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REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEAD START PROGRAM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEAD START PROGRAM SERVING INDIAN COUNTRY

SEPTEMBER 25, 2003
WASHINGTON, DC

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REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEAD START PROGRAM

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2003

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room 562, Dirksen Senate Building, Hon. Daniel K. Inouye (vice chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senator Inouye.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL K. INOUYE, U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII, VICE CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Senator INOUYE. The Committee on Indian Affairs meets this morning to receive testimony on the reauthorization of the Head Start program and particularly the programs that serve Indian country.

For millions of children nationwide, the Head Start program has proven to be one of the most beneficial aspects of their beginnings of life. For the children of Indian country and their parents, the Head Start program may well make a critical difference throughout their entire lives.

So it is important that the Head Start program have the flexibility to address the unique needs in Indian country, including the ability to allow instruction in the child's native language.

We have witnesses today who are the experts in Indian Head Start programs. So, without further ado, I will call upon the first panel. We have on the first panel the associate commissioner of the Head Start Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Windy Hill.

STATEMENT OF WINDY M. HILL, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, HEAD START BUREAU, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. HILL. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Please proceed. Welcome.

Ms. HILL. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today on the President's plan to strengthen Head Start, including those programs serving American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. I am here not only as the Associate Commissioner of Head Start, but

also as a former Head Start child and the mother of a Head Start child who is now an accomplished high school student.

I would like to focus my time today on the President's goals for improving Head Start. I also want to share some highlights and insights into Head Start services and operations within American Indian and Alaska Native programs, AIAN Head Start, that I know are of special interest to this committee.

Let me say at the outset that the President remains committed to maintaining the current Federal-to-local relationship with AIAN Head Start programs and working with these programs to address the unique challenges they face.

As you know, Head Start was launched in 1965 as part of a bold, big idea that children should not be disadvantaged in their education because of the circumstances of their families. However, recent research shows that, although Head Start children make progress in areas of school readiness during the Head Start year, they continue to lag behind their more economically-advantaged peers. Consequently, the President and Secretary Thompson sent the Head Start Bureau a clear message: More needs to be done to strengthen the educational outcomes for children.

As part of the President's "Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative," we were directed to increase the knowledge and skills of Head Start teachers in the areas of pre-school language and literacy and to create and maintain a national reporting system that will help measure children's progress in mastering the skills necessary to enter school ready to learn.

In response, the Head Start Bureau has already undertaken a number of efforts aimed at bolstering the school readiness of Head Start children, and representatives from AIAN programs have been part of this effort.

The administration's efforts to improve the quality of Head Start services for all children continue with the President's proposal for reauthorization of Head Start. Let me be clear that the President is not proposing to block grant Head Start funding to States. The President's proposal does not allow States who may qualify for participation in a State option to do away with the comprehensive services currently available through Head Start and makes clear that the Federal Government will not cease or relinquish its oversight responsibility for the Head Start program.

Under the President's proposal, AIAN Head Start programs will continue to be funded directly by the Federal Government. Governed by relevant laws and regulations, each tribe will design a program that works, one that is sensitive to the culture and history of the families, one that respects the rich traditions of the tribe, and that recognizes the uniqueness of language and customs.

The Head Start program has provided Head Start services to Indian tribes since 1965, when the Department funded 43 grantees in 14 States. We are currently funding 165 grantees in 26 States to provide Head Start services to 23,837 children, 2,532 of whom are served in our early Head Start program. There are 5,587 staff working in AIAN Head Start programs, 80 percent of whom are Native Americans.

In fiscal year 2004 there will be increased efforts made to assure that Head Start programs are achieving their primary purpose of

promoting school readiness, that all children, including all American Indian and Alaska Native children, leave Head Start with the cognitive, emotional, and social skills they will need to be successful in school.

We have tried to respond to several unique needs by making available funding that permits Indian programs to reach all, or a substantial part, of their Head Start-eligible families. Over the past several years we have worked in partnership with the Indian Health Service, IHS agency, addressing the many health and safety concerns of Head Start programs, concerns that are often exacerbated by environmental factors beyond the control of a local Head Start program or the community in which the program is located.

In partnership with the IHS, we are currently finalizing a report to Congress on the overall status and condition of facilities occupied by AIAN Head Start programs. My formal statement provides some of the overall findings.

We have invested over $25 million in the last three years for renovations and construction to improve classroom and playground, as well as work and meeting space, for AIAN Head Start programs. We are also investing in new Head Start buses for AIAN programs at a rate that is twice the national average.

We share these investments with you not to say that our job is complete, but to acknowledge our awareness and intent to address the needs of AIAN Head Start. We are committed to doing that.

We look forward to working with this committee and with the Congress to continue to address these and other challenges. Together we must do all we can to bring to fruition the goals and dreams of our Nation's "first family."

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Hill appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. All right, thank you very much, Ms. Hill.

I gather that the administration is proposing to create and manage a national reporting system, and I am just wondering what sort of testing tools are you going to have and, if so, are they culturally-sensitive or are they strictly for those who speak English?

Ms. HILL. We have begun this process of developing the national reporting system with a great awareness that in some parts of our country there are multiple languages in our Head Start classrooms, as many as 50 to 58 different languages. We know that the national reporting system will give us for the first time the ability to assess the cognitive development of children, much like we assess whether or not children have immunizations and whether parents are receiving the supportive services that they need.

We approach this with a real sense that it will take time to develop and implement a system that is responsive to all of the children in the program, but that we must start somewhere. So we have begun the process focusing primarily on children whose primary language is English or Spanish, recognizing that in the process of assessing skills or English, children who have not acquired English will not be assessed by an English assessment tool. It means that over time we will move to multiple languages, but at this point we are only capable of assessing children with those languages.

Senator INOUYE. In the meantime, those children who cannot be appropriately tested may have to suffer the consequences?

Ms. HILL. No; absolutely not. Head Start is designed to address the individual needs of all children. The national reporting system gives us the ability to look across the country nationally and see how well programs are doing in meeting the cognitive needs of children, but at the same time local programs still maintain that responsibility to plan their program services around the individual needs of children.

It means that children are assessed at three points in time in every program. They look at the beginning of the year to identify how and what services might need to be provided, including those that relate to the development of a child. They look again about mid-year to see how well they are doing and make whatever corrective modifications are necessary. Then at the end of the year they do a final assessment to see how well they achieved service delivery for every children. So no child will suffer because the national reporting system cannot assess in all languages.

Senator INOUYE. So your reporting programs will accommodate the language immersion Head Start programs?

Ms. HILL. Absolutely.

Senator INOUYE. How does the administration plan to further the acquisition, retention, and preservation of Native languages through the Head Start program, or do you have any policy on that?

Ms. HILL. Well, as you know, the Head Start program values, has a long history since its inception of valuing the culture and languages of the children which we serve. We know that we are serving children in south Texas whose primary language may be Spanish, children who are in Alaska whose native culture is Inupiat or Tlingit tribes, and that that is part of the Head Start experience and figuring out how to do it. So we do that very well, and we will continue to do that.

The Department of Health and Human Services, through its ANA, Administration for Native American programs, makes available opportunities to support the immersion of language not only in Head Start, but also throughout tribal programs and other opportunities.

We also have local programs who have done an excellent job of creating within their local infrastructure the support for the preservation of Native languages.

Senator INOUYE. As you may be aware, I represent a State of many islands. As a result, there are big islands and small islands. On some of the islands, it is hard to believe this, but there are no escalators, no elevators, no shopping malls. In fact, there are no huge-screen theaters.

To take these children from one island to another, there is an additional cost of transportation. In the same way, there are many reservations that are hundreds of miles away from centers of activity.

Is your program making accommodations for additional transportation costs?

Ms. HILL. We have begun our process, and it is an ongoing process. As I mentioned in my short statement, the rate of investment

in buses alone is twice the national average in Head Start, recognizing that many children are being transported over unpaved roads. We want them to be transported in a fashion that is as safe as possible, and the National Transportation Safety Board is giving us guidance on what that type of transportation should look like.

So we continue, through quality improvement funds and one-time funding opportunities, to provide local programs with the opportunity to apply for those funds, and as they are available, make those funds available in developing transportation systems that are safe for children.

Senator INOUYE. The funds are finally available?

Ms. HILL. The funds have always been available in that one-time funds are available at the end of each year. These are funds that, for example, in the implementation of a program, if the program starts late and dollars are unused, we use those funds to support broader needs such as the transportation needs. So those funds continue to be available on an annual basis.

In addition to that, there is ongoing quality improvement funds. Now from 1999 to about 2001, there was about $80 million that went into the base of Head Start program funding to address quality improvement needs, and transportation would certainly be an area in which programs had an opportunity to use those dollars to support those needs.

Senator INOUYE. The Congress has requested the Department to submit a report on the progress being made in Indian and Alaskan villages. Do you have the report?

Ms. HILL. The report is in the final stages of being complete and submitted through the clearance process for submission to Congress. In my long statement we did extract some findings of that report to share with the committee in anticipation of its release here.

Senator INOUYE. When do you anticipate completion of the report?

Ms. HILL. I believe the report will be due and submitted the latter part of this year.

Senator INOUYE. So the committee will get a copy?

Ms. HILL. Yes, sir.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

There is also a requirement of consultation. What is the nature of consultation you have with Indian tribes?

Ms. HILL. Well, as you know, the Department and the Secretary have revitalized a couple of interagency advisory groups and councils for that specific purpose.

Commissioner Quanah Stamps, who heads up the Administration for Native American, ANA, Department, is the chair of that committee. Consultations for this year are being planned for December.

In addition to that, our assistant secretary, Dr. Wade Horn, serves on the executive committee, advisory committee, and we are looking forward to the opportunity, to those consultations this year. In the interim, because we share one Department through our weekly and monthly staff meetings convened by our assistant secretary, we have the opportunity to have frequent dialogue across programs about services, and we use that also as a vehicle, in addition to required reporting.

Senator INOUYE. And you are satisfied with the progress being made?

Ms. HILL. I am satisfied that we are all extremely committed to ensuring that that communication is effective and that it yields outcomes, better outcomes, for the children and families served by those programs.

Senator INOUYE. Ms. Hill, I thank you very much.

Ms. HILL. Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. I think you are doing a good job.

Ms. HILL. Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. In our next panel: the president of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association of California, Mavany Verdugo; the immersion instructor of the Taos Pueblo Head Start program of New Mexico, Henrietta Gomez; the National Head Start Directors Association board member and director of the Nez Perce Tribe Head Start program, Consuelo Guillory.

Ladies, welcome, and may I call on Ms. Verdugo first.

STATEMENT OF MAVANY VERDUGO, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, VALLEY CENTER, CA, ACCOMPANIED BY HENRIETTA GOMEZ, IMMERSION INSTRUCTOR, TAOS PUEBLO HEAD START PROGRAM, TAOS, NM; AND CONSUELO GUILLORY, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, BOARD MEMBER AND DIRECTOR, NEZ PERCE TRIBE HEAD START PROGRAM, LAPWAI, ID

Ms. VERDUGO. Thank you. Vice Chairman Inouye and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association with regard to reauthorization of Head Start.

We want to remember that in 1994 Senator Inouye was the first-ever-awarded our association's Child Advocate of the Year, and we just want to thank you for continuing to support our children.

This testimony is about the miracle of Indian Head Start. Head Start is one of the truly great Federal success stories in Indian country. We urge the committee to support expansion of Head Start and not its reorganization.

In the week prior to this hearing, our association sent out a brief e-mail asking programs to respond to the specific challenges that they face or obstacles that they have overcome in their work and things that would be just unique to Indian Head Start. We were really overwhelmed with the response. These testimonies and stories are attached, and we would really encourage you to read them.

Our role as the National Indian Head Start Directors Association is as a national voice for our members in the United States. We have roughly 95 percent of all of the Indian programs as members, and we keep in communication.

Some of our statistics: Of the 575 federally-recognized tribes, 216 participate in Head Start and Early Head Start. That is a funded enrollment of approximately 24,000 children. This number represents 2.9 percent of the total number of children nationwide served by Head Start. These programs employ approximately 6,000 individuals, and one-half of them are employees that are current or former Head Start parents, like myself.

Among the recommended improvements to the Head Start Act are increasing the setaside for Indian Head Start. Currently, Indian Head Start programs receive a 2.9 percent set-aside of Head Start funds. This is really not sufficient to address the extraordinary range of unique challenges faced by tribes through the United States. This just supports a statutorily-mandated increase in the setaside for Indian Head Start to 4 percent.

Other specific funding needs are:

Increased funding for transportation services. Head Start funding for transportation does not adequately consider the geographic isolation of many rural tribal communities, and you will read about this in some of the stories that were submitted.

Increased funding to support effective professional development; increased funding for training and technical assistance. Currently, there is a 2 percent setaside for training and technical assistance. We support a 3-percent set-aside for T&TA

Tribal programs should continue to receive their own T&TA dollars with the additional funds awarded to a national technical and training assistance system to support continued networking and development across all tribal grantees.

We ask for increased funding for upgrading Head Start facilities to maintain quality standards. There is a great need for the renovation of existing facilities as well as a need for the construction of new facilities. Again, you will see this demonstrated in the stories.

Expansion of Early Head Start programs, including an Early Head Start Indian set-aside—Ann Belleau will be giving you a more detailed story about this in her testimony.

Flexibility in eligibility criteria. NIHSDA recommends that tribes be given greater flexibility to establish the criteria for eligibility in their Indian Head Start programs. This is not an effort to provide universal coverage, but is intended to ensure that each tribe can tailor its program to the unique cultural and economic circumstances of its community. Currently, there is no preference language for serving Indian children and eligibility requirements are unreasonably low and inconsistent with other Federal programs.

We are asking for maintenance of a separate Indian Head Start region within the Head Start Bureau. We request that the Head Start Act specifically provide for a separate region for Indian Head Start. We support the continued separate provision of technical assistance for Indian Head Start.

State and local programs do not have the capacity to develop and support this expertise. The American Indian/Alaska Native Program Branch has also developed knowledge and experience which enables it to respond more effectively to tribal programs, as well as to explain, advocate, and articulate the issues within the Federal Government.

Formal consultation requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services: Tribal Head Start consultations must provide tribes and tribal Head Start grantees a forum that will allow greater opportunity for significant participation in the administration and operation of Head Start programs and greater opportunity to express their issues and concerns with existing or developing Fed-

eral policies, regulations, and other related directives that affect services in tribal communities.

Enhanced but flexible degree requirements for staff with expanded distance learning opportunities, Connie is going to expound on this in her testimony.

Culturally- and linguistically-appropriate testing: While the goals of the national reporting system are laudable, to measure children's language and literacy skills in order to track child outcomes and progress in educational achievement, culturally-skewed assessments will hurt both schools and children.

Preservation of language and promotion of culturally-relevant programs and research, Henrietta Gomez will be speaking about that in her testimony.

Greater flexibility in cost sharing: Tribal communities affirm their responsibility to provide a share of in-kind or cash-match to support Head Start programs. However, it is a constant challenge for impoverished tribes with a small volunteer pool, limited third-party in-kind contributions, and their remote locations and low-value facilities to meet the cost-sharing requirements of the law.

Undertaking of culturally-appropriate relevant research and evaluation, this will be covered by Lee Turney in his testimony.

So, in conclusion, on behalf of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association, I would like to thank the committee for holding this hearing and listening to the views expressed today. Again, I would like to encourage you to read the stories from our programs that are out there on the front, because they are very compelling, to let you see the uniqueness of our Indian programs. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Verdugo appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. First, may I assure you that we will read those stories.

You have suggested that the Head Start program be increased. For example, at this moment you are receiving about 3-percent of the Head Start funds. You are suggesting it be raised to 4. How many more children will that accommodate?

Ms. VERDUGO. I would like to get back to you with an exact number of how that would affect, but we do have many children who are unserved in our communities. This would enable us to get out and reach unserved communities.

Senator INOUYE. You are also suggesting that families that qualify under WIC be permitted to send their children. How many more children would that add to the program?

Ms. VERDUGO. Again, I would have to get back to you on an exact number, but I would say that USDA has proposed rules to go from 125 to 185 percent in their eligibility criteria. If we were able to adopt that, it would be a uniform eligibility criteria for Federal programs, and it would help a lot of families that just barely go over that eligibility criteria, because TANF is working, and they are going out to work, but they lament that it was much easier when they were on TANF to be able to qualify for things. So it is not that they are exceeding the limit in a large way.

Senator INOUYE. With your background and experience, are you satisfied that the program has had some good results?

Ms. VERDUGO. Absolutely. I can speak personally as to how Head Start has helped me and my family, and you will see it in stories.

It helps children as we follow them, as they transition into school, in a broad area of ways. We are really increasing their academic success. You will see that in the other testimony that comes through. We can firmly stand behind the program.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much.

Ms. VERDUGO. Yes.

Senator INOUYE. Ms. Gomez.

STATEMENT OF HENRIETTA GOMEZ, IMMERSION INSTRUCTOR, TAOS PUEBLO HEAD START PROGRAM, TAOS, NM

Ms. GOMEZ. [Speaks briefly in Native language.]

Iloculi is my Tiwa name given to me by my paternal grandfather. Henrietta Gomez is my paycheck name.

Senator INOUYE. Your paycheck name? [Laughter.]

Ms. GOMEZ. Vice Chairman Inouye and members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of the recommendations of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association for amendments to the Head Start Act as it applies to American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start programs.

Among the proposed recommendations are amendments that relate to Native language preservation, an issue I would like to focus on in this testimony. In the early 1990's, Congress passed the Native Language Act, which recognized the unique status that tribes hold in the United States as sovereign entities through treaties and acts of Congress and the central importance of native languages. I hope this body will once again reaffirm its commitment to native people and the survival of their languages and culture through careful and thoughtful consideration.

I went to school when I was 5 years old. My first language was English. My mother is Acoma Pueblo. My father is Tiwa from northern New Mexico. His language is Tiwa. As such, I learned to speak English first.

When I went to school, I saw my classmates suffer because they came to school speaking their first language, which was Tiwa. When we would go into the playground, because they were forbidden to speak in the classrooms, we would go out into the playground and we would sit in our little circles playing, and they would whisper to me: [Speaks briefly in Native language.] "Why do you speak English? Are you a Poinsiena? Are you a white girl?"

I tried very hard to learn my language. My mother, whose native language is Keres, saw my suffering and the trauma that I was experiencing, and she learned, made every effort to learn, the Tiwa language. My native language is my second language.

I went through school speaking and learning both English and Tiwa. When I became a mother, I taught my children only English. When they became adults, young adults, I realized that through my efforts to prevent my children from experiencing the same trauma that I experienced, I robbed my children of their rightful heritage. My children do not speak the language.

