaska Native students, and reinforces the Federal Government's commitment to improving the academic performance and reducing the drop-out rates of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

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, 48 percent of American Indian 4th grade students and 63 percent of 8th grade students scored at or -above basic on the 1994 reading assessment, compared to 60 percent for all 4th grade students and 70 percent for all 8th grade students. In addition, although American Indians have made progress on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, moving from a composite score of 808 in 1976 to 850 in 1995, they are 60 points behind all students who had a composite score of 910 in 1995.

The 2001 budget request for Department of Education programs serving Indians is part of a major Administration initiative to improve economic opportunity, health care, education, and law enforcement for Native American communities. We are very pleased that the Department of Education programs are included in this initiative, which includes a total increase of \$1.2 billion for new and existing programs.

The budget request also supports continuing implementation of the Executive Orders on American Indian and Alaska Native education and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Indian Education Programs

Our request for Indian Education programs is \$115.5 million, an increase of \$38.5 million over the 2000 level. With this increase, the Administration would significantly increase formula grants to enable school districts to provide viable Indian Education programs; expand Special Programs for Indian children; and provide the resources to address the research objectives of the Executive Order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

Indian Education -- Grants to Local Educational Agencies

We are requesting \$92.8 million for the formula grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) program, an increase of \$30.8 million (50 percent) over the 2000 level. 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 sharpen their academic skills, improve their self-confidence, and participate in enrichment programs and activities that would otherwise be unavailable. The requested increase would provide the resources necessary to help ensure that Indian students achieve to the same standards as all children. The requested level would provide an estimated per-pupil payment under the formula grant program of \$200, an increase of \$66 per student from the 2000 level.

The request will also help LEAs recover from losses the program has suffered over the last two decades. Since 1980, when the program received its highest level in constant dollars, it has experienced several cuts in funding, and increases have failed to match the rate of inflation in most years. LEAs have had to modify their programs to adjust to the loss of purchasing power, and the program has not been able to have as significant an impact on Indian education as intended under the statute.

Special Programs for Indian Children

Our request for Special Program for Indian Children is for \$20 million, an increase of \$6.8 million (51 percent) over the 2000 level. These funds will be used for four activities. Approximately \$2.4 million will be used for 12 new demonstration grants that promote school readiness for Indian preschool children, enhance native language development and education programs, and increase the potential for learning among American Indian and Alaska Native students. Approximately \$2.6 million will be used for 14 new grants to institutions of higher education, including tribally controlled colleges, to provide support and training for Indian students who are pursuing degrees in education or school administration and other fields.

In addition, the 2001 request will provide \$10 million to the American Indian Teacher Corps program, which the Department began last year to train Indian college students to become teachers, place them in schools with concentrations of Indian students, and provide them with professional development and in-service support where they teach. In addition to continuing the training of an initial cohort of 500 new Indian teachers, the program will provide professional development to teachers already in the field so that they can work more effectively with their Indian students.

Finally, we are requesting \$5 million to initiate a new American Indian Administrator Corps, modeled after the American Indian Teacher Corps. This initiative would recruit, train, and provide

inservice professional development to American Indians to become effective school administrators in schools with high concentrations of Indian students. The request would support and assist approximately 200 American Indian teachers and professionals.

National Activities

We are requesting \$2.8 million for the research, evaluation, and data collection activities to provide information on the status of education for the Indian population. As part of the Department's activities to implement the Executive Order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, we are establishing a comprehensive research agenda that will guide our activities in carrying out high-quality research and data collections. For example, we are supplementing the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey initiated in 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics so that it will collect data on a representative sample of Indian children from birth through age 6.

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

School Renovation

The Administration is requesting \$1.3 billion for a new School Renovation initiative. This proposal includes \$50 million for grants to approximately 118 LEAs that have 50 percent or more of their children in average daily attendance residing on Indian lands. These funds would be in addition to the \$167 million increase the Administration is requesting for Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school construction and repair, and funds provided for construction and renovation of public schools (many of which serve Indian children) through our proposed grant, loan, and bond programs.