I came into the Head Start program when the Head Start program and the local Bureau school had made an effort, because of the community assessment and the findings of the community assessment, and the tribal communities voicing their concern about

our children not speaking the language, because children were speaking English in places where English didn't have a place, and those were in our ceremonial places.

Children were speaking to their grandparents in English. The grandparents sometimes didn't have anyone to speak to in their language, and I see this not only in my tribe, but many tribes across the Nation.

After we applied for the ANA grant and were granted a 3-year grant through an ANA program, we developed a language immersion program in the Head Start program. The second year of implementing our program our children were tested because many of the teachers, and even fluent Native teachers, were concerned that, if our children were immersed in a language program, they would have academic delays. In the second year of implementing our program, our children were tested and their gains were greater than the children in the English-only classrooms.

We understand in the Head Start program that we have Federal mandates that we have to comply with. We understand our President's efforts to reach every child in the No Child Left Behind Act. We understand that English is very important, but just as well we want our Native languages to have the same recognition, to have the same status as English, because in order for children to progress and develop socially and academically, they have to be recognized and honored for who they are and where they have come from.

In our language immersion program, children can go out into the community and acknowledge people, their people, in their language. Children can use their Native language outside of the tribal community and greet each other in their language. When they go out into the greater community, because they are nurtured and honored for where they come from and who they are, they can succeed in the greater world.

Learning your native tongue and learning English can happen simultaneously. We see that in our language immersion program.

After the ANA grant expired, we had an opportunity to apply for a full-day, full-year grant through the Head Start program, and we wrote our language program into the Head Start grant. Our teachers, our native language teachers, understand accountability, and many of them have taken the challenge to go back to school and receive early childhood education.

We can bring more native-language-speaking teachers into the classroom to develop culturally-relevant material, teaching materials. We understood early on in our program that we can't just translate written curriculum or borrowed curriculum and try to teach our native language. It is a challenge to develop curriculum and teaching materials to teach native languages, but those teachers that have done this are very creative and innovative teachers that have taken that challenge.

They teach outside of the walls of the classroom. They teach children to honor and respect their environment.

As I went through my personal education process, because we weren't recognized and honored for who we were, many of us left our language and culture behind, and our children, as such, didn't learn that. We robbed them of that.

I could see the breakdown of the social structure of my tribe. It is our hope that in bringing back the language in the home and in the classrooms that we can start to bring back the social values of our tribes which can be communicated in our language.

Native language and culture in American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start programs will help to ensure that indigenous children are educated in a cultural-appropriate manner and be able to relate to the larger society from an intact cultural perspective, not from a destroyed or distorted cultural perspective.

Native language programs and Head Start programs represent a native's adaptation of the ideal of education. For a native culture, learning means discovering the principles and the relations of everything. Integrating native culture and language in NIAN Head Start programs will contribute not only to the survival of native society, but also to the survival of the world through native contributions to the community of learning.

We do not believe that language and literacy activities geared toward English are the only meaningful ones in a classroom of students from a native language background, the home language and literacies of native children can and should be incorporated into the classroom in ways that would be socially useful and cognitively challenging for children. Inclusion of the home language and culture in the classroom curriculum allows Native children the opportunity to be the experts and build pride in the languages and cultures of their family.

The inclusion of native languages in the classroom is also cognitively challenging. These children will develop mental linguistic awareness, the ability to think how language works, a skill that will help them in learning how to read and write in English.

In an effort to ensure school readiness, we must make sure to leave intact and strengthen the paths to meaningful life connections to family and community. Thank you. [Speaks a Native language word.]

[Prepared statement of Ms. Gomez appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much. Historians and anthropologists have long suggested that language is an integral part of culture and civilization. When language disappears, that culture and civilization eventually disappear. No one knows anything about Assyrians now. It is because it is long gone. No one speaks that language. Or Chaldean or Babylonian, but these were great civilizations at one time.

In the same sense, I agree with the anthropologists and sociologists and historians. I am proud to say that we in Hawaii have a very ambitious Native Hawaiian language immersion program, and like you, the results have shown that children who have gone through the program have done academically better than those who have not. So I congratulate you.

My question to you is: Have you found, has your tribe experienced any barriers in establishing and operating a native language immersion Head Start program? Has the Government put any obstacles in your path?

Ms. GOMEZ. In the beginning, when we first implemented our program, there were questions, just as I testified, on whether there would be delays in the children's academic performance. There

were also, interestingly, the instructors, sometimes even native instructors, stating that, "I went and took and got my degree to teach in English. I was not taught to teach my language."

So I think that in this act, if there is language in the law where all people can understand that language and culture are important to the development, the healthy and well-being of children, that everyone can understand and not put up personal barriers, and we can overcome attitudes and understand differences and honor everyone's culture and language.

Senator INOUYE. I thank you very much, Ms. Gomez.

May I now recognize Ms. Guillory.

STATEMENT OF CONNIE GUILLORY, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, BOARD MEMBER AND DIRECTOR, NEZ PERCE TRIBE HEAD START PROGRAM, LAPWAI, ID

Ms. GUILLORY. Thank you very much. Usually I don't have to use a mike, but I will be professional, I guess.

But I did hand this out yesterday, and I hope you do have it in your packets. What it says is "The Nez Perce Tribe's Early Childhood Development Program: Its Journey to Distance Learning Education." I will be referencing that.

Today I am here to represent Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Indian country and to talk about the relevance and importance of distance learning for these programs. In my experience as the Director of the Nez Perce Tribe Early Childhood Development Program, which includes Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Fund, distance learning can and has successfully bridged the resource gap experienced by nearly all rurally-located Indian tribes. To do this, Indian country has already begun developing collaborations to utilize distance learning, especially for professional development purposes.

As we know, Indian country does not have a cadre of people prepared to enter the workforce. Rather, the workforce consists of parents with children. Unfortunately, all too often they lack the skills needed or are entering the workforce for the first time, do not have a high school diploma, and many are working to just get their GED.

So what do we do in Indian country? We have to become creative and innovative while developing practical, attainable, professional development training plans to meet the needs of staff, the tribal government, and the Federal Government. Thus, the role of technology allows programs to develop training activities and opportunities for our children, families, and communities.

Since 1994, when new academic requirements were added to the Head Start Act, tribes have had to collaborate, create, and develop systems to meet these requirements. In doing so, they have had to address the difficulty of being located far from major educational institutions.

One way we have dealt with this challenge has been through distance learning. While distance learning is relatively new to early childhood programs in Indian country, I am happy to report that it is up and running.

Tribes seek to provide ways for their people to get degrees without having to leave the reservation. For Head Start programs, distance learning permits relatively easy access to quality professional development training plans. We should not forget that our staff often pursue these degrees while working full time and raising a family.

Of course, distance learning not only allows tribes to offer opportunities to tribal members, but also to their workforce, including the non-Indians. It is a tool that works for everyone: tribal governments, employees of the tribe, and the communities within a reservation.

I am here to specifically talk about the distance learning program that the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho entered with the Northwest Indian College based in Bellingham, Washington, almost 10 hours away. In 2001, we entered into an agreement, and in 2002, through the Head Start program, was specifically to assist our tribe in getting our staff trained to get on their way towards their AA degree.

What we have found through this collaboration, the MOA is really a commitment on both sides for the Head Start Bureau, for the local or community college, and for tribes that enter into this agreement.

In my research I looked at the commitments ranging from Alaska, which is very remote, to the Navajo Nation, which is very big. Our tribe isn't that big. We do encompass five counties.

But even though distance learning can be successful, there is a lot of the costs and benefits you have to look at prior to getting into it. I kind of look at insight and I think, my gosh, we have accomplished so much, and maybe because we didn't know we were successful, and maybe if we would have known, we wouldn't be as far as we are. I don't know, but it has worked.

I do cite some things: that when you first go into distance learning, you talk about technology, the hardware, the video players, the cameras, software, transmission, looking at the T1 line, satellite, microwave. The examples I have given in our brochure here, a PowerPoint presentation, is how we show it from Lapwai to Kamiah, which is 62 miles going up the beautiful Clear Water River.

But in that it is just valleys. It is not flat. It is trees. That was probably one of our biggest obstacles. It took us 1 year to get that in place.

You look at the maintenance, repair, and update, the infrastructure. Does the program have the infrastructure in place, production, the support, the support from the tribes, from the colleges, from Northwest Indian College? How fast can they get over here from Bellingham?

Well, luckily, our tribe has that information of support systems, the personnel to not only run the program, but getting instructors that are qualified. We do run ads every year. Although the costs of distance learning are truly outweighed by the benefits, I do point out that, to just start this program, it costs $463,000 to start up.

As a result, from this, as we have when I heard you speak earlier about articulation agreements, we have articulation agreements with Washington State University in Pullman, Washington; the

University of Idaho, which is in Moscow, ID, and Lewis and Clark State in Lewiston, ID.

As we talk about this and as I try to describe it, collaboration is the key, and in Indian country that is survival. I think about, I actually made this sentence up: For Indian country, collaboration is not an option; it is a necessity and, fortunately, it exists.

One successful collaborative effort is that between the Head Start program and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and tribal colleges and universities. There are 32 accredited tribal colleges and universities that offer early childhood education programs.

Then we get into our professional development that we are required to do through the Head Start Act. It says, each Head Start agency would be required to coordinate and collaborate with the local education agency serving the communities involved to ensure curriculum and classroom experiences for Head Start are aligned with the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills that children entering kindergarten are expected to demonstrate.

We didn't even know this was going on, Mr. Inouye, in that the Idaho Reading Indicator—it is called the IRI—had been testing our children that were leaving Head Start to kindergarten from 1999. The skills they were looking at was, once they left Head Start to kindergarten, could they write their own name? Could they detect rhyme? Could they detect syllables and identify uppercase letters?

I am happy to report from this graph you will see in 1999 15 percent scored at or above grade level; 3 years later, in 2002, our children scored at 49 percent at or above grade level.

As a part of this, as I indicated earlier, our Early Head Start program, which we are so fortunate to have, is offering a holistic approach to child development, and I am really a believer that every—you know, of course, I am going to say every Indian program should have an Early Head Start program, but we start with the mothers who the babies are being inside of them, until they come into the program from Early Head Start to Head Start. We have seen this work because, as a part of this statistic, these are our Early Head Start children that started at a minimum in our program at 3 months old, the brain development. So it does work.

That is a passion. Today, probably he has already been born; I have a grandson that has just been born today as I present this testimony. So it will be very memorable to me.

Professional development can be achieved but requires financial and administrative support. I would like to state that we did receive notice that the new T&TA system that has been dismantled was supposed to have started September 1, and to our knowledge, it has not begun. It is a concern that we have.

I would like to, in closing, NIHSDA strongly supports amending the Head Start Act to provide grants to tribal colleges and universities, to increase the number of post-secondary degrees in early childhood education, and increase funding for Indian Head Start early childhood services. When I say that, I don't mean just Head Start. I am talking from birth to 5 years of age. As shown in our report, it does work.

In collaboration with local school districts, we support that, but we need to keep it separate because this is a result of it. I don't

know that we should necessarily be mandated, even though I heard an assurance that that wouldn't occur.

Then increase funding to retain and recruit staff. Again, this was real disappointing for me, is that, through this process of getting staff educated, what we are finding now, they are getting their education. We are helping to support them. Just last week, I lost a person. I know we can never keep them or make them stay with you, but a lot of it is going to have to depend on the salary we are going to be able to pay them. We have to pay them. She gave me two days' notice and she went to the Lewiston Idaho School District. So that was really a disappointment to us.

I just want to say that it does work, Early Head Start and distance learning, and that we need to have enough funding to meet these mandates. I had Windy Hill ask me that. When I showed her the diagram, she said, "Well, how did it work? What did you do?" I said, "Well, I don't know. I guess we've done what you told us to do."

I think as Indian people we do that. We get these Federal regulations and we do; we do the best we can without a lot of times the resources to do it.

With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Guillory appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. Well, congratulations. The Nez Perce Tribe is very fortunate to have you, Ma'am.

Ms. GUILLORY. Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. Under the Memorandum of Agreement, what percentage of your teachers have met, or are meeting, the education degree requirement?

Ms. GUILLORY. Mr. Chairman, until I lost this person, we were doing pretty good. Right now I am one of those directors, contrary to probably a lot of the belief out there, that what we have set up in the way of professional development, that within the first year they must get their CDA. That is the basic foundation.

Along with that, then they start to enter into school for their AA degree via our distance learning program. If they choose to go directly or they already have some classes, we just start their professional development plans and try to provide that support to get their degrees.

We are not at 50 percent. We are at probably 75 percent for our CDAs, but we are not for our AAs. I mean I am not even looking at a bachelor's, to be honest with you.

I know that they are trying to make that mandatory by 2008. I don't know that tribes can meet that.

Senator INOUYE. I thank you very much, and, ladies, I thank you all very much.

Our next panel: The National Indian Head Start Directors Association board member, Lee Turney; National Indian Head Start Directors Association board member, Ann Belleau; executive director, Department of Education, Pueblo of Laguna, Gilbert Sanchez, and Navajo Nation Government Services Committee, Roy Laughter.

Mr. Turney.

STATEMENT OF LEE TURNEY, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, BOARD MEMBER AND DIRECTOR, LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE HEAD START PROGRAM, CASS LAKE, MN, ACCOMPANIED BY ANN BELLEAU, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, BOARD MEMBER AND DIRECTOR, INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN INC. HEAD START/EARLY START, SAULT STE. MARIE, MI; GILBERT SANCHEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PUEBLO OF LAGUNA, LAGUNA, NM; ROY LAUGHTER, NAVAJO NATION GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE, NAVAJO NATION, PHOENIX, AZ; AND LEE MORGAN, CONTRACT COMPLIANCE OFFICER, NAVAJO NATION, PHOENIX, AZ

Mr. TURNEY. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to thank you for allowing me an opportunity to present oral testimony on the reauthorization of Head Start. I will concentrate my comments this morning on Indian Head Start research and the need to establish curricula that reflects the unique learning styles and cultural values of Native American people.

In the area of research, while some research has been done in Indian country, tribes are still legislatively excluded from the national research agenda. If we are to meet the challenges of tomorrow and establish the successes for our children, we need to be included in any further and in future research agendas at the national level.

Also, when research is conducted, it will be important to take into account the unique cultural characteristics of the children and families that we serve. Also, tribal communities must have a significant voice in the research when it is designed and conducted.

There is a strong consensus that American Indian and Alaskan Native children bring unique aspects of their culture and background when they come into Head Start. In order for us to provide appropriate relevant Head Start services, programs must be able to accommodate those unique characteristics.

The American Indian/Alaska Native programs support the Head Start Bureau's efforts to improve accountability by strengthening the screening and assessment of child outcomes and program monitoring. However, these instruments, measures, and procedures that are going to be used to assess our children must be culturally-appropriate.

The National Indian Head Start Directors Association recommends research in some of the following areas:

The national reporting system. We need to ensure that as we go out and do this assessment on our children that the tool is culturally-appropriate and sensitive to the various aspects that our children provide across Indian country.

The current Head Start Act of 1998 had two studies which Congress thought were important back in 1998. To date, neither of these studies have been reported out to Indian country.

They are, one, status of children. This report was to conduct a study on the service delivery to Indian children living on or near Indian reservations.

A side note to that is that the migrants were also included in this legislative action. Their report has been completed and published.

Another report was on facilities, and we heard earlier that that report should be coming out in the near future, but it was a report that looked at the condition, location, and ownership of facilities that are used currently or available for use by travel grantees.

In my written testimony I have outlined a few other examples of research projects that the association submits for consideration in the future.

In the area of curricula, many observers and educators have noted the importance of providing culturally-appropriate curricula for the American Indian and Alaska Native children. In this, language and culture, as we have heard in previous testimony this morning, plays a vital role. We believe that this would provide for the social, emotional, and historical links that would aid in the child development and achievement in school.

We believe that each child must have an understanding of who they are and where they have come from in order to be able to walk in both worlds, as we have to do today to be successful. Indian students learn in styles that are unique to their cultural upbringing. At times the American education system and their background are not compatible. Then we need to have the research available that defines that. Like any child, an American Indian/Alaska Native child would be more apt to be engaged in classroom activities and instructions if the curriculum that was being presented fit their cultural backgrounds.

Research is very important. I believe that we have heard today how important culture/language is in the development of our children and knowing who they are as Native American peoples.

I urge Congress to make provisions in the new Head Start Act that would recognize tribes in the future as part of the national research agenda, so that we can provide the curricula, both in Early Head Start, Head Start, and also into the public and tribal school systems that is reflective of the children that they are providing services for.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Turney appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much, Mr. Turney.

Are you suggesting that the reporting system is culturally-insensitive?

Mr. TURNEY. That has been the consensus from the people that we have sent to do the conduction of the test. We have moved forward, but our concern, again, is across Indian country is that there are some biases that have been included and have been removed. But it is our belief that if we are going to go forward in tests, then the testing tool should be accurate and should meet all the needs of all the children, instead of fix it as we go.

Senator INOUYE. And the tools today are not sufficiently culturally-sensitive?

Mr. TURNEY. No, sir; I don't believe so.

Senator INOUYE. All right, thank you very much.

Mr. TURNEY. Thank you, sir.

Senator INOUYE. May I now recognize Ms. Belleau.

STATEMENT OF ANN BELLEAU, NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION, BOARD MEMBER AND DIRECTOR, INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN INC. HEAD START/EARLY START, SAULT STE. MARIE, MI

Ms. BELLEAU. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the National Head Start Directors Association. My testimony focuses on the need for an American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start funding setaside separate from the current pre-school Head Start setaside.

There are many reasons that justify the need for a separate setaside for the American Indian/Alaska Native programs. The first reason is the obvious disparity in the number of tribal Early Head Start programs that are funded as compared to the other 10 regions.

From the very beginning, the American Indian/Alaska Native programs received proportionately less funding. During the first wave of Early Head Start funding in 1995, only 2 out of 68 applications funded were tribal programs. This pattern of funding fewer tribal programs began in 1995 and has continued until today. In fact, most recently, during the last funding opportunity, only 4 of the tribal applications received funding, leaving more than 20 applications from tribal entities unfunded.

A separate setaside would ensure equal opportunity for tribal applications and would alleviate the American Indian/Alaska Native programs from competing for Early Head Start funds at the national level with the other 10 regions and only compete for funds with their counterparts in the American Indian/Alaska Native Programs Branch. This would also allow for tribal applications to have a separate grant review process where the reviewers would better understand the unique circumstances that each tribe is challenged with.

Today there are 708 Early Head Start programs across the Nation. Only 43 of those programs are American Indian/Alaska Native programs. This is only approximately 5 percent of the total Early Head Start grantees.

The 2002 PIR data confirmed that only 4.6 percent of the nationwide enrollment are American Indian/Alaska Native children, to again demonstrate the blatant disparity of tribal Early Head Start programs that have been funded and are currently available to tribes across the country. A separate setaside would ensure a more equitable distribution of grant funds to tribal governments. The existing setaside for pre- school Head Start has provided a foundation for stable American Indian/Alaska Native pre-school Head Start programs. A separate setaside would provide the same opportunity to tribal Early Head Start programs.

Currently, the national Head Start budget only allocates 2.9 percent of funding for the American Indian and Alaska Native preschool Head Start programs. This allocation currently is not sufficient for the pre-school age program and should not be considered as a source for the tribal Early Head Start setaside, justifying the need for a completely separate setaside for the American Indian/Alaska Native Early Head Start programs.

Early Head Start is very beneficial to the American Indian/Alaska Native population because services to pregnant women, infants,

and toddlers are limited. Early Head Start is the only comprehensive early childhood program of its kind available to tribes.

Early Head Start improves the overall quality of life by ensuring that children receive immunizations, routine health care, nutritious meals, family services, improved parenting skills, and much more. Early Head Start programs double as child care services for families to provide them with more opportunity to attend classes or work without the added expense of paying for child care that they cannot afford.

There is a greater need for Early Head Start services within Indian country since tribes are disadvantaged by lack of resources and struggle to find funding to operate programs and services to assist tribal members. While there is a common misconception that tribes are rich because of the casinos, in reality this is not the case, except for a few who are the minority, not the majority. The rest of us benefit from low-paying jobs that put us just over the Head Start income guidelines, but certainly do not make us rich. These low-paying jobs put food on the table and money to pay everyday household bills without having to depend on TANF for assistance, rich we are not, but in need we are.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Belleau appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much, Ms. Belleau.

I just received a call from the Senate Chamber. I am the senior member of the Defense Appropriations Committee, and they just brought up my bill and they feel that I must be there in order to manage that bill. So may I call a short recess? We will try to resolve the matter in the Senate immediately. So can you stick around for about half an hour? Thank you very much.

[Recess.]

Senator INOUYE. I am sorry for this interruption, but I think we have the matter resolved.

Ms. Belleau, we have heard about Indian children being involved. How many children do you believe are eligible for these programs and how many are enrolled? I just want to see how many are denied this.

Ms. BELLEAU. As far as being denied, I can't really give you a specific number, but we do know that there are a lot of tribes that are not even being served right now under Early Head Start. In my State alone we have three tribes that are completely unserved for Head Start or Early Head Start. But as far as specific numbers, we could certainly get that information back to you.

Senator INOUYE. Yes; I think the committee would like to know how many eligible children there are and how many are enrolled. That would give us an idea of what the scope is.

Thank you very much, and may I now recognize Mr. Sanchez.

STATEMENT OF GILBERT SANCHEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PUEBLO OF LAGUNA, LAGUNA, NM

Mr. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman, for inviting me to testify on behalf of the Pueblo of Laguna regarding Head Start reauthorization. My written testimony has been submitted for the

record, and it describes Laguna's Head Start and early childhood programs in more depth.

But let me just say that our programs are family-driven and very comprehensive. There are more than 600 children under the age of 5 years in our community. We are serving only 40 percent of them, in large part due to the concerns and issues I have identified in the written testimony.

It is important to distinguish that these comments are unique to Laguna tribe that has successful years of experience in managing our own education system, and, therefore, our position may not be fully supported by all tribes.

In summary, our concerns are, first, the option of direct funding to tribes should be provided on a contractual basis with the Federal Government, so that tribes can provide comprehensive education programs.

Second, funding levels for all programs are inadequate and need to be increased.

Third, the 15 percent limitation on administrative costs is too low. The Pueblo needs to fully recover administrative costs.

Fourth, continue to improve the administration of performance standards and evaluations.

Fifth, separate program funds must be made available to meet our facilities and transportation needs.

Sixth, national standards and assessment criteria must accommodate and support the provision of language and culture evaluation/education.

For the remaining of my time I would like to discuss Laguna's support for the Department of Health and Human Services direct contracting for tribes for Head Start and early childhood programs. I will also discuss the supreme importance of providing our children with language and cultural education.

The Pueblo of Laguna was enthusiastic about President Bush's initiative to encourage the consolidation of early childhood programs with Head Start programs. However, we were disappointed that the President did not initiate this helpful concept for tribes. Because of this, Laguna is delighted and supportive of the committee for considering the establishment of direct contracting tribal demonstration programs. A demonstration program should allow tribes to, one, establish their own performance standards and compliance criteria; two, develop and implement Native language and culture immersion programs; three, develop streamline reporting systems for managing multiple programs to minimize administrative costs, and, four, identify barriers to effective use of Federal, tribal, State, and private resources.

However, we must point out that the tribal demonstration projects will be hampered by multiple program and agency requirements unless Federal administrative reforms are implemented. To this end, Laguna believes that:

First, tribes should be able to combine Federal funds with multiple agencies into a single administrative system.

Second, Federal agencies should collaborate on how to combine the resources into a single service delivery system.

Third, Federal agencies should be assisted in harmonizing their statutory requirements by enabling them to waive requirements where it makes sense to do so.

Fourth, integration tools should be developed and used to streamline reporting, auditing, and oversight of programs.

Fifth, Federal agencies should jointly provide multiple program technical assistance.

Other Federal reforms are needed to facilitate interagency fund transfers, eliminate separate recordkeeping requirements, and allow tribes to receive full administrative costs compensation without overage reductions.

The importance of tribal preservation of language and culture: Laguna Pueblo values thinking and education of families, but we must also value traditional culture and ceremony. The early years of childhood are critical to a lifelong development not only in the cognitive or physical sense, but also in the social and cultural sense. The traditional means of educating children must be supplemented by our education systems, including the Head Start and early childhood programs. A young child's early conception of the basic elements of language and culture are important to Laguna people for lifelong success as an individual, as a contributing member of Laguna society.

Laguna is concerned that the great emphasis on other learning will undermine our important efforts in language and cultural transference. In order to be Laguna and to say that Laguna exists in the world, Laguna's values, attitudes, beliefs, rules, history, kinship, and certainty of life must be transferred to each generation. Our stories, language, and ceremonies represent particular Laguna knowledge on a variety of subjects. These cultural lifeways are the backbone of our society.

The Bush administration is developing a national reporting system to measure a child's language and literacy skills in order to track child outcomes and progress in educational achievement. Laguna supports closing the achievement gap of disadvantaged children, but the proposed system only values non-cultural learning. If child readiness and programmatic success are to be measured only by non-cultural learning outcomes, tribal programs may not be able to fully measure up, and this would be exceedingly unfair.

Cultural education and provision of it must not be discounted in the evaluation of readiness skills nor in the evaluation of programmatic success. Instead, Native language and culture education should be supported.

The Native American Language Act makes it official Federal policy to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop their languages. We think that the Department of Health and Human Services should embrace this policy.

In conclusion, again, I want to thank you for allowing the Pueblo of Laguna to present its views. Our Pueblo is obligated to do the best we can for our families and children. That is why we are here today, and we look forward to working with this committee in the future. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Sanchez appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much, Mr. Sanchez.

I have received communications from several leaders who have suggested that self-determination contracts be entered into to authorize Indians to establish their own Head Start programs, programs where the performance standards would meet or exceed that established by the Bureau. Do you believe that, if this authorization is established, programs under these agreements would exceed the performance standards that are now in place?

Mr. SANCHEZ. Yes; I do. I feel like, if given the opportunity, we would work toward quality. As it is now, when you consider performance standards, they are minimum and many times we don't even measure up to the minimum, for lack of resources and wherewithal as tribes.

But in the case where Laguna established its own Department of Education, we were able to combine all our education programs into one system in Laguna. So we basically manage about 35 funding sources and about six different fiscal years.

I think the success we are having with our programs, managing all of our programs under one agency, has really allowed us to focus on the quality aspect of it. So I think, given the 10 years of experience that we have had doing this, that Head Start would do very well within our program because I know we would be able to follow the guidelines that probably go beyond that.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much, Mr. Sanchez.

Mr. Laughter.

STATEMENT OF ROY LAUGHTER, NAVAJO NATION GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE, NAVAJO NATION, PHOENIX, AZ

Mr. LAUGHTER. Mr. Vice Chairman Inouye and staff members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, good morning. My name is Roy Laughter. I am a council delegate from Chilchinbeto and Kayenta Chapter of the Navajo Nation. With me to answer questions about Navajo Head Start is Lee Morgan, contract compliance officer.

On behalf of the Navajo people, I thank you for this opportunity to present our concerns and recommendations regarding the proposals before Congress to change the Head Start program. The Navajo Head Start program is of critical importance to the health and welfare of the Navajo children. Head Start enables the Navajo Nation to invest in its most valuable resource, the children of the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Reservation is geographically as large as West Virginia. The unemployment rate on the Navajo Nation currently ranges from 50 to 60 percent. Our per-capita income is $6,123, which is less than one-third of its State neighbors, Arizona and New Mexico.

The Navajo Nation has over 19,000 children. Navajo children alone represent one-third of all the Native American children who receive Head Start services throughout the United States. The Navajo Head Start serves nearly 4,073 children who otherwise would not receive comprehensive services.

The Navajo Head Start is one of the largest Native American Head Start programs operating in the United States today. In fact, they are one of only ten super-grantees within the Head Start Bu-

reau. Navajo Head Start has 250 centers and offices, 177 classrooms, and 60 home-based programs. The Navajo Head Start serves a growing population whose birth rate is 21.7 per 1,000, compared to the United States at 14.8 per 1,000.

Since its inception in 1965, Navajo Head Start has taken on new initiatives to provide comprehensive health, educational, nutritional, socialization and related culture to promote school readiness. Navajo Head Start provides medical and dental screenings and nutritional meals to students. Parenting classes and counseling services are also offered to Head Start families on the Navajo Nation with a special component for career development, to help Navajo parents to provide better lives for their children.

The Navajo Head Start is nationally distinguished as a Head Start that offers programs to preserve culture and language using technology infrastructure. The Navajo Head Start has two primary concerns related to changes reflecting President Bush's proposal to Head Start programs.

The first concern regards the delegation of Head Start authority to States. The second is lack of recognizing language and culture which is essential to a child's development. The following is a brief outline of these concerns.

First, the Navajo Nation finds that the delegation of Head Start authority to the State would be difficult because the Federal Government has treaty and trust responsibility to Indian tribes through the United States Constitution, treaties, case laws, and subsequent legislations. Our program exists in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

Given the historical relationship between the Navajo Nation and States, our relationship has not been favorable toward receiving fair and equitable funding of Federal flow-through dollars. As a result, tribes do not see the State as a proper mechanism for these programs and have, instead, insisted on maintaining the direct government-to-government relationship with the United States.

Second, the Navajo Nation believes the Navajo language and culture are an integral part of our children. Language and culture is a way of life that defines one's self identity and self esteem. It is the hope of the Navajo Head Start to aid in the preservation of the Navajo language and culture.

We have two recommendations. First, exempt the American Indian/Alaskan Native Program Branch from State authority to ensure that the Navajo Nation and tribes maintain the government-to-government relationship and direct funding to tribal communities.

Second, incorporate the Native American Language Preservation Act. On behalf of the Navajo people, Navajo Head Start, we proudly present this program to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs not only as an educational institution, but as a quality holistic program uniquely designed to meet the individual needs of each child, family, expectant mother, and community. We are committed to empower each child, family, expectant mother, and community to become proactive and effective learners, leaders, and caretakers of the future generation of the great Navajo Nation.

I thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Laughter appears in appendix.]

Senator INOUYE. I thank you very much, Mr. Laughter. Your testimony suggests that your program in the Navajo Nation is a successful one. Am I correct?

Mr. LAUGHTER. Yes.

Senator INOUYE. You have indicated that there are 19,000 eligible children?

Mr. LAUGHTER. Yes, sir.

Senator INOUYE. And, of that number, 4,500 are enrolled?

Mr. LAUGHTER. Yes.

Senator INOUYE. The remaining 14,500, are they not in the program because they don't wish to take part or are they denied access because of lack of funds?

Mr. LAUGHTER. I would like to defer this question to Mr. Morgan because he is an expert on that.

Senator INOUYE. Mr. Morgan.

STATEMENT OF LEE MORGAN, CONTRACT COMPLIANCE OFFICER, NAVAJO NATION, PHOENIX, AZ

Mr. MORGAN. Vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Mr. Inouye, there are 19,000 children that are documented that we have on the Navajo Nation. Of that 19,000 children, we are providing services to 7,000; 4,000 of those services are provided by Head Start; 3,000 are provided by Child Care Development Fund Program. The remaining children are either taken in by the FACE program or the majority of those children are basically left at home.

Senator INOUYE. So there are some children left out?

Mr. MORGAN. There are a lot of them left out. It is estimated that 60 percent or more are not even being served.

Senator INOUYE. This is because of the lack of funds or the lack of trained personnel?

Mr. MORGAN. There are several factors involved in this. There is several legislations that have been enacted by Congress that impact it. One of them is the Workforce Program, which basically what it is is have the parent go back to work. So that impacts the Head Start program in a way that we don't get volunteer service, but it also makes the parents have to move away from the reservation into larger cities. But those that do remain, they basically are now dependent on their extended family to provide that support. Due to the facility and our funding enrollment, we are not able to serve those children. So there are several circumstances involved as a whole that affects those services to children.

Senator INOUYE. Is this the same ratio that you find in your tribes, 60 percent not having access to the Head Start program?

Ms. BELLEAU. Ours vary from tribe to tribe. You know, we have small communities and large communities and then some communities who are not served at all. So I would say that would be accurate as an overall percentage for our State.

Senator INOUYE. Whatever the cause, some children are being left behind?

Ms. BELLEAU. Definitely.

Senator INOUYE. Well, I can assure you that this committee will do its utmost to make certain that no child is left behind. Notwith-

standing what others say about it, we will try our best to carry that out.

So, with that, I would like to wish all of you a good day. Thank you very much for your participation. The committee appreciates it very much. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12 noon, the committee adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.]

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WINDY M. HILL, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER, HEAD START BUREAU, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today on the President's plan to strengthen Head Start, including those programs serving American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. Head Start is an important means of helping to ensure that every child has the opportunity to enter school ready to learn. Recently, the House took a major step toward making certain that each Head Start child will have the skills they need to succeed in school by marking up H.R. 2210, the "School Readiness Act of 2002" to reauthorize and strengthen the Head Start program. We look forward to action on Head Start reauthorization in the Senate in the coming days.

I would like to focus my time today on the President's goals for improving Head Start, both through reauthorization and also through direct changes in program services. I also want to share some highlights and insights into Head Start services and operations within American Indian and Alaska Native programs [AIAN Head Start], that I know are of special interest to this committee. The President remains committed to maintaining the current Federal to local relationship with American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs and working with these programs to address the unique challenges they face.

As you know, Head Start was launched in 1965 as part of a bold, "big idea"—that no child should be disadvantaged in their education because of the circumstances of their families. Our common goal remains—to prepare our children for success in school and later life. What you may not know is that I am one of the lucky ones—one for whom the Head Start program goals and ideals became a vivid reality. I am here today as a living legacy of the fulfilled promises that Head Start can and must make for every child and family. I am here not only as the Associate Commissioner of Head Start, but also as a former Head Start child and the mother of a Head Start child who is now an accomplished high school student.

As a child growing up in rural Texas, no one could have imagined that I would 1 day testify before the U.S. Congress. No one could have imagined that I would introduce the President of the United States during his recent public address at a local program. No one knew for sure, but everyone believed in the power of Head Start to change lives and influence futures.

None of us should be satisfied until we have achieved the vision reflected in the bold ideas that have become synonymous with Head Start, which is that economically disadvantaged children should arrive at school on a level playing field with their more economically advantaged peers. Any current shortfalls in achieving this goal should not label the Head Start program as a failure. We must all see it as a challenge for the program to do even better.

Recent research shows that although Head Start children make progress in areas of school readiness during the Head Start year, they continue to lag behind their more economically advantaged peers. Even Head Start graduates making significant

progress continue to lag too far behind age norms on a number of important indicators of emerging literacy and numerary skills.

Consequently, the President and Secretary Thompson sent a clear message to the Head Start Bureau. Given this compelling evidence, more has to be done to strengthen the educational outcomes for children. In response to the President and Secretary Thompson's charge, we must look for ways to improve the effectiveness of the Head Start program. Much about the program works, and works well, but we know the program needs to move ahead—particularly in the areas of educational gains and coordination.

As part of the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, we were directed to increase the knowledge and skills of Head Start teachers in the area of preschool language and literacy and to create and manage a National Reporting System that will help measure children's progress in mastering the skills necessary to enter school ready to learn.

In response, the Head Start Bureau has already undertaken a number of efforts aimed at bolstering the school-readiness of Head Start children. The Strategic Teacher Education Program, known as STEP, launched last summer, was designed to ensure that every Head Start program and every classroom teacher has a fundamental knowledge of early development and literacy, and of state-of-the-art early literacy teaching techniques. More than 3,300 local program teachers and supervisors, including representatives from ALAN programs, have received this training and have served as "trainers" to the nearly 50,000 Head Start teachers across the country. I am pleased to report that these trainers and Head Start directors are reporting that this early literacy training is making a difference in their classrooms.

Following the summer training sessions, the Head Start Bureau hosted national training conferences on mentor-coaching and social-emotional development. These events expanded the skills of teachers and supervisors in fostering effective classroom practices. A national Web-based resource, called STEP-Net, has been created to help early literacy specialists access and use resources and tools, and to exchange information and promising practices.

We see AIAN grantees actively participating in these nationally convened and sponsored Head Start trainings. Because the President has made accountability a guiding principle of his Administration, we are working to make sure that we measure the outcomes of our efforts, not merely the processes and procedures that make up each of our programs.

To that end, the most important indicator of any program's efficacy is whether it is, in fact, helping the individuals it is intended to help by achieving important outcomes. Throughout Head Start's history, critical outcomes have been reported for child health, child development, parent education, adult literacy and GED's, and other aspects of Head Start's hallmark comprehensive service design. However, in many Head Start programs, the cognitive aspects of school readiness have not been a priority and cognitive outcomes have not been included in annual program reports.

Good Start, Grow Smart, therefore, calls for not only the improvement and strengthening of Head Start through intense, large-scale efforts in the areas of early language and literacy, but also for a method to track the results of this effort. As the President often reminds us, good intentions, although better than bad intentions, are not good enough. This Administration believes that we must also challenge ourselves to determine whether or not good intentions are translating into good outcomes. We must, therefore, do a better job of determining how well Head Start children across the country are being prepared for academic success once they enter school.

This fall we are beginning implementation of the national assessment system of the congressionally mandated school-readiness indicators for all the 4-year and 5-year old children in Head Start. Children will complete these assessments upon entering and exiting Head Start. We have just completed eight national events to train and certify local staff in the conduct of this national assessment and reporting system. Across the country, an initial 181 ALAN staff were certified in the assessment procedures, trained in the data entry and are now in the process of training and certifying additional local staff.