Title I: Education for the Disadvantaged

Title I provides supplemental education funding to LEAs and schools, especially in high-poverty areas, to help some 13 million disadvantaged students, including Indian children and youth, learn to the same high standards as other students. With Title I, these students have the benefit of, for example, extra instruction at all grade levels, extended day kindergarten programs, learning laboratories in math, science, and computers, 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.

The Department's request for Title I Grants to LEAs is \$8.358 billion, an increase of 5.2 percent over the 2000 appropriation level. Under the statute, the BIA receives 1 percent of Title I Grants to LEAS. Our 2001 request would provide approximately \$54 million to BIA schools. During the 1996-1997 school year (the most recent year for which actual data are available), 47,261 Indian students in BIA and an estimated 142,000 Indian students in public schools across the country participated in Title I programs.

Also, the Title 1, Even Start program provides over \$2 million for Even Start programs benefiting Indian families. An estimated 1,300 Indian parents and their children, birth through age 7, are participating in 13 Even Start projects operated by Indian tribes and tribal organizations. These projects integrate early childhood education, adult literacy, and parenting services to improve family literacy. The Department is requesting \$150 million, level funding, for Even Start in 2001.

Finally, the Demonstrations of Comprehensive School Reform program provides schools with funding to develop or adopt, and implement, comprehensive school reforms, based on reliable research and

effective practices that will enable children in participating schools to meet challenging State standards. BIA and the Outlying Areas share a set-aside of 1 percent.

The Department's fiscal year 2001 request of \$190 million would provide the BIA with an allocation of approximately \$1.5 million.

Teaching to High Standards

The President's budget request emphasizes the importance of good teaching for all students. A proposed new Teaching to High Standards State grants program would help educators improve learning in American classrooms by supporting State and local efforts to align curricula and assessments with challenging State and local content standards and to provide teachers with sustained and intensive, high-quality professional development in the core academic subjects. The BIA and the Outlying areas share a set-aside of 1 percent.

The Department's fiscal year 2001 request of \$690 million would provide the BIA with an allocation of approximately \$4.9 million for professional development activities.

Class Size Reduction

The Class Size Reduction program helps school districts improve education in the early elementary grades by providing funds to hire highly qualified teachers and reduce class sizes. Under the program, school districts give particular consideration to reducing class sizes in the early elementary grades, the grades in which research has shown class-size reduction to be effective in improving student achievement. The Department is requesting \$1.75 billion, a 35 percent increase for Class Size Reduction in 2001; the BIA would receive approximately \$5.0 million of that amount.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities 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. One percent of the appropriation for State grants 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 2001 budget request of \$439.25 million for Safe and Drug-Free Schools includes \$4.4 million for the BIA and \$880,000 for Native Hawaiian programs.

Impact Aid

Basic Support Payments

Impact Aid provides substantial assistance for general operating expenses to many LEAs that educate Indian children. Approximately 615 school districts receive Impact Aid payments on behalf of 126,323 children living on Indian lands. The budget request of \$720 million would provide approximately \$341 million in Impact Aid Basic Support Payments to support the education of children living on Indian lands.

Payments for Children with Disabilities

Payments for Children with Disabilities enable federally affected LEAs to provide the special education services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The budget request of \$40 million would provide approximately \$21 million for services to approximately 17,242 children living on Indian lands.

Construction

The Administration's reauthorization proposal would target funds to LEAs in which the number of students living on Indian lands is at least 50 percent of average daily attendance. This proposal is part of the Administration's commitment to making Construction payments on behalf of students residing on Indian lands who attend schools in predominantly Indian LEAS. Under the budget request, \$5 million would be available for construction and renovation of school facilities, for debt service related to the construction of school facilities, or for purchase of minimal initial equipment in connection with a new building or the renovation of an existing building.

Bilingual Education

Bilingual Education programs support programs for limited English proficient students, through Grants to LEAS, Program Development, and Special Programs. Under the 2001 budget request, the Department estimates that approximately \$38.5 million in bilingual education funds would serve an estimated 124,300 Indian students.