The President's Proposal

The Administration's efforts to improve the quality of Head Start services for all children continue with the President's proposal for reauthorization of Head Start. The President believes there must be a stronger focus on the educational program of Head Start and the measurement and assessment of outcomes which will move the Head Start program to a higher level of overall school readiness for low-income children.

The President also believes even more must be done about the lack of adequate coordination between Head Start and state-administered programs which undermines the program's ability to provide high quality preschool services to as many children as possible throughout every State. Where coordination is not currently occurring, we are finding gaps and patchy areas in our services to the detriment of young children and their families. Nationwide, approximately 62,000 funded Head Start slots go empty each year. Lack of coordination often makes worse the troubling and avoidable under-enrollment problem in Head Start.

Therefore, to strengthen the Head Start program, improve services to low-income children, and promote the coordination and integration of early care and education services, President Bush is asking Congress to include in the reauthorization of the Head Start Act a provision that will allow interested and qualified States to include Head Start in their overall plans for preschool services. As part of the solution, under the President's proposal, eligible States would have the opportunity to coordinate their preschool programs and child care programs with Head Start in exchange for meeting certain accountability, maintenance of effort and programmatic requirements. States wishing to participate must submit a State plan for approval to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, that addresses several fundamental issues.

Each State must indicate in its plan how it would better coordinate Head Start with State administered preschool programs. In addition, the State plan must address how it will work to develop educational goals for all preschool children in the State and devise an accountability system to determine whether children are achieving the goals. States must describe in their plan how they will maintain the comprehensive range of services for children supported by Head Start funds, including the provision of social, nutrition, and health services, and guarantee that they will continue to provide at least as much financial support for state preschool programs and Head Start as they are currently providing.

Let me be clear that the President is not proposing to block-grant Head Start funding to States. Only in those instances where eligible States apply for integrated preschool services and are approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services will States be allowed to manage Head Start programs. Under the bill passed by the House, Head Start will continue to be managed as a Federal-to-local program in all but eight States and for all MAN programs. To be clear on this point, no State will be required to take advantage of this opportunity nor is anyone proposing that the Head Start program be turned over to States with no strings attached.

The President's proposal does not allow States who may qualify for participation in a State option to do away with the comprehensive services currently available through Head Start. Indeed, States taking advantage of this option must make a commitment to maintain the comprehensive services currently available through Head Start for those children who, under the State plan, are supported with Head Start funds.

The President's plan also makes clear that the Federal Government will not cease or relinquish its oversight responsibilities for the Head Start program. Under the President's proposal, even States who choose this option and who have their plans approved will still be accountable to the Federal government for their use of Head Start funds and for achieving positive outcomes for children. In cases where a State does not choose this option or where a State's plan is not approved, the Federal Government will continue to administer the Head Start program as a direct Federal-to-local program. I also want to mention that the President's plan would prohibit States from supplanting State preschool funds with Head Start dollars.

Finally, our proposal would change the current set-aside for training and technical assistance to provide the Secretary with greater discretionary authority to allocate these resources each year in a manner that will maximize benefits to children and families. Our proposal would also provide flexibility in targeting funds to quality improvements. Training and technical assistance resources have gown considerably in recent years at a rate well above the growth of Head Start while, at the same time, grantees have had access to quality improvement funds that provide them additional resources for these activities. These changes will allow the Secretary to determine the appropriate level of funds for these activities taking into account all the other needs of the program and the children and families served. I would like to turn to AIAN Head Start and share some insights into services and operations.

AIAN HEAD START

Head Start programs can be found throughout all parts of our country, from inner city neighborhoods where violence and substance abuse are a daily part of life to remote Alaskan villages where there are poor facilities, few jobs and limited access to education and training opportunities. Head Start programs are embedded in some

of the most economically disadvantaged and geographically isolated areas of the country, including Indian reservations.

The Head Start program has provided Head Start services to Indian Tribes since 1965 when the Department funded 43 grantees in 14 States. Since that time AIAN Head Start has grown many times and we are currently funding 165 grantees in 26 States to provide Head Start services to 23,837 children; 2,532 of whom are served in our Early Head Start program. There are 5,587 staff working in AIAN Head Start programs, 80 percent of whom are Native Americans; 26 percent of the families served by AIAN Head Start programs receive public assistance and 39 percent are single-parent households; 22 percent of AIAN Head Start parents are without a high school diploma and only 4 percent have college degrees. Head Start has long been designed as a program that can bring support and multiple opportunities to families and children.

Head Start programs throughout the country promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services that enable each child to develop and function at his or her highest potential. Head Start children receive comprehensive health services, including immunizations, physical and dental exams and treatment, and nutritional services. Over 80 percent of children in AIAN Head Start are immunized. In addition, at least 10 percent of the enrollment opportunities in each program must be made available to children with disabilities. Annually, MAN grantees report between 12 and 13 percent of the enrolled children have diagnosed disabilities.

Head Start engages parents in their children's learning and help them in making progress toward their educational, literacy and employment goals. The Head Start program also emphasizes significant involvement of parents in the administration of local Head Start programs. In fiscal year 2004, there will be increased efforts made to assure that Head Start programs are achieving their primary purpose of promoting school readiness—that all children, including all American Indian and Alaska Native children, leave Head Start with the cognitive, emotional and social skills they will need to be successful in school.

This is particularly challenging to AIAN Head Start programs since the number of teachers with degrees is below the rest of the country [51 percent overall but only 29 percent for MAN Head Start], compounded by difficulties in recruitment and retention of qualified teaching staff in both Head Start and Early Head Start. For example, in the last Program Information Report, AIAN grantees report a turnover of 313 teachers during the year, with 117 of those vacancies left unfilled for more than 3 months.

Additionally, in terms of local program support for helping children achieve school readiness, 73 percent of the AIAN grantees reviewed between 2000 and now, have significant review findings in the critical areas of curriculum planning, implementation and individualizing for children's learning.

Under the President's proposal, AIAN Head Start programs will continue to be funded directly by the Federal Government. Governed by relevant laws and regulations, each will design a program that works—one that is sensitive to the culture and history of the families; one that respects the rich traditions of the tribe and that recognizes the uniqueness of language and customs. HHS understands that Indian children and families deserve special attention—that too many Indian families face the challenges of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and medical conditions such as diabetes, in significantly higher rates than in non-Indian populations.

We have tried to respond to several unique needs by making available funding that permits many Indian programs to reach all or a substantial part of their Head Start eligible families. For example, we have issued regulations to implement the statutory provision which expands the ability of MAN grantees to serve children from over-income families.

Over the past several years we have worked in partnership with the Indian Health Service agency addressing the many health and safety concerns of Head Start programs, concerns that are often exacerbated by environmental factors beyond the control of the local Head Start program or the community in which the program is located.

In partnership with the Indian Health Service we are currently finalizing a Report to Congress on the overall status and condition of facilities occupied by ALAN Head Start programs. Let me share a few of the overall findings from that report:

The on-site survey assessed 364 AIAN Head Start facilities—58 percent of the total 624 American Indian centers.

A small majority of these centers, 52 percent were identified as being in "good" condition, 40 percent were in moderate condition and 8 percent were cited with major structural or other physical problems.

Over 50 percent of these facilities were built prior to 1984; nearly one-third were constructed in 1990 or later and 21 percent were built during the 1980's.

A majority of the 364 centers surveyed, 298 facilities or 82 percent are owned by the AIAN Head Start grantees.

We have invested over $25 million in the last 3 years for renovations and construction to improve classrooms and playgrounds as well as work and meeting space for AIAN Head Start programs. In 2003 alone we have invested over $9 million in these facilities, and in 2004 we anticipate funding an additional $4 million in pending requests for facility renovations and improvements.

We are also investing in new Head Start buses for AIAN Programs at a rate that is twice the national average; because we recognize that many of these programs must drive children many miles on roads that are often unpaved. We share these investments with you not to say that our job is complete, but to acknowledge our awareness and intent to address the needs of AIAN Head Start. We recognize that we still have a long way to go to give our AIAN programs the fall support they will need to make both a short and long-term difference in children's lives. We are committed to doing that.

We look forward to working with this committee and with the Congress to continue to address these and other challenges. Together we must do all we can to bring to fruition the goals and dreams of our Nation's first families.

One of the reasons the Head Start program has remained strong over the course of nearly four decades is that it adapts to accommodate to the changing needs of children, families, and communities. We cannot afford to dissipate precious resources through overlapping or poorly coordinated Federal or local services. Most importantly, we cannot afford to have children slip through the gaps that patchwork methods often create, particularly when children with the greatest need for support continue to remain below national norms of school readiness. Children and families deserve the best support that we can provide.

Head Start is part of our Nation's commitment to the big idea that no child should be left behind because of the circumstances of their families or communities. Hence, while recognizing the important contribution that Head Start has made over the past 38 years, we can, should and must do more, for we have not yet fulfilled the full promise of the boldest ideas that helped to create and sustain the Head Start program. The Administration is committed to strengthening the Head Start program and improving the coordination of services to benefit school readiness of children and the support services for families. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your commitment and dedication to the well-being of our Nation's children, and thank you, members of the committee, for your interest in hearing more about our proposal to make Head Start stronger, and about some of the specific efforts that impact AIAN programs. I look forward to continuing our dialog as we work together on the reauthorization of the Head Start program.

Written Testimony of
Ann Belleau, Director
Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start

on Reauthorization of the Head Start Act
before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
September 25, 2003

American Indian Early Head Start Funding Set-Aside

Chairman Campbell and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan Head Start and in full support of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA) with regard to the reauthorization of the Head Start Act. I would like to focus my testimony on the importance of the Early Head Start program and on the need for establishing a separate set-aside for Indian Early Head Start, which would assure that American Indian-Alaskan Native programs have a fair opportunity to participate in this program and would have stability in their funding levels.

With the reauthorization of the Head Start Act in 1994, Congress established a new program -- Early Head Start -- to provide services to low-income families with children from birth to age three and to pregnant women. In creating this program, Congress acted upon evidence from research and practice which illustrates that early intervention through high quality programs enhances children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development; enables parents to be better caregivers and teachers to their children; and helps parents meet their own goals, including economic independence.

The Early Head Start Program (EHS) began in 1995 under the Head Start Program umbrella. Early Head Start Programs serve pregnant women and children from birth to age three. Early Head Start is primarily a child development program that adheres to the Head Start Performance Standards and provides the same services in the areas of education, health, family services, and parent involvement, something not offered by most other 0-3 programs.

In 1995, 68 Early Head Start Programs were funded. Of the initial 68 EHS programs that were funded, only two (2) of those programs were Native American (Tribal) Programs through the American Indian Programs Branch, known as Region XI of the Head Start Bureau.

Today there are a total of 43 Tribal Early Head Start Programs funded through the American Indian-

Alaska Native Branch of the Head Start Bureau - that is only approximately 19% of the 222 Tribes that currently participate in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs (155 grantees). Of the 575 federally recognized entities across the United States, 61% of those Tribes are not being served by either the Head Start or Early Head Start Program.

The Tribal pre-school Head Start Programs are funded from the Tribal set-aside funds for Tribal Head Start Programs through the American Indian-Alaska Native Program Branch. As a result, Tribal Head Start programs compete with each other for funds. This is not the case for Tribal Early Head Start programs. Since the Tribal Early Head Start Programs must compete at the national level for EHS funds, it greatly limits the amount of Tribal EHS programs that can achieve funding due to the already limited amount of money available nationwide.

It would stand to reason that there should be a specific set-aside for Early Head Start funding for the American Indian-Alaska Native Programs like there is for Head Start funding. This would create a more equitable funding environment in which AI-AN EHS applicants would only be competing with their counterparts in the American Indian-Alaska Native Program Branch, Region XI and the Tribal EHS application would be subject to an independent review process. A separate review process for Tribal/AI-AN EHS applications would be very beneficial in that the reviewer(s) would better understand the diverse needs and the unique dynamics that Tribal communities are faced with. A separate review process would also alleviate the current random fluctuation in the number of Tribal EHS applications that receive funding.

The need for a Tribal set-aside for American Indian-Alaska Native Programs has become even more evident recently as only four (4) of the Tribal EHS applications received for the EHS nationwide expansion opportunity could be awarded due to funding restrictions. Historically and from the inception of EHS, fewer and fewer Tribal EHS applicants have been funded during the competitive grant process. Not only are there considerably less Tribal applications funded, there has been no consistency in the amount of Tribal applications funded as compared to the number of non-Tribal applications funded. The only consistency is that the Tribal applicants have historically received less consideration and less funding.

Additionally, there is a greater need in Indian Country for Early Head Start services. Unfortunately, Tribal Communities are disadvantaged by a lack of resources both in services to tribal members and with regard to adequate funding for the operation of programs and services. Native American communities are plagued with many issues that Early Head Start services assist families with, including; parenting information (single and young parents), domestic violence, alcohol and drug

addiction, common health problems (diabetes, heart disease, obesity), lack of child care, low income or low paying wages just above the poverty guidelines, and rural locations. Every Native American child and family is in need of Head Start and Early Head Start.

Over the past several years, a great deal of research in the area of Brain Development has become available to clearly demonstrate the critical need for services for pregnant women, infants and toddlers since it is evident that the development of the brain occurs during pregnancy and the early years of child development. There are many factors that contribute to brain development such as adequate nutrition and thoughtful stimulation. The Early Head Start Program provides both nutrition and stimulation that is very comprehensive through structured activities that are specific to the age and stage of development for individual children, as well as for pregnant women.

Early Head Start services are very beneficial to the American Indian-Alaska Native population in that the services otherwise available for this specific population of pregnant women, infants and toddlers are generally extremely limited. Some Tribal communities offer services from the Healthy Start Program, whose mission is to reduce infant mortality. The Healthy Start Program provides services mainly to pregnant woman while the Early Head Start Program focuses on both the pregnant woman (when available collaborates with Healthy Start to provide services to pregnant women) and the child during his development from birth to age 3.

For many tribal families, Early Head Start doubles as child care that they could not otherwise afford, allowing the parents increased opportunities to attend school or work while their child is attending Early Head Start. Early Head Start research (2002 Research and Evaluation Project) has concluded that parents involved in EHS were found to have a greater warmth and supportiveness toward their children, showed less detachment, reported more time spent in play with their child, provided more stimulating home environments, and provided more support for language and learning. In addition, EHS parents were more likely to read daily to their children, showed higher levels of positive parenting and lower levels of negative aspects of parenting, were less likely to spank their children, and reported a greater repertoire of discipline strategies. The end result of all of these gains is happier, healthier, and more secure children.

EHS enhances the strengths of children and their developmental potential. EHS children that move onto Head Start (ages 3-5) are prepared socially, developmentally, and individually for their next educational experience. These children are familiar with routines, have been nurtured to be secure and confident, and are developmentally and cognitively ready for continued learning.

Justification for American Indian EHS Set-aside Funding

(A Separate Set-aside from the current Pre-School Head Start allocation)

Tribal applicants must compete nationwide with ten federal regions, and not just against other tribes, for expansion funding to implement EHS services.

Tribal (Indian) Pre-School Head Start funding already has a set-aside allocation, which has effectively ensured fair participation by Tribal Head Start programs.

The Indian set-aside requirement for Head Start has provided the foundation for stable AI-AN pre-school Head Start programs.

Currently, there are over 20 applications from Tribal entities competing for Early Head Start Programs that have not been funded, according to the American Indian-Alaska Native Program Branch, Head Start Bureau.

A set-aside would ensure more than equitable distribution of the grant funds to Tribal governments to meet the universal early childhood developmental needs for the birth to five populations.

Only 43 of the 708 current EHS Programs are American Indian-Alaska Native programs. This is approximately 5% as compared to Regional Programs that consist of 45% of the current EHS grantees.

According to the 2002 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data, of the total enrollment nationwide, only 4.6% are American Indian or Alaska Native children, and some of those children and families are being served by Regional EHS programs.

Only 2.9% of the national Head Start Bureau budget is allocated for American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start Programs.

EHS is the only comprehensive early childhood development program available to Tribes.

Tribal programming/services must be culturally unique to every Tribe.

There is a need to serve all children from birth to five within Indian communities.

Increased funding is needed for expanding Head Start and Early Head Start for full-day, full-year services.

Sources: Head Start Research ACF, OPRE, CORE - Overall Findings and Implications for Programs from Early Head Start 2002. Zero to Three Brain Wonders online. National Indian Head Start Directors Association, American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start 2002-2003 Advocacy Agenda, August 2001. Program Information Report Ellsworth 2002.

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
REGARDING THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEAD START ACT
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

September 25, 2003

This statement regarding the 108th Congress reauthorization of the Head Start Act is submitted by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, which is comprised of the nation's 34 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). As engaged community institutions, tribal colleges are in a unique position to help achieve the goal set forth in the 1998 Head Start reauthorization that 50-percent of teachers in Head Start programs earn a minimum of an Associate degree in Early Childhood or a related discipline. We commend the members of the Committee for their commitment to working with Tribal Colleges and Universities as we continue to strive to offer educational excellence to our Indian communities.

This statement is organized in three parts: (1) brief history of the tribal college movement; (2) background on the Tribal Colleges and Universities-Head Start Partnership program that has been helping to address the needs of Head Start programs in Indian Country; and (3) legislative recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

THE TRIBAL COLLEGE MOVEMENT:

American Indian tribal colleges are young, geographically isolated, and poor. None of our institutions is more than 35 years old. Most are located on remote Indian reservations in the Great Plains, Southwest, and Great Lakes regions. Three of the five poorest counties in America are home to tribal colleges, where unemployment rates range from 50 to 75 percent. The tribal colleges funded under the Tribally Controlled College or University

Assistance Act or "Tribal College Act", are the most poorly funded institutions of higher education in the country. Most of these institutions receive no state funding and little funding from their tribal governments. These tribes are not the handful of wealthy gaming tribes located near major urban areas; rather, they are some of the poorest governments in the nation. The Federal government, despite its trust responsibility and treaty obligations, has, over the years, not considered funding of American Indian higher education a priority. For Fiscal Year 2004, the President's budget included a recommendation to cut $4 million from the funding for day-to-day operations of the 27 reservation-based colleges funded under the Tribal College Act. Further, the FY04 budget recommended that the Department of the Interior operating funds for our two tribally controlled postsecondary vocational institutions be eliminated altogether. If enacted, the cuts to the Tribal College Act would cause their allocation to be reduced to as little as $3,100 per full-time Indian student or about half of the Congressionally authorized level.

Yet, each year Tribal Colleges and Universities provide educational opportunity to 30,000 American Indian students, many of whom have no other access to higher education. We are increasing retention and attainment rates from Head Start to graduate school, strengthening tribal governments, creating jobs, and developing reservation economies, through the promise of increased access to higher education opportunities in rural America.

TCU - HEAD START PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM HISTORY

The 1998 reauthorization of the Head Start Act contained a provision mandating that 50-percent of all Head Start teachers, nationwide, earn an Associate Degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or related discipline, by the end of fiscal year 2003. The Head Start Bureau is prepared to declare that this nationwide goal has been reached. However, in fact a Head Start Program Information report dated May 1, 2003 indicates less than 15 percent (14.26 percent) of Head Start teachers in the American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Program area hold an Associate degree, and less than seven-percent (6.86 percent) hold a Baccalaureate degree. In response to the new staff qualifications mandate, and because of

statistics like these, the American Indian Programs Branch (AI/ANPB) of the Head Start Bureau issued a solicitation for TCUs to establish partnerships with Head Start grantees.

The Tribal Colleges & Universities - Head Start Partnerships Program has proven to effectively deliver culturally relevant academic services to Head Start teachers and staff. To date, 16 TCUs have been awarded partnership grants and have collectively graduated 322 students, with an additional 59 expected to finish by the end of 2003.

In 1999, the first year of the program, six TCUs were awarded 3-year Head Start grants under the partnership agreement; in 2000, an additional seven TCUs were awarded 3-year grant awards; and in 2001, three additional TCUs received 5-year grant awards. Through continued appeals from the TCUs to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, program staff, and numerous Members of Congress, the 2001 grants were awarded as 5-year grants, increasing the duration given to earlier grants by 2-years. In July 2002, the 1999 grants originally funded for 3-years were extended by an additional 12 months. The 2000 cohort retained its original 3-year grant funding.

In 2002, Head Start provided no funding for new grant opportunities under this partnership program. Initially, the Administration explained that it suspended new Head Start funding so that it could have time to study the program and determine its future direction. Other sources within the agency indicated that they understood the current Administration is interested in moving the Head Start Program out of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Education, to become part of No Child Left Behind. Such a move is a major concern to Indian Head Start programs, as well as to tribal colleges.

On July 21, 2003, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families announced that up to $1.5 million would be available to fund approximately 10 new partnership grants for FY03. Because of the erratic funding of this program, despite its measurable effectiveness at helping Indian Country train Head Start teachers, Senator Bingaman introduced S.1469: *The Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership Act,* with bipartisan support. This bill authorizes $10 million for Fiscal Year 2004 and such sums as are necessary for FY 2005-08

for the TCU-Head Start Partnership Program, and is an effort to stabilize its funding for this proven and vital program.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

During the 108th Congress reauthorization of the Head Start Act, we will be pleased to work with the Indian Affairs Committee, Senator Bingaman, and other interested Senators to ensure that the Tribal Colleges and Universities-Head Start Partnership Program be included in the final reauthorizing legislation. These partnerships provide high quality, accredited education opportunities to American Indian Head Start agency staff so that they can better deliver services that enhance the social and cognitive development of low-income children through the provision of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services to these children and their families. For all of the reasons stated above, we strongly support the inclusion of the TCU-Head Start Partnership Program in the reauthorization of the Head Start Act, as proposed in S.1469.

CONCLUSION

Tribal Colleges and Universities are ideal catalysts for preparing Indian Head Start teachers so that they might offer American Indian children the early education programs they deserve. Therefore, we strongly support the inclusion of the TCU-Head Start Partnership Program in the reauthorization of the Head Start Act, as proposed in S.1469, and look forward to working with the Indian Affairs Committee to realize this goal.

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Written Testimony of
Henrietta Gomez, Taos Pueblo Head Start Program
Tiwa Culture Specialist and Language Instructor
before the
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
on the
Reauthorization of the Head Start Act
and on
Native American Indian Language and Culture

September 25, 2003

Chairman Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Vice Chairman Daniel K. Inouye and members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of the recommendations of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association for amendments to the Head Start Act as it applies to the American Indian-Alaskan Native Head Start Programs. Among the proposed recommendations, are amendments that relate to Native American Language Preservation, an issue that I would like to focus on in this testimony.

In the early 1990's the U.S. Congress passed the Native Languages Act which recognized the unique status that Tribes hold in the United States as sovereign entities through treaties and acts of congress and the central importance of Native languages. Today as this committee reviews the Head Start Act, I hope it will once more reaffirm its commitment to Native people and the survival of their languages and cultures through careful and thoughtful consideration of each testimony that has been prepared and presented for your review.

The need for Native Language Survival

For indigenous people across this nation, the importance of issues related to language survival is

inextricably entwined with cultural survival. The continuance of Native American cultural values, traditions, beliefs and governance systems is dependent on continued transmission and use of native spoken languages. Unfortunately, for many Native people this language preservation has been severely jeopardized by Federal policies that sought to destroy Native Language and culture. In particular, at one time, Federal educators argued that Native Americans must be moved into the mainstream and that the key to doing this was to separate Native children from their Native culture and language influences. The result was the notorious boarding school system which did so much harm to Indian country. These policies contributed directly to the endangered state of Native languages today. The survival of Native culture depends on the vitality of Native languages. Tragically, for 80% of North America's indigenous languages, the children are no longer learning their Native tongue. But it is not too late to turn this situation around!

Along with the loss of culture, language loss can destroy a sense of self-worth, limiting human potential, and complicating efforts to solve other problems, such as poverty, family breakdown, school failure and substance abuse. After all, language loss does not happen in privileged communities. It happens to the disposed and disenfranchised -- the people who most need their cultural resources to survive (Crawford 1994).

Even among Native communities where children are actively learning their native tongue, there are growing concerns about language survival and the need to take action. The uniqueness of Pueblo languages in my home State of New Mexico reflects a history of some of the oldest and longest sustained cultures in the nation. These languages have existed and still function primarily within a socio-cultural and socio-religious community context (Blum, 2000; Sims, 2001; Suina, 1990}. As

such, the oral tradition serves as the critical vehicle in which a community such as mine, Taos Pueblo, maintains its internal socio-cultural organization, its oral histories, cultural knowledge and spiritual way of life. To lose our Tiwa language would mean that everything that holds together our society would begin to unravel and would be lost to future generations.

The survival of the Tiwa language into the 21st Century is a testimony to the resilience and wisdom of our tribal elders and tribal leaders, who have steadfastly refused to abandon our language, despite overwhelming pressures in the last century to speak only English. Their legacy and the future of younger generations who will take their place as leaders will depend upon the steps we take today. AI-AN Head Start Programs that recognize the importance of Native culture and languages are better preparing Native youth for continuing higher education anywhere in this world and better preparing indigenous peoples as we take our rightful place in the world

For some tribes, there are now only a few speakers or even no speakers of their language left. In a response to this crisis, several tribes have made extraordinary efforts to stem the loss of language and therefore culture through community-based and school-based language efforts. In my small Pueblo of Taos, New Mexico, for instance the youngest generation of tribal members are beginning to relearn their native tongue, which until a few years ago remained viable only in age groups of thirty and older. Based on a Head Start Community Assessment, in 1998, Taos Pueblo developed a Tiwa Language Immersion Program (Red Willow Language Immersion Program) in the Taos Pueblo Head Start Program. Oral instruction in the native Tiwa language is provided for Head Start children. The Red Willow Language Program has already begun to yield significant outcomes in children who are speaking the Tiwa language once more. They represent the future of young Native Americans who

while maintaining a healthy connection to their communities are just as capable of as any child in America to succeed academically.

Our tribal community has benefitted from the Taos Pueblo Head Start language preservation efforts. Community members have input and influence regarding the curriculum. More native teachers have entered the Head Start Program as teachers, teacher assistants and in other leadership positions. The Head Start Program and the tribal community work together as a team to reclaim our native language.

Students have benefitted from language preservation. Head Start children in our language program have made smoother transitions into other schools. Being immersed in their native language has not delayed their academic development, but actually enhanced it. Their academic gains are sometimes greater than those in English-only classrooms. Attendance and parent participation have shown significant improvement. Native Language Immersion is more than words- it is a person's culture heritage, identity, and the way he or she is taught to view the world. Speaking and learning in more than one language enhances the development of cognition and should be viewed as desirable and be encouraged both at home and at school.

Native Language and Culture Curriculum is an Integral Part of the Whole Curriculum

Including Native language and culture in AI-AN Head Start Programs will help assure that indigenous children are educated in a culturally appropriate manner and be able to relate to the larger society from an intact cultural perspective, not from a destroyed or distorted cultural perspective.

Native language programs in Head Start represents a Native adaptation of the ideal of education , for in Native culture, learning means the discovering of principles and the relations of everything. Integrating Native culture and language in AI-AN Head Start programs will contribute not only to the survival of Native society, but also to the survival of the world through Native contributions to the community of learning.

We do not believe that language and literacy activities geared toward English are the only meaningful ones in a classroom with students from a Native language background. The home languages and literacies of Native children can and should be incorporated into the classroom in ways that would be socially useful and cognitively challenging for the children. Inclusion of the home language and culture in the classroom curriculum allows Native children the opportunity to be the "experts" and builds pride in the languages and culture of their families. The inclusion of Native languages in the classroom is also cognitively challenging. The children will develop meta-linguistic awareness, the ability to think how language works, a skill that will help them in learning how to read and write in English. In an effort to ensure school readiness, we must make sure to leave intact and strengthen the paths to meaningful life connections to family and community.

Language and Culture --Essential Links

Economic:

- The ability to speak, read, and write more than one language is a great advantage in the job market.

Intellectual:

- Research shows that knowing more than one language increases thinking ability

Educational:

- Children who learn English and develop their native language do better in school than students who learn English at the expense of their first language.

  Educational research has clearly established that Native culture and language are essential in Native children's acquisition of Knowledge and foster academic achievement" (T. Yazzie)

  Sources:

  * Lipka, Mohatt, and the Cuiilister Group, 1999

  * Skinner, 1999

  * Yazzie, 1999

  * Dupuis & Walker, 1998

  *Hakes & other. 1980

  * Mccarty., 1989

  * Mohatt& Sharp, 1998

  Conclusion

  For Native peoples language, culture, belief, governance, family and community are all closely inter-related. The loss of any one of these, is damaging to the others. I urge this Committee to support the use of Native language and culture in the Indian Head Start program.

NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 6058 ● NORMAN, OK 73070
www.nihsda.org

Chairman Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Vice Chairman Daniel K. Inouye
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Campbell and Vice Chairman Inouye:

At the hearing on Indian Head Start held by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on Thursday, September 25, 2003, NIHSDA representatives were asked two questions that we could not answer in full. As promised, set forth below are the two questions along with our complete responses.

1. How many more Indian children would be served if the 2.9% Indian set-aside for pre-school Indian Head Start programs (ages 3-5) were increased to 4%?

If the entire increase were spent on expansion (something NIHSDA does not recommend), the total number of Indian children served by Indian Head Start would increase by approximately **9,629** to a new total of approximately 30,950. This number (9,629) is based on:

- calculating how much funding Indian Head Start would have received in FY 2003 with a 4% set aside ($261,463,000);
- subtracting from that number the amount Indian Head Start actually received under the current 2.9% set-aside (186,218,000); and then
- taking the difference ($75,245,000) and dividing it by the average cost per Indian child in Head Start ($7,814), which yields a total of 9,629 additional Indian children who would be served.

NIHSDA recommends, however, that approximately one-third of the funding increase be spent on expansion, and the remaining two-thirds be spent on quality enhancement. NIHSDA believes that this is the proper balance to be struck between increasing the number of Indian children served and improving the quality of the services provided to all Indian Head Start children. Specifically, NIHSDA would recommend spending the additional $75,245,000 in the following way:

- **Expansion - $28,150,000.** This amount would allow Indian Head Start to be expanded to serve an additional 3,603 Indian children.
- **Quality Enhancement - $47,095,000.** NIHSDA would recommend that these funds be divided to address five enhancement needs:

- **Teacher Salary Increases - $9,915,000.** Indian Head Start programs have great difficulty in retaining teachers and teacher aides, especially after teachers earn required degrees and then are able to take higher paying positions in non-Indian programs. These supplemental funds would be used to increase teacher and teacher aide salaries to make them more competitive with equivalent salaries in the local non-Indian community. Currently, there are 1,364 teachers and 1,511 teacher aides. This funding request would enable the average teacher salary to be raised by $4,500 and the average teacher aide salary to be raised by $2,500. Currently, the average salary for a teacher with an AA is $20,644, and with a BA $23,438. Teacher aides make approximately $17,230.

- **Management and Administration - $20,641,000:** There is a need for both new hires and increased salaries for Indian Head Start management and administration, which currently suffers from a 30%-40% annual turnover rate.
  - ***New Hires - $18,000,000.*** Indian Head Start programs operate with skeletal managerial and administrative staff, who are often called upon to substitute teach in the classroom, drive a bus, wash dishes, clean, etc. In addition, many directors serve as education specialists/coordinators as well as mentor coaches for the STEP literacy program, and now as National Reporting System trainers. NIHSDA proposes adding an average of three new management/administration staff positions per program at an average cost of $40,000 per position. This would allow hiring approximately 450 new staff for a total cost of $18,000,000.

  - ***Increased Salaries - $2,641,000.*** As with teachers, a principal cause of high turn-over among management/administration is low salaries. There are approximately 587 such positions in Indian Head Start (Directors and Coordinators). NIHSDA recommends increasing Director and Coordinator salaries an average of $4,500/year for a total cost of $2,641,500.

- **Hiring of Additional Substitute Teachers - $5,600,000.** It is extremely difficult for Indian Head Start teachers to work full-time, raise their own families, and go to school to meet mandatory degree requirements. Head Start used to run four days per week so teachers could accomplish all the paper work including lesson planning, individualization for all students, implementing IEPs, making home visits, organizing on-going assessments, making referrals, etc. Now the majority of programs operate five days per week. To assist, NIHSDA suggests funding additional substitute teachers to free-up time for regular teachers to pursue further education. The requested amount ($5,600,000), at a rate of $9/hour, would allow approximately one and one-half substitute days per week per classroom.

- **Transportation - $5,000,000.** Safe transportation on rural reservations is a great challenge and very costly. This request would fund 71 new buses per year at a cost of $70,000/bus. Despite testimony to the contrary, there are not enough funds in Quality Monies or Year-end-funds to supply the busses needed in Indian Head Start programs.

- **Technology - $3,000,000.** Indian Head Start programs have computer and other technological resources. This request would allow programs to receive approximately $100/child to be applied to bringing new

technology into the classroom, as well as expanding other technological resources for Indian Head Start programs, such as office computers, internet access (which is now mandatory for federal programmatic and fiscal reporting, but also very costly and underfunded to remote reservation programs).

- **Professional Development - $2,939,000.** This request would fund degree and non-degree educational opportunities for Indian Head Start teachers and staff. This is especially important if degree requirements are raised, as pursuing the necessary schooling for a a bachelors degree and/or other professional training is all too often prohibitively expensive.

2. What percentage of eligible Indian children are served by Indian Head Start?

There is little hard data on this statistic. Of the approximately 555 tribes, only 222 have Head Start programs. Needless to say, for the 333 that do not, 0% of the eligible children are served by Indian Head Start. Overall, NIHSDA, based on census and other data (see below), believes that about 16% of the age-eligible Indian children, and perhaps 32% of the income-eligible Indian children are served by Indian Head Start programs.

According to the Indian Health Service, based on the 2000 census, there are 144,972 Indian children under age five living on Indian reservations (age eligibility for pre-school Head Start and Early Head Start is zero to five). As pre-school Head Start and Early Head Start have a current enrollment of 23,837, this means that approximately 16% of the age eligible Indian child population are enrolled in Indian Head Start. Assuming that 50% of the children meet the income requirements of Head Start (of course, on some reservations, like Navajo, the percentage would be closer to 70%-80%), Indian Head Start serves approximately 16% of the total number of income and age eligible Indian children.

I hope that this information is of assistance to the Committee. NIHSDA greatly appreciates the Committee's interest in Indian Head Start and its recognition of the extraordinary contribution Indian Head Start makes to Native American communities. Please do not hesitate to call if you should require any further information.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Mavany Verdugo
President

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
CONSUELO GUILLORY, BOARD MEMBER
NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
AND
DIRECTOR OF THE NEZ PERCE TRIBE HEAD START PROGRAM,
LAPWAI, IDAHO
ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEAD START ACT
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
SEPTEMBER 25, 2003

Introduction. I am here today to represent Head Start and Early Head Start Programs in Indian Country and to talk about the relevance and importance of distance learning for these programs. In my experience, as the Director of the Nez Perce Head Start Program, distance learning can successfully bridge the resource gap experienced by nearly all rurally located Indian tribes. To do this, Indian Country has already begun developing collaborations to utilize distance learning, especially for professional development purposes.

Indian Country does not have a cadre of people prepared to enter the work force. Rather the work force consists of parents with children. Unfortunately, all too often they lack the skills needed, or are entering the work force for the first time, or do not have a high school diploma, or are working to get their GED, etc. So what do we do? We have to become creative and innovative while developing practical attainable professional development training plans to meet the needs of staff, the tribal government and the federal government. Thus the role of technology allows programs to develop training activities and opportunities for our children, families and communities.

Since 1994, when new academic requirements were added to the Head Start Act, Tribes have had to collaborate, create and develop systems to meet these requirements. In doing so, they have had to address the difficulty of being located far from major educational institutions. One way we have dealt with this challenge has been through distance learning. While distance learning is relatively new to early childhood programs in Indian Country, I am happy to report that it is up and running!

Distance Learning - High Technology that Preserves Tribal Culture. Tribes seek to provide ways for their people to get degrees without having to leave the reservation. They do this, in part, to preserve tribal culture by keeping people at "home" on the reservation. Indeed, "the refusal to abandon culture is perhaps one of the most poignant rationales for the use of distance education by Native populations." (Berg and Ohl 1991).

For Head Start programs, distance learning permits relatively easy access to quality professional development training programs for our staff. We should not forget that our staff often pursue these degrees while working full-time and raising a family! Of course, distance learning not only allows Tribes to offer opportunities to tribal members, but also to their work force, including non-Indians. It is a tool that works for everyone - tribal governments, employees of the Tribe and communities residing within a reservation. Through distance learning, American Indian Tribes

can still learn from Western education while remaining in an environment which teaches what Vine Deloria, Jr. calls the "traditional technologies or the practices and beliefs of Native American peoples." (Deloria 1990).