Education for Native Hawaiians

We are requesting \$23 million for Education for Native Hawaiians, the same as the 2000 appropriation level. 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 centers, and gifted and talented programs. Although H.R. 2, which passed the House last year, would not reauthorize the Native Hawaiian programs, the Department remains committed to helping ensure that they are included in the final Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization bill.

Alaska Native Education Equity

We are requesting \$13 million for Alaska Native Education Equity, the same as the 2000 appropriation level. Funds support a wide 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 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, the Secretary is authorized to transfer 1 percent of the appropriation for Education for Homeless Children and Youth to the BIA for services to Indian students in the Bureau's schools. Our 2001 budget request of \$31.7 million, a 10 percent increase, includes \$100,000 for BIA programs to provide services to homeless children and youth that enable them to attend and excel in school.

Technology Literacy Challenge Fund

The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund helps States put into practice strategies to enable all students to integrate technology fully into schools so that students become technologically literate and possess the academic, communication, and critical-thinking skills essential for success in the Information Age. From the appropriation, up to 1 percent is reserved for BIA to enable all schools to integrate technology fully into school curricula.

Under the budget request of \$450 million, a 6 percent increase, the Department would provide approximately \$2.3 million to BIA.

Vocational Education

Vocational Education State Grants support a variety of education programs designed to develop the academic, vocational, and technical skills of students in high schools and community colleges. From the total appropriation, 1.25 percent is set-aside for competitive grants to federally recognized Indian tribes and organizations and 0.25 percent for competitive grants to organizations recognized by the Governor as primarily serving and representing Native Hawaiians.

Under the budget request of \$855.7 million, the Department would award approximately \$10.7 million to 35 Indian tribes or tribal organizations, serving approximately 2,500 students. The Department would award approximately \$2.1 million to Native Hawaiian organizations.

Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Vocational and Technical Institutions

This program provides grants for the operation and improvement of tribally controlled postsecondary vocational and technical institutions to ensure continued and expanded educational opportunities for Indian students and to improve and expand the physical resources of those institutions.

Under the budget request, the Department would provide \$4.6 million, level funding, to continue support for two institutions.

Higher Education Aid for Institutional Development

The Aid for Institutional Development programs are designed to strengthen institutions of higher education that serve high percentages 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, to improve their management and fiscal operations, to build endowments, and to make effective use of technology.

The Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCU) program authorizes 1 - year planning and 5-year development grants that enable TCCUs to improve and expand their capacity to serve American Indian students. Under the budget request, the Department would award \$9 million, an increase of \$3 million (50 percent) over the 2000 level, for 8 new and 16 continuation awards.

The Strengthening Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions program authorizes 1 - year planning and 5-year development grants that enable institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students. Under the budget request, the Department would award \$5 million, level funding with the 2000 level, for 13 continuation awards.

Special Education

Grants to States

The Grants to States program provides formula grants to meet the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. From the total appropriation, 1.226 percent is allocated to BIA to serve children with disabilities on reservations. Of the funds reserved, 80 percent is used for the education of children 5-21 years old, and 20 percent for distribution to tribes and tribal organizations for the education of children 3-5 years old.

Under the budget request of \$5.28 billion, a 5.8 percent increase, the Department would provide approximately \$49.9 million to BIA to 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, multi-disciplinary, interagency programs to make available early intervention services to all children with disabilities, aged birth through 2, and their families. 1.25 percent is allocated to the BIA.

Under the budget request, the Department would provide approximately \$4.7 million to the BIA.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program provides grants to governing bodies of Indian tribes located on Federal and State reservations (and consortia of such governing bodies) to pay 90 percent of the costs of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near such reservations. Vocational rehabilitation services are provided consistent with the individual strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice, so that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment.

The program is supported by funds set-aside under the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Grants Program. Section 110 (c) of the Rehabilitation Act requires that not less than 1.0 percent or more than 1.5 percent of the VR State Grant funds be set aside for Grants for Indians.

Under the budget request, approximately \$24 million (1.0 percent) would be set aside to support approximately 70 competitive service grants to American Indian tribes. About 3,190 American Indians with disabilities were served by the 47 projects that were in full operation during FY 1999.

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.