Indian Country has several notable successes in the distance learning area. For example, the Northwest Indian College (NWIC) in Bellingham, Washington, entered into a distance learning agreement with the Nez Perce Tribe in 2000. Distance learning services were provided beginning in 2001. By 2002, the College and the Tribe had entered into a Memorandum-of-Agreement (MOA) to provide early childhood education services to the Nez Perce Tribe Early Childhood Development Program. Under the terms of the MOA, the College and the Nez Perce Nation agreed to collaborate to provide on-reservation post-secondary education and training consistent with the needs and interests of the Nez Perce Tribe. The MOA outlines goals specifically related to the Head Start Act. This Collaboration Agreement confirms a shared commitment to helping individuals gain self-sufficiency in a rapidly changing technological world while recognizing and nurturing their cultural identity. It is focused on improving the quality of life on the Nez Perce reservation through education, training and economic development. This effort has been very successful, not only for our early childhood staff, but also for employees of the Nez Perce Tribe and communities within the reservation.

There are several other successful distance education programs in Indian Country. The University of Alaska and the Yugtarvik Museum Project have provided college courses to students at remote locations, primarily through audio conferences. (Sponder and Schall 1990). One-quarter of Alaska's rural population is Native Alaskan; most Alaskan communities are not accessible by road. Fortunately, satellite technology has enabled Alaska to develop a strong tele-communication infrastructure that makes this program possible. Similarly, in February of 1990, Northern Arizona and the Navajo Nation reached a distance learning agreement whose goal is to develop programs aimed at increasing the quality of educational delivery and level of academic achievement of Navajo students from kindergarten through post secondary education. (Stern 1990).

Even though distance learning has been successful, it is costly to develop and implement. Several cost components factor into the design of a distance education system. They are:

- **Technology** – hardware (e.g., videotape players, cameras) and software (e.g., computer programs).
- **Transmission** – the on-going expense of leasing or buying transmission access (e.g., T-1 line, satellite, microwave).
- **Maintenance** – repairing and updating equipment.
- **Infrastructure** – the foundational network and telecommunications infrastructure located at the originating and receiving campuses.
- **Production** – technological and personnel support required to develo0p and adapt teaching materials.
- **Support** – miscellaneous expenses needed to ensure the system works successfully including administrative costs, registration, advising/counseling, local support costs, facilities and overhead costs.
- **Personnel** – to staff all functions previously described.

Although high, the costs of distance learning are truly outweighed by the benefits.

Collaboration is the key. For Indian Country, collaboration is not an option, it is a necessity and, fortunately, it exists. One successful collaborative effort is that between the Head Start Programs and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium – Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU's). There are thirty two (32) accredited tribal colleges and universities that offer early childhood education programs. This Consortium of colleges and universities provides much needed technological access and capabilities for Tribes across the nation. Tribal colleges and universities were created by Indians for Indians primarily on rural and remote Indian reservations. They understand the challenges faced by tribes and are, therefore, the logical place from which to build distance learning programs. We urge Congress to continue to support programs through these institutions.

Collaboration Lead to an Extraordinary Success at the Nez Perce Tribe. One of the proposed Head Start bills states "that each Head Start agency would be required to coordinate and collaborate with the local education agency serving the communities involved to ensure curriculum and classroom experiences for Head Start are aligned with the cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills that children entering kindergarten are expected to demonstrate." The Nez Perce Tribe Head Start Program, through collaboration with its local school district and with the distance learning support it has received from the Northwest Indian College, has seen its children achieve extraordinary results on the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) for students who entered kindergarten after attending our Head Start program. The skills for the Idaho Reading Indication are:

1) Write own name,
2) Detect rhyme,
3) Detect syllables and
4) Identify uppercase letters

In 1999, just 19% of our children tested above grade level on this test. I am proud to report that in 2002, 49% of our children tested above grade level! This is extraordinary progress in three (3) years, and is directly attributable to the impact of our Early Head Start and Head Start programs, working in collaboration with local school districts and with distance learning institutions!

Early Head Start works. Our experience at Nez Perce demonstrates that not only does Head Start work, but it works even better when combined with Early Head Start. A birth to age 5 holistic approach is very effective. I urge this committee to support establishing a separate set-aside for Early Head Start, similar to that provided for Head Start, for Indian tribes so that we have a stable source of funding and do not have to compete with non-Indian programs whose circumstances are so different from our own.

Professional development can be achieved but requires financial and administrative support. To meet any mandates, funding must be assured to programs. The support system for Training and Technical Assistance and Disabilities has been dismantled. The new technical assistance system began September 1, 2003 according to an Information Alert but is not operational as contact has not occurred with programs in the field. It is not known how or when the new system will begin to assist

programs.

NIHSDA strongly supports:

- Amending the Head Start Act to provide grants to Tribal Colleges and Universities to increase the number of post-secondary degree in early childhood education and related fields earned by Indian Head Start agency staff members, parents of children served by such an agency and members of the community involved.

- Increased funding for Indian Head Start Early Childhood Services, birth to 5 years of age. As shown in the Idaho Reading Indicator, the holistic approach offered by Tribes when they are afforded the opportunity to operate both Early Head Start, Head Start and Child Care programs collaboratively.

- Collaboration with local school districts but the distinction between the programs must be maintained for Tribes to operate their own programs.

- Increased funding to retain and recruit staff.

Conclusion. Distance learning education works even though it "...counters the trend of centralized, norm-minded, teacher oriented pedagogy..." (Berg and Ohler 1991)! Distance learning is an effective learning tool for Tribes and as such Congress should support adequate funding for Indian Head Start Programs to utilize distance learning programs.

Nez Perce Tribe's Early Childhood Development Program: It's Journey to Distance Learning Education
Early Childhood Development Program Pow Wow 2003
NEZ PERCE TRIBE
Theodore Williamson
Courage LoneBear
Merlin Kickingwoman Jr.

The Nez Perce Tribe
❖The Nez Perce Tribe is governed by the Nez Perce Tribe Executive Committee (NPTEC), a nine (9) member board. The NPTEC provides policy guidance and fiduciary responsibility for tribal development.
❖The Nez Perce reservation includes close to 110,000 acres with checkerboard ownership by Indians and non-Indians located in five (5) counties.

The Nez Perce Reservation
Nez Perce Reservation
Lapwai Headstart
Kamiah Headstart

MISSION STATEMENT
The mission statement for the Nez Perce Tribe Early Childhood Development is to "provide a community-based, multi-cultural environment which includes quality, comprehensive and developmentally appropriate services for each eligible child and their family."

It has been the Nez Perce Tribe's intent to create a seamless early childhood development program design housing Head Start, Early Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) programs in facilities offering a "one-stop" approach on the Nez Perce reservation located in Lapwai and Kamiah.

The CCDF Program "wraps-around" Early Head Start and Head Start to assist parent(s), families with child care who are attending school, participating in on-the-job training or employed. ECDP serves over 200 families.

The Nez Perce Tribe has administered the Head Start Program since 1967; Child Care and Development Fund since 1993; and Early Head Start since 1996.

ECDP Partners with Distance Learning

- January 2001: Distance Learning Center (DLC) first opened in Lapwai,ID.
- Satellite Technology (one-way communication) was the first method primarily used in combination with "live" on-site courses.
- Upgrade needed to increase interaction between teacher/student.
- January 2002: DLC was opened in Kamiah (62 miles apart).
- Memorandum of Agreement with NWIC for ECE Classes in March 2003.

Partnerships (continued)

- The primary source in supporting distance education is federal grants, the Nez Perce Tribe Executive Committee, Northwest Indian College (NWIC), Early Childhood Development Program, Nez Perce Tribe Information Systems Department, Nez Perce Tribe Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO), Lewis-Clark State College, Salish-Kootenai College.

Partnerships (continued)
Public Law 102-477
Three (3) full-time instructors & technology costs
Total: $160,000 (annually)
Early Childhood Development Program
Modular: $90,000
Electricity cost (per/year): $5,000
Custodial (annual): $18,000

Partnerships (continued)

- Nez Perce Tribe Vocational Education Program (VEP) & Lewis Clark State College
  - Carry-over from VEP allowed for start up $43,500
  - Equipment $20,000
  - (15) Tables & (20) chairs $ 5,175
- Nez Perce Tribe Information Systems
  - Telcom Equipment & Cabling $4,170
  - Networking Equipment $4,000
  - Installation & Labor $9,000
  - Phone charge (per/year) $3,600

Partnerships (continued)

• **Northwest Indian College**	
• Site Coordinator Salary (per /year)	**$30,000**
• Ten (10) Computers donated from 2000 Census	**$20,000**
• **TERO revenue**	
• Kamiah DLC renovation	**$30,000**
• Site Coordinator Salary	**$20,000**
• Indirect Costs (per /year)	**$ 6,780**
• **Salish-Kootenai College**	
• Five (5) New computers	**$10,000**
• **Total Cost**	**$463,225**

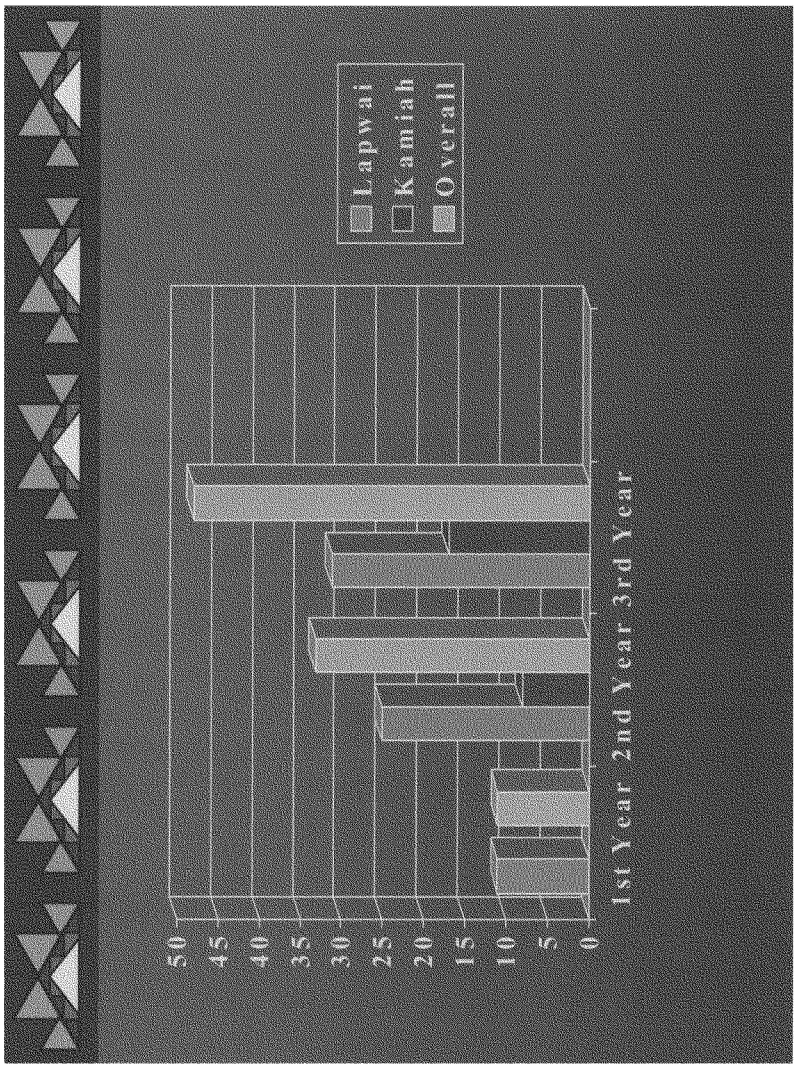
Results From Idaho Reading Indicator
Head Start to Kindergarten
Fall Skills
•Write your name
•Detect rhyme
•Detect syllables
•Identify uppercase letters

LAPWAI KINDERGARTEN
Idaho Reading Indicator
Percent At Above Grade Level
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Sept. 1999
Sept. 2000
Sept. 2001
Sept. 2002
Sept. 2003
Testing Date

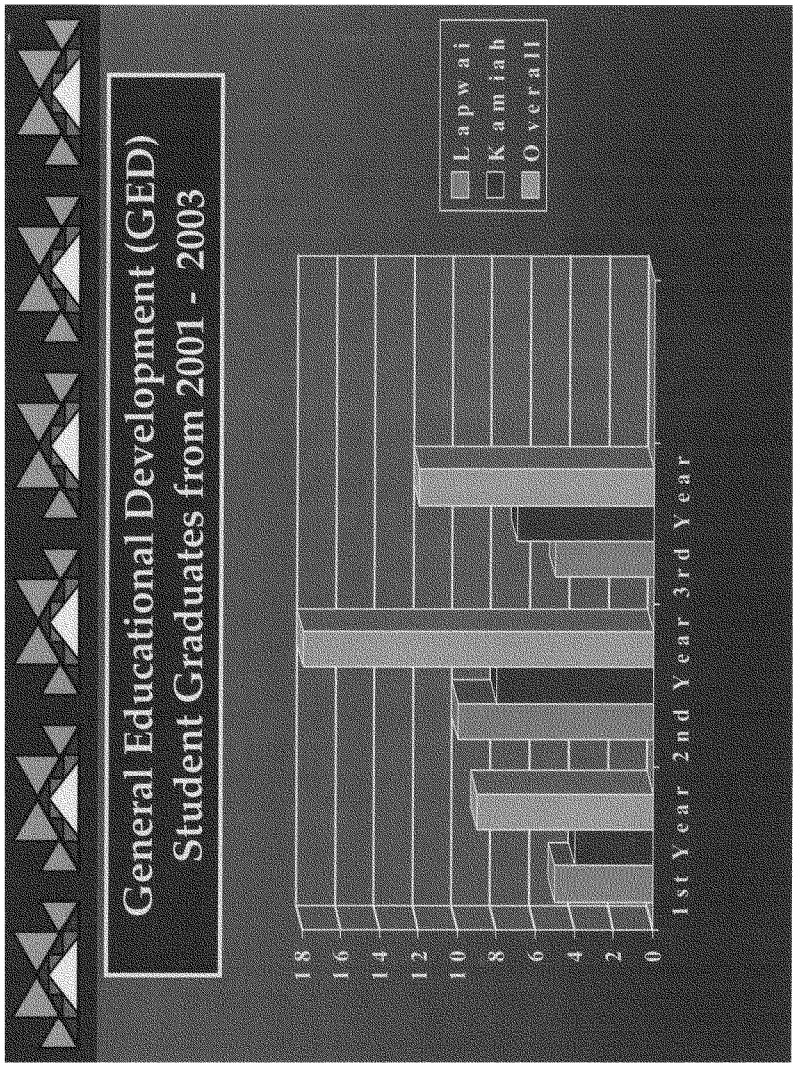
DLC Students

- According to final 2003 NWIC Spring Quarter enrollment Report, fifty-six (56) total students enrolled in classes.
- Of those students, (20) are employed by the Early Childhood Development Program.
- Forty-eight (48) students are enrolled full-time (12 or more credits).
- Fifty-one (51) students are enrolled in a federally-recognized Tribe.

College Student Increase of DLC from 2000 - 2003
1st Academic Year (2000-01)
Students enrolled full-time (FTE's): *11 Students
*Lapwai site only
2nd Academic Year (2001-02)
Students enrolled full-time (FTE's): *33 students
*25 Lapwai
*8 Kamiah
200% increase from previous year
3rd Academic Year (2002-03)
Students enrolled full-time (FTE's): *48 Students
*31 Lapwai students
*17 Kamiah students
45% increase from previous year
Two (2) students graduated with an Associate of Arts & Sciences Degree


Lapwai
Kamiah
Overall
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1st Year 2nd Year 3rd Year

General Educational Development (GED)
Student Increase from 2001 - 2003
1st Academic Year (2000-01)
Total GED Students Completed: *9 Students
5 Lapwai
4 Kamiah
2nd Academic Year (2001-02)
Total GED Students Completed : *18 Students
10 Lapwai
8 Kamiah
3rd Academic Year (2002-03)
Total GED Students Completed: *12 Students
5 Lapwai students
7 Kamiah students
*Of the thirty-nine (39) total students who completed, nineteen (19) either enrolled in college or gained employment.


General Educational Development (GED)
Student Graduates from 2001 - 2003
Lapwai
Kamiah
Overall
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
1st Year
2nd Year
3rd Year

What is Interactive Video Conferencing (IVC)?

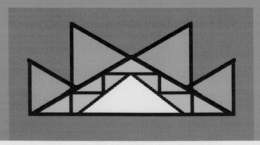
- By definition it is a system that utilizes compressed digital video for the transmission of motion images over data networks such as high capacity Integrated Services Digital Networks (ISDN).
- This system is designed to support two-way video and audio communication between two or more locations.

IVC: Advantages

- Allows simultaneous or "real time" communication between students and the instructor.
- Reaches a broader student audience.
- Supports the use of many types of media such as photos, graphics, internet, etc. This document sharing helps facilitate collaboration and feedback.
- Provides access to students at remote sites who are unable to attend on-campus classes.
- To obtain an education & transfer to four (4) year college.

IVC Equipment Required to Operate a Program

- Front & back camera
- Wireless keyboard plus remote
- Elmo (document camera)
- Smart board
- Microphones



Graphic Design ©
Angel McFarland-Sobotta

Types of
IVC
Equipment
Used

Sample of "How it's Done"

Lapwai & Kamiah connecting for classes: 62 miles apart.

Classes Being Taught
Nez Perce
Language Class

Classes Being Taught
Left: Math 98 instructor
teaching
Right: Nez Perce Language
instructor
using the Elmo

Success of DLC:
Articulation Agreements between NWIC, Tribal & Non-Tribal.
Distance Learning Center
Associate of Arts & Science (AAS)
Direct Transfer Degree
Northwest Indian College
Early Childhood Education
Technical Degree (ATA)
Northwest Indian College
General Educational Development
(GED)
Lewis Clark State College
Transfer/Articulation Agreement: (4-year degree)
Lewis Clark State College
Washington State University
University of Idaho

OUR FUTURE

Our ECDP Students

When you help a child
TODAY, you write the
history of tomorrow

Qe'ciyew'yew'

(Thank You)

"I wish all my children would learn more and more everyday, to do business with the white people as well as anyone else". Chief Joseph, 1904

Carlisle Indian School Graduation which included General O.O. Howard as CO-Keynote Presenter

TESTIMONY OF THE NAVAJO NATION

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
September 25, 2003
Hearing on the 2003 Head Start Reauthorization Act

Presented by
Roy Laughter, Council Delegate of the Chilchinbeto/Kayenta Chapter
Navajo Nation Council

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, the Head Start program is of critical importance to the health and welfare of Navajo children. Head Start enables the Navajo Nation to invest in its most valuable resource, the children of the Navajo Nation. On behalf of the Navajo people, I thank you for this opportunity to present our concerns and recommendations regarding proposals before Congress to change the Head Start program.

Issues

The Navajo Nation have the following comments, concerns and recommendations:

1. Supporting the reauthorization of the Head Start Act

It is the Navajo Nation's position that the NNDOHS remain within the United States Department of Health and Human Services and not be transferred to the United States Department of Education. It is important that children continue to receive comprehensive services with strong parental involvement. It is the Navajo Nation's position that the benefits of keeping Head Start within the Department of Health and Human Services include the following:

A. Head Start has been integrating language, early literacy, and mathematics into children's curriculum since its inception and has always strived for excellence. During the 1998 reauthorization of the Head Start Act, provisions were added to augment performance standards and outcome measures to focus on children's language, pre-reading and numeric skills, which are currently being implemented.

B. The services that NNDOHS provides and its results are demonstrable and overwhelmingly positive. Children are indeed "ready to learn" when they enter kindergarten; 83% of Head Start graduates could identify most or all letters of the alphabet and were familiar with key book and print concepts, as well as phonemic awareness. Head Start teachers are well qualified with an average of 12 years of teaching experience and 79% have earned a Childhood Development Associates' Certificate or other early childhood credentials.

C. NNDOHS success is attributable to the comprehensive services it provides to low-income children and families. The administration of the program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ensures greater collaboration and integration of all components of education, health, family, and community support that contributes to a child's readiness, especially for low-income children and families. Transferring the program to the U.S. Department of Education holds no guarantee that these essential program components, such as comprehensive services, career development of community residents, and extended day services to meet the needs of working parents, will be sustained. Further, unlike U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Education has neither the record nor structure to administer a program as large and geographically spread out as the NNDOHS.

D. NNDOHS has long been recognized for its strong parental involvement. The transfer of the program to the U.S. Department of Education may limit this parental involvement component. NNDOHS truly believes that a child's primary educator is his/her parent(s). NNDOHS parents are heavily involved in the governance of the program through their policy councils, and parents spend countless hours in the programs reading to children, assisting teachers, and planning educational events.

2. Recommendations

A. The Navajo Nation recommends a five (5) year reauthorization plan to effectively carry out the objectives of the NNDOHS programs. A period of four (4) years does not provide sufficient time to implement the program and allow for quality staff development.

B. The Navajo Nation recommends that the government-to-government relationship between the tribe and the federal government, through the Department of Head Start, be maintained by continuing to provide direct funding to tribes. The Navajo Nation must be recognized as a sovereign entity, possessing the same duties, powers and authorities as a "State entity". The U.S. Department of Education has no record, history or experience working directly with Indian Tribes. Historically, the U.S. Department of Education has not recognized Tribes as a State entity eligible for direct funding. The proposed transfer of Head Start to the U.S. Department of Education would severely impact direct funding to tribes and sever the recognition of the tribe's government-to-government relationship with the federal government. Further, State governments are in a financial crisis today, as many are facing choices about slashing programs. States are facing combined budget gaps of approximately $100 billion that must be closed over the next several months, including $25 billion in deficits in the current fiscal year and between $70 and $85 billion for the fiscal year that begins in June. In fiscal year 2003, the states have to close a gap deficit of approximately $50 billion and produce a balanced budget. At least 40 states, and perhaps as many as 49 of the 50 states, are facing serious budget shortfalls.

C. The Navajo Nation strongly recommends that the Head Start Act incorporate the Native Language Preservation Act, Public Law 101-477, to protect Native American language and culture in conjunction with the current emphasis on promoting school readiness and children's language and literacy services. A child who acquires his/her native language and cultural understanding and have learned the English language as a secondary language, possess diverse skills, dual knowledge and enhancement of their communicative and cognitive abilities.

D. Head Start Funding Level

1. The Navajo Nation supports the requests for additional funding of $1 billion nationwide for Head Start and Early Head Start programs to address quality, expansion and staff salaries. Currently, nationwide, only 40% eligible children are able to enroll due to lack of funding. A $1 billion increase in funding would mean that an additional 80,000 children would be able to participate in Head Start, nationally. Moreover, the 1998 Head Start Reauthorization Act sought to improve the quality of the program. It increases the percentage of funding set aside for improving the quality of Head Start. The quality funds are used to ensure that the programs have qualified staff that can promote language skills and the literacy growth of children. The Act also requires Head Start programs to implement specific performance measures to improve children's literacy and language skills and mandates that at least 50% of all Head Start teachers at center based programs have at least an associates degree or its equivalent by 2003.

2. Head Start programs are required to match 20% of the funding for their program. The Secretary of Health and Human Services has the discretion to reduce the required match, however, the request often times is not a temporary situation. Dwindling community resources and services that have helped in the past to make the match, such as donation of facility space and parent volunteer time has decreased due to welfare reform. Tribes have difficulty raising enough revenue to meet the required non-federal share. The Navajo Nation recommends reducing the 20% match and supports establishing an automatic hardship waiver.

3. The Navajo Nation recommends that priority be given for full-day, full-year services for currently enrolled children and families to serve as many children as possible while equally providing children with high quality programs. Even before the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996, the Head Start program has had the need to transition part day, part-year classrooms to full day, full-year in order to address the critical needs of the families who are on welfare and must work to maintain eligibility.

4. The Navajo Nation supports comprehensive high quality childcare and increased funding for childcare services. Affordable and adequate childcare remains out of reach for many working families. Childcare consumes about one-quarter of the income of low-income families who pay for care.

5. Transportation services expenses have increased due to the increasing cost of fuel and maintenance of buses. The Navajo Nation requests additional funding for the transportation of children in a safe and secure mode of transportation.

6. The Navajo Nation supports the reauthorization of the Welfare Reform Act. The Navajo Nation supports the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act to improve in a variety of areas so that it will better serve low-income children and families. NNDOHS believes that the welfare-to-work program should be held accountable for lifting people out of poverty, not eliminating people from the welfare roll. NNDOHS supports those families that are working towards self-sufficiency skills; therefore, education and training should be counted towards them meeting the welfare-to-work requirements. NNDOHS supports those families that need continued support benefits such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, Medicare, etc. after leaving the welfare-to-work program. Recipients moving from the welfare-to-work benefits should have some source of funding for outreach effort. NNDOHS supports removing time limits for those recipients that "*play by the rules*" but are unable to obtain employment. If a Welfare recipient is making a good-faith effort to find employment but is unable to find work due to a lack of job availability or other uncontrollable barriers to obtaining employment, then recipients should not be sanctioned or lose their benefits even if they exceeded the welfare-to-work time limitation. Head Start joins with other organizations to restore Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp benefits to legal immigrants. The national Head Start Bureau has migrant programs across the country, sharing the same common purpose of providing comprehensive developmental services to low-income children and families. Head Start supports an amendment to the Food Stamp Act of 1977, so that the value of a vehicle not be included in determining food stamp eligibility for low-income families. The existing Food Stamp Act requires the count of the fair market value of a car as a resource to the extent the value exceeds $4500. Low-income families should have reliable transportation to get to work without sacrificing what little resources they have to purchase food as well as meeting the realities of the working poor.

7. The Navajo Nation opposes the initiative to block grant Head Start. It is the tribe's position that under a block grant, states are not obligated to use the funds in any particular manner and all guarantees of minimum standards of services would be lost.

8. The Navajo Nation opposes the privatization or vouchering of Head Start services by taking funds away from an under-funded program that has established a good track record and giving it to a private sector or corporation that may have an unimpressive track record.

E. Head Start Services

1. The Navajo Nation recommends that the income eligibility guidelines and over-income enrollment allowances be reevaluated and redefined. When the poverty criteria was first established in the 1960's, it was determined that families spend one third of their income on food. Measuring poverty and establishing the poverty line by the "food budget" method, is no longer accurate by today's standards where transpor.tation, housing and other factors are of great concern and cost as well. Head Start income guidelines are more stringent than other federal programs for low-income families. By comparison, the Child Care Development Fund is 85% of the state-median, TANF presently ranges from 125 to 316% above poverty line, and Medicaid is 133% of the federal poverty line. Head Start continues to operate at 100% of the poverty line in determining income eligibility. The Navajo Nation recommends that the American Indian Alaska Native Program Branch of Head Start and the Tribal Guarantees are authorized to establish eligibility criteria based on local needs and "other" population residing within their jurisdictional boundaries.

2. The Head Start Program strives to enhance the qualifications of teachers. Quality teaching by qualified and innovative teachers generates academic excellence. The Navajo Nation recommends that the following specific provisions are included within the Head Start Act:

    a. A provision for loan forgiveness and scholarship incentive programs.
    b. A provision that maintains the quality set aside so that Head Start teachers can continue to receive education and training.
    c. A provision allowing that by 2005, 75% of all teachers have at least a childhood development associates degree.

3. The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACE) includes children and families enrolled in the American Indian Alaska Native Program Branch with mandatory inclusions of the Navajo Nation Department of Head Start children and families.

4. The Navajo Nation recommends that Local Flexibility remains a hallmark of the program. No one program design, nor one assessment or curriculum tool, can meet the needs and build on the strengths of every child in every community. In this way, children and families with diverse needs are assured a place in their community's Head Start Program, similar to Native American Head Start Programs.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Navajo people and NNDOHS we proudly present its program to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs as, not only an educational institution, but as a quality holistic program uniquely designed to meet the individual needs of each child, family, expectant mother, and community. NNDOHS is committed to empowering each child, family, expectant mother, and community to become proactive and effective learners, leaders, and caretakers for the future generations of this great Navajo Nation.

Attached to the testimony are supporting resolutions from the Navajo Nation Intergovermental Relations Committee and Education Committee.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL ADOPTS, SUPPORTS AND APPROVES THE NAVAJO NATION HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL'S POSITION ON THE 2003 HEAD START REAUTHORIZATION ACT.

WHEREAS:

1. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §821, the Intergovernmental Relations Committee is established and continued as a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council; and

2. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §824, the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council has the authority to assist in the development of the programs designed to serve the Navajo people and the Navajo Nation through intergovernmental relationships between the Navajo Nation and federal, state, local entities; and

3. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §481, the Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council is established and continued as a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council and shall serve as the oversight committee of the Division of Diné Education and to colleges within the Navajo Nation; and

4. Pursuant to Resolution No.: GSCAP-35-01, the Government Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council approved the Plan of Operation for the Department of Head Start. The Department of Head Start is situated under the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation government within the Division of Diné Education; and

5. Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50, Program governance and Appendix A, the Navajo Nation Head Start Policy Council is a duly elected and constituted Head Start Policy Council and an authorized entity of the Navajo Nation government; and

6. The United States President George W. Bush has proposed to move the Head Start from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Education and that the United States Congress will be debating the President's proposal during the 108th Congress 1st session and is now receiving comments from all constituents regarding this proposal.

7. By Resolution ECMA 31-03 the Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council recommended that the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council approve and adopt the Navajo Nation Head Start Policy Council's position.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT:

1. The Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council approves the Navajo Nation Head Start Policy Council's legislative recommendation to the 2003 Head Start Reauthorization Act to the United States Congress and the President of the United States.

2. The Navajo Nation has prioritized the ranking of concerns on the 2003 Head Start Reauthorization Act and is listed as follows:

   a. REAUTHORIZE THE HEAD START ACT

      i. Ensure that Head Start remains in the Department of Health and Human Services and not be moved to the Department of Education, this is to ensure that children continue to receive comprehensive services with strong parent involvement.

      ii. Navajo Nation recommends a Five (5) year reauthorization, 2003 – 2008 to effectively carry out objectives.

      iii. Maintain Government-to-Government relationship by continuing to provide direct funding to tribes and to be recognized with the same duties, powers and authority as a "State entity".

      iv. Adopt into the Head Start Act the Native Language Preservation Public Law 101-477 to protect and preserve the Native American Language and Culture in conjunction with the current emphasis on promoting school readiness and promoting children's language and literacy serves.

   b. HEAD START FUNDING LEVEL

      Request additional funding of 1 billion dollars nationwide for Head Start and Early Head Start to address quality, expansion and staff salaries. Currently, nationwide, only 40% of children eligible for Head Start are able to enroll due to lack of funding.

      Reduce the 20 percent match and/or establishing an automatic hardship waiver. Tribes have difficulty raising enough revenue to meet the required non-federal share match so programs need not apply every year for approval.

iii. Priorit[illegible] or full-day, full-year services for currently enrolled children [illegible]nd families to serve as many children as possible and equally [illegible]oviding children with high quality program.

iv. Head St[illegible]rt strives to enhance the qualification of our Teachers and sul[illegible]equently, the Head Start programs. We support a proposal [illegible]hat by 2005, 75% percent of all teachers have at least a Childhood [illegible] Development Associate Degree and allow programs to retain q[illegible]ilified teachers.

v. Add into the Head Start Act, language for loan forgiveness and scholars[illegible]lp incentives program.

vi. Advocate for comprehensive high quality childcare and increase funding [illegible]r childcare services. Affordable and adequate child care remains [illegible]out of reach for many working families. Childcare consumes [illegible] about one-quarter of the income of low-income families who pay [illegible]or care.

vii. Transpo[illegible]ation Services needs funding to support the transport of children [illegible]long with providing additional funds for transportation.

viii. Support [illegible]Welfare Reform Reauthorization. Reform proposed are to make po[illegible]erty reduction not caseload reduction the goal of TANF, allow e[illegible]ucation and training to count towards the work requirem[illegible]nts and extend support benefits to recipients who are working.

ix. Do Not [illegible]lock Grant Head Start. Under a block grant states are not obli[illegible]ted to use the funds in any particular manner and all guarante[illegible]s of minimum standards of services would be lost.

x. Do Not [illegible]ucher Head Start. Taking money away from an already under-fu[illegible]ded program with a proven track record and giving it to private [illegible]ector corporations with an unimpressive record is bad policy.

c. HEAD START SERVICES

i. Reevalua[illegible]e and redefine income eligibility guidelines and over-income [illegible]nrollment allowance. Head Start Eligibility Criteria in "Indian C[illegible]ountry" authorizes Tribal Grantee to establish eligibility criteria b[illegible]se on local needs and "other" population residing within their juri[illegible]dictional boundaries.

ii. By 2008, 75% percent of all teachers have at least a Childhood Develop[illegible]ent Associate Degree or equivalent

iii. Allow pro[illegible]grams to retain qualified teachers.

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iv. Maintain the quality set aside so that Head Start teachers can continue to receive education and training.

v. Add into the Head Start Act, language for loan forgiveness and scholarship incentives program.

vi. Maintain the quality set aside so that Head Start teachers can continue to receive education and training.

vii. The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACE) include children and families enrolled in the American Indian Alaskan Native Program Branch with mandatory inclusion of the Navajo Nation Department of Head Start children and families.

viii. Ensure Local Flexibility Remains a Hallmark of the Program. No one program design, nor one assessment or curriculum tool, can meet the needs and build on the strength of every child in every community. In this way, children and families with diverse needs are assured of a place in their community's Head Start Program, similar to native American Head Start programs.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation at a duly called meeting in N.SC. Quarters, Window Rock, Arizona at which a quorum was present and that same was passed by a vote of 5 in 7 favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained, this 28th day of July, 2003.

Lawrence T. Morgan, Chairperson
Intergovernmental Relations Committee
The Navajo Nation Council

Motioned:
Seconded:

ECMY-31-03

RESOLUTION OF THE
DUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE
NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

Ado ting the Navaj Nation and Navajo Nation Department of Head Start's
Pos on and Recom endations on the 2003 Head Start Reauthorization Act
and ecommending e Same to the Intergovernmental Relations Committee
of the Navajo Nation Council

WHER AS:

1. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. § 481, the Education Committee is established and continued as Standing Committee of the Navajo Nation Council and shall serve as the ersight Committee of the Division of Diné Education and to colleges wit the Navajo Nation; and

2. Pursuant to esolution No. GSCAP-35-01, the Government Services Committee of ie Navajo Nation Council approved the Plan of Operation for the Departmer of Head Start. The Department of Head Start is situated under the Executive ranch of the Navajo Nation government within the Division of Diné Educatio ; and

3. Pursuant to 4 CFR 1304.50, Program governance and Appendix A, the Navajo Natio Head Start Policy Council is a duly elected and constituted Head Start Pr icy Council and an authorized entity of the Navajo Nation government; a

4. The United St as President, George W. Bush has proposed to move the Head Start Bureau om the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Education and that the United States Congress will be debating the President' proposal during the 108th Congress 1st Session and is now receiving com ents from all constituents regarding this proposal.

NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council adopts the Navajo Nation's pos ion and recommendations on the 2003 Head Start Reauthorizatic Act to the United States Congress and the President of the United States, ttached as Exhibit "A", and recommends the same to the Intergovernme al Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council.

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ECMY-31-03

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting at Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona), at which a quorum was present and that same was passed by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstained, this 23rd, day of May, 2003.

Leonard Chee, Chairperson
Education Committee

Motion: Katherine Benally
Second: Edison D. Jones

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
LEROY TURNEY, BOARD MEMBER
NATIONAL INDIAN HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION AND
DIRECTOR OF THE LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE HEAD START
CASS LAKE, MINNESOTA
ON REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HEAD START ACT
BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
SEPTEMBER 25, 2003

INDIAN HEAD START AND THE NEED FOR RESEARCH AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULA

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Leech Lake Band Head Start program on the reauthorization of the Head Start Act. I will concentrate my comments on Indian Head Start research issues, but would like to note here my full support for the testimony of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association, which addresses Indian Head Start issues in a comprehensive fashion.

My testimony broadly examines the importance of culture values in the Indian educational experience, the status of various Indian Head Start research efforts, the key have been or should be examined as part of a research agenda, and the need to establish curricula that reflect Indian cultural values. While some research has been undertaken, Indian programs have been generally left out of the national research agenda. It is time for this to change; we can only make progress if we understand where we are and what works. I strongly urge the Congress to recognize the value of culture-specific research and curricula and incorporate that recognition into the Head Start Act.

There is a strong consensus that American Indian and Alaska Native children bring unique aspects of their culture and background into Head Start. Based on studies and practitioners' observations, it is likely that many American Indian and Alaska Native children have learning approaches, develop language skills, exhibit behavioral characteristics, and are affected by health matters in ways that are different from those of other racial and ethnic groups. Moreover, American Indian and Alaska Native children differ from each other across tribal and ancestral affiliations and across the cultural norms which affect their families and the types of environments in which they live. **Any research efforts must take into account the unique cultural characteristics of the children and families served as well as the goals and directions of the local communities in which they live.**

To provide appropriate, relevant Head Start services, programs must accommodate the unique characteristics of AI-AN children. Understanding and building on these unique characteristics may be especially timely, given the emphasis currently placed on measuring outcomes that is affecting all Head Start programs.

One particular challenge in describing and assessing early childhood education for American Indian and Alaska Native populations is to recognize their uniqueness while avoiding any overgeneralization about their distinctiveness; if this challenge is not met, the analyst risks stereotyping, with attendant adverse consequences.

American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs need to be included in the Head Start Bureau's efforts to improve accountability by strengthening screening and assessment of child outcomes and program monitoring. Such activities, however, must be conducted in a manner that takes into account the unique cultural values of tribes implementing Head Start programs. Although tribal Head Start programs have the same requirements for assessing program outcomes as other Head Start programs, little is known about current practices in assessing children's progress at the program level among tribal Head Start programs. For example, are the instruments, measures, and procedures being used to assess child outcomes in tribal Head Start programs culturally appropriate?

Current national research and evaluation activities of Head Start typically exclude tribal programs from the population eligible for inclusion in the samples, in part because of methodological issues raised by the inclusion of tribal programs, and in part because legislative mandates have specifically excluded tribal programs from certain national Head Start research and evaluation activities (Sec. 649, Head Start Authorization Act, October 27, 1998). At the same time, legislative provisions require the study of Head Start programs for American Indian and Alaska Native children. To meet this requirement, it is necessary to study American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs in a separate effort from other national research and evaluation studies of Head Start programs. Cultural issues must be addressed in the development of methodologies, sampling procedures, and data collection instruments for use in conducting research among tribal Head Start programs. Differences among American Indian and Alaska Native groups must be acknowledged and respected in developing the methodology and conducting the research.

Most importantly, tribal communities must have a significant voice in how the research is designed and conducted. To support the development and implementation of research within and by tribal communities, ACF needs to collect information on the research needs and priorities of tribal Head Start programs. Little is known about the kinds of research studies currently being conducted by tribal Head Start programs, experiences of tribal programs in research partnerships with colleges and universities, and ways that ACF might support these partnerships.

In 2001, the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, began a two-year initiative to review existing information and explore research needs for American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs. The goal of the project was to develop research responsive to the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs – research that (1) takes into account the unique cultural environments and values of these populations and (2) provides information that programs can use to improve services provided to children and families.

The project addressed the following questions:

- What are the research priorities and needs of American Indian and Alaska Native programs?
- What issues should be considered in conducting research in American Indian and Alaska Native programs?
- How can ACF support partnerships between researchers and American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs?
- To what extent are culturally appropriate instruments, measures, and procedures available to assess child outcomes?
- What technical assistance would be helpful for program staff in terms of conducting developmental screenings and assessing child outcomes?

Findings from the work produced directions for developing scientifically valid information that can be used to address matters of consequence for American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs, particularly with regard to identifying effective procedures and

practices for enhancing child development and promoting school readiness.

This study, entitled ***American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start: Establishing a Research Agenda***, is finished and at the Head Start Bureau. This report, done under a contract with ORC Macro, Calverton, MD, must be released to the AI-AN community as soon as possible and the findings, reviewed with the National Indian Head Start Directors Association. A "sister" publication entitled ***A Summary of Research and Publications on Early Childhood for American Indian and Alaska Native Children*** was published by the Head Start Bureau in March 2003 and is available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/core/ongoing_research/ hs/hs_aian_report.html.

NIHSDA strongly recommends research in the following priority areas:

- The National Reporting System (NRS) initiative, prior to being implemented in Indian Country, needs to eliminate its culturally biased and irrelevant testing tools. We recommend that NSR be tabled until culturally appropriate tools are developed.

- The current Head Start Act has 2 studies which Congress thought were important in 1998, to date neither of these studies have been reported out to the Indian Community. They are:

  "Status of Children – a study of the delivery of Head Start programs to Indian children living on and near Indian reservations, to children of Alaskan Natives, and to children of migrant and seasonal farm workers." The migrant study has been completed and published however the AI-AN study was never started.

  "Facilities – a report concerning the condition, location and ownership of facilities used or available to be used, by Indian Head Start agencies (including Native Alaskan Head Start agencies) and Native Hawaiian Head Start agencies."

Other research that NIHSDA believes is important is:

- Methods for recruiting and retaining high-quality and trained staff. Today, in AI-AN programs nation wide, the attrition rate for Directors is 30-40% per year and at least that high for management and classroom staff. NIHSDA, the Head Start

Bureau and the American Indian-Alaska Native Program Branch need to know how this rate of attrition can be slowed and stopped. This research should also include optimal strategies for staff development in tribal communities.

- After almost 40 years of Head Start operating in Indian Country, Directors and Tribal Leadership would like to know how Head Start has made a difference. There should be a longitudinal study comparing outcomes for AI-AN Head Start participants to those who were not Head Start participants.

- What are AI-AN programs doing right that helps to keep children in school after Head Start and what can we do different to help identify children with the potential of dropping out of school once they leave Head Start. In many Indian communities, the high school drop out rate is 40-50% and in some as high as 80%. What role can Head Start play in recognizing traits in young children before they become a statistic of either a success in school or a dropout?

With this type of research, AI-AN Head Start programs could begin to analyze what changes for the better could be made. Also, it would help government agencies, including the Head Start Bureau, to more realistically focus funds and initiatives on what works for American Indian and Alaska Native children and families, staff and community members.

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULA AND PRACTICES

Issues and Observations

Head Start endorses the use of culturally appropriate curricula and practices to help provide contextual links for children's schoolwork. Many observers and educators have noted the importance of providing culturally appropriate curricula for American Indian and Alaska Native children:

- Including Native language and culture in the curriculum is a way to provide social, historical, and emotional links that aid in children's achievement in school. Developing culturally appropriate curricula should involve a team approach, including students in teacher training programs, local teachers and educational administrators, elders, community members, and university-based staff (Allen,

1997; Ball and Pence, 1999; Jordan, 1995; Rinehart et al., 2002; Watahomigie and McCarty, 1994).

- Schools have an important role in restoring Native languages (Holm and Holm, 1995; Peacock and Day, 1999), although some members of some tribal communities have expressed opposition to teaching components of the culture (especially religious and ceremonial functions) in the schools (Batchelder and Markel, 1997).

- Many authors note that AI-AN children bring their cultural backgrounds into school, and they also note that the way much American education is typically provided may not be fully compatible with the learning styles of AI-AN children. "Native students learn in styles unique to their cultural upbringing . . . [and their] learning styles . . . are directly impacted by language, culture, spirituality, communication styles, and more" (Tunley-Daymude and Begay-Campbell, 2000). Some curriculum developers have postulated that underachievement, absenteeism, high dropout rates, and lack of parental involvement are linked to inconsistencies between cultural values of AI-AN children and traditional school curricula (Joe, 1994; Stokes, 1997).

- Teaching styles and classroom instructional practices need to reflect the learning styles of AI-AN children, who are likely to demonstrate more engagement in classroom instruction and activities when the teaching style and instructional practices fit their cultural backgrounds (Deyhle and Swisher, 1997; Estrin and Nelson-Barber, 1995; Swisher and Deyhle, 1987; Tharp, 1994; Tharp and Yamauchi, 1994). A preference for an "observational" or visual learning approach has been described among several AI-AN populations, including the Eskimo, Kwakuitl, Navajo, Oglala Sioux, Pueblo, Yaqui, and Yup'ik (Deyhle and Swisher, 1997; Harris, 1985; Nelson and Lalemi, 1991; Preston, 1991; Suina and Smolkin, 1994; Swisher and Deyhle, 1987; Tempest, 1998; Wax et al., 1989). Cooperative learning and experienced-based learning activities have been seen as appropriate for AI-AN children, as have the incorporation of other traditions, such as storytelling and culturally relevant materials (Preston, 1991).

- Caution should be used in generalizing findings about characteristics to groups of children because that could result in stereotypes, discrimination, or erroneous

explanations about school failure (Swisher, 1991).

Sources: ***Head Start Research: A Summary of Research and Publications on Early Childhood for American Indian and Alaska Native Children***, March 2003. Contract from HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB to ORC Macro, Calverton, MD, prepared by: Ellen L. Marks, Melinda K. Moyer, Michelle Roche and Elliott T. Graham. ***National Indian Head Start Directors Association American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start 2002-2003 Advocacy Agenda***, August 2001. Compilation of input from participants of the 2001 NIHSDA Training Conference.

Written Testimony of Gilbert Sanchez[1]
Executive Director, Pueblo of Laguna Department of Education
Laguna, New Mexico
Regarding the Reauthorization of the Head Start Program
Before the
United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

September 25, 2003

Thank you Mr. Chairman for inviting me to express our tribal government's views on the needs of Tribal Head Start programs which we hope will be addressed through the Reauthorization of the Head Start Act. This written statement describes the Laguna Head Start and early childhood program and discusses a number of issues and concerns. In summary, these issues and concerns are that:

- Direct funding to tribes should be provided on a contractual basis with the federal government, so that tribes can comprehensively provide Head Start and early childhood programs and bring other federal resources to these programs.
- Funding levels for all programs are inadequate and need to be increased.
- The 15% limitation on administrative costs is too low. The Pueblo needs to fully recover administrative costs.
- The administration of performance standards and evaluations should be improved.
- Separate program funds must be made available to meet our facilities and transportation needs.
- National standards and assessment criteria must accommodate and support the provision of language and cultural education.

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[1] Pueblo of Laguna, P.O. Box 207, Laguna, New Mexico, 87026, (505) 552-6008.

Laguna Head Start and Early Childhood Programs

The six villages of the Pueblo of Laguna are located in west central New Mexico approximately 45 miles west of Albuquerque, New Mexico and 25 miles east of the city of Grants. Most of our 8,000 members reside in these villages and although they are connected by a common road system, the villages are widely dispersed throughout our reservation. Laguna has operated a Head Start program since 1965 and we are proud to have one of the few Indian Early Head Start programs located in New Mexico. Today, these programs and others, are managed by the Laguna Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood (DEC). These programs were consolidated into a division within our Education Department so that we could provide comprehensive education programs to our community, from birth through adulthood.

The DEC administers Preschool Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, Home-Based and Early Intervention, and the "Free to Grow" Program. Free to Grow is a community-wide initiative to build stronger families and healthier communities to ensure that every child has a home that is free of substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. DEC programs serve infants, toddlers, three-year-olds, preschoolers, children with special needs, children in protective custody, and children with developmental delays or who have at-risk conditions. DEC also serves expectant mothers, working parents, and parents attending educational training programs. Our family services include education, health, nutrition, and disability services, developmental screenings and assessments, home visits and therapies, and parent training, consultation, and respite and service coordination.

The operations of the Early Childhood Division are based upon a strong philosophy and belief that supporting and promoting families will contribute to a strong and healthy community. The DEC mission celebrates and supports the diversity of families through providing services

that are family-driven, coordinated, integrated, culturally appropriate and comprehensive. The physical and emotional environments of all DEC programs and services are designed to promote positive experiences for all involved and to maintain an atmosphere which helps both children and families feel loved and nurtured.

Direct Funding: Laguna's family driven and comprehensive approach requires us to work hard at honoring our strong commitment to the community and to creatively unify the many federal and other program opportunities to support the seamless approach we have established. Laguna was enthusiastic about President Bush's initiative to encourage the consolidation of early childhood programs with Head Start programs. However, we were disappointed that the President did not initiate this helpful concept for tribes. Because of this, Laguna is delighted and supportive of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs for considering proposals to establish direct tribal funding demonstration programs. Direct funding programs make a great deal of sense to Laguna because the mechanisms being discussed are ideal for Laguna's family-driven and comprehensive approach. Laguna supports a direct, government-to-government approach that will enable us to:

- Establish our own performance standards and compliance criteria;
- Develop and implement native language and cultural immersion programs;
- Develop streamlined reporting systems for managing multiple programs and to minimize administrative costs; and
- Identify barriers to the effective use of federal, tribal, state, and private resources.

However, we must point out that the success of tribal demonstration projects will be hampered by multi-program and multi-agency requirements unless there are federal administrative reforms. Laguna Pueblo knows this from experience--our Education Department

accounting staff must manage more than 19 funding sources and 44 funds or programs with six different fiscal years, and six different sets of auditing, programmatic, and reporting requirements. Federal administrative accounting reforms should be implemented to help smooth out the edges of multiple program management. To this end, Laguna supports the following:

- Tribes should be able to combine funds from Head Start, early childhood programs, and other federal programs into a single administration system;
- Federal agencies such as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Interior, should be directed to collaborate on how to combine their resources into a single service delivery mechanism;
- Federal agencies should be directed to harmonize their statutory requirements and they should be assisted by enabling them to waive requirements where it is appropriate, and conducive to seamless and comprehensive program and service delivery;
- Integration tools should be developed and used by federal agencies, including memorandums of understanding, to streamline reporting, auditing and oversight of programs; and
- Federal agencies should jointly provide multi-program technical assistance.

Successful tribal demonstration programs will need other federal administration reforms to facilitate interagency fund transfers, eliminate separate record-keeping requirements, and to allow tribes to receive full administrative cost compensation without overage reductions.

Funding Levels: The funding levels for tribal programs are inadequate. Like the National Head Start Directors Association, Laguna supports increased funding levels and also supports proposals that do the following:

- Allow flexible use of federal funds for a variety of needs unique to tribes and other rural

communities.

- Allow greater federal assistance levels when tribes cannot meet match requirements due to the lack of resources, inability to use depreciation and usage allowances, or when they must expend additional funds to purchase facilities, equipment, materials, and additional staff to meet supplemental requests, required quality improvements, or to address compliance issues.
- Allow the use of other federal resources to meet the match requirements; and
- Allow the retention of carry-over monies without the reduction of new year funding.

Administration of performance standards and monitoring of programs. The President proposes to strengthen Head Start programs by creating new quality standards for school readiness skills and to require the use of scientifically based programs that promote school readiness and meet quality standards. Laguna supports eliminating the academic achievement gap for disadvantaged children and establishing better programmatic and financial measures. However, measures of achievement and programmatic excellence should not be so narrowly defined nor solely modeled upon the management and administrative capacities of tax supported public systems, or programs with greater access to other community services and resources

In the assessment of programmatic excellence, Laguna supports better evaluation tools and methods–but not more evaluation. Laguna's experience with the evaluation process has not been ideal. Emphasis is placed on rigid and mechanical compliance which results in pointing out all the ways of failure and not on providing encouragement, positive instruction, or support of systemic change. If DHHS evaluations could be conducted by local or regional professionals or if DHHS employees were encouraged to acquire better professional skills and attitudes, the evaluation process could be more collegial, consultative and professional. Using local experts

would also make evaluations less costly and effective (reduction of travel costs and ability to spend more time on evaluation), and would reduce their excessiveness.

Administrative Cost Limitation: The financial assistance received by the Pueblo for administering the Head Start Program includes a limitation of 15% on administration costs. Because the 15% includes the non-federal match requirement, it is very difficult to comply with this limitation when tribes have few resources to contribute. Although efficiencies can be achieved through federal administrative reforms, these reforms have to be implemented in order to provide relief. Raising the limitation is also necessary and the Secretary's waiver authority must be exercised more liberally. If there is doubt about whether this issue is significant, Laguna recommends that a cost study be undertaken to examine the administrative realities of providing program services in tribal communities. We are confident that the results of such a study will confirm the need for administrative reforms that allow more flexibility for tribes to provide greater administrative cost allowances.

The need for funds to address our facilities and transportation needs. Funding must be made available to meet our many facilities and transportation needs to ensure that tribal children and families can receive and have access to Head Start and early childhood programs. At Laguna, we have a constant wait list of 35 to 50 eligible children who cannot attend Head Start or benefit from our other early childhood programs, because our facilities cannot accommodate them. Currently, our early Head Start program is housed in an 86-year-old building that was constructed in 1917. We also use modular buildings that have a functional use of less than four more years. Also, costly repairs for maintenance are required. There are no alternative Head Start or early childhood facilities available to wait-listed children because the Laguna program is the only one within fifty miles of our somewhat remote location.

Also, our buses transport children all year round on a daily basis and travel many miles on unpaved roads. They accumulate great "wear and tear." New and adequately equipped buses are expensive and they must be upgraded consistently in order to meet the transportation needs of the programs. The cost of providing or maintaining facilities and reliable transportation, must come from funds outside the regular Head Start operating budget. If facility and transportation needs are addressed with our basic Head Start operation funds, it would have a very negative impact on the program's ability to provide quality services by well-trained personnel. Separate funds must be set aside and made available to tribes to renovate or construct facilities, and for purchase, maintenance and repair of transportation equipment.

The Importance of Tribal Preservation of Language and Culture. Laguna Pueblo highly values thinking, education and families, but we also value traditional culture and ceremony. The early years of childhood are critical to lifelong development not only in the cognitive and physical sense, but also in the social and cultural sense. Our customs hold that the children belong to everyone. Our tradition of educating children in the community where each adult works with every child at home or in other settings, is much changed. Adults must now spend a great deal of time earning income and are not as available to children as they once were. Therefore, the traditional means of providing language and cultural education must be supplemented by our education systems including the Head Start and early childhood programs. A young child's beginning conceptions of some of the basic elements of language and culture are important at Laguna, for lifelong success as an individual and as a contributing member of Laguna Society.

An important part of cultural education is language retention. The culture of our people cannot be fully understood unless language is fluent within each of us. Traditionally, language

and culture were passed down from generation to generation by parents and family members in each household. However, the influence of non-Native culture has changed that process.

To be successful individuals and contributing members of Laguna society, our children must obtain a cultural education. We are concerned that the great emphasis on other types of learning will undermine our important efforts in language and cultural transference. To be Laguna, and to say that Laguna exists in the world--Laguna's world view, values, attitudes, beliefs, rules, and skills must be transferred to each generation. Laguna history, kinship roles, clan systems and life-cycle ceremonies must be known so that the Laguna identity of an individual or the community, can be said to exist. Our stories, language, ceremonies, and other ways of conveying what is uniquely Laguna, contain Laguna knowledge that consists of our particular understanding of earth sciences; physical, emotional and spiritual well-being; positive and inappropriate personal and community conduct; and other ways of being distinctly Laguna. These cultural life ways are the backbone of our society. Like everything else that moves and has power–stories, language, and ceremony are living things that must be nurtured.

The Bush Administration is developing a National Reporting System to measure children's language and literacy skills in order to track child outcomes and progress in educational achievement. This is not an incorrect idea but the proposed system only values non-cultural learning. If child readiness and programmatic success are to be measured only by non-cultural learning outcomes, Tribal programs may not be able to fully measure up, and this would be exceedingly unfair. Cultural education and the provision of it, must not be discounted in the evaluation of readiness skills, nor in the evaluation of programmatic success.

Instead, native language and cultural education should be supported. The Native American Languages Act (Public Law 101-477) made it official federal policy to preserve,

protect, and promote the rights and freedoms of Native Americans to use, practice and develop their languages. We think that DHHS should embrace this policy.

Our Pueblo also needs assistance to access the nature of native language use among different generations and the cultural knowledge base that exists in the community, through the systematic collection and analysis of data. We need to research, and have access to research and methodologies that will provide successful models for language and cultural preservation. We must disperse the information we gather, and train volunteers and instructors. Through these efforts, Laguna can begin re-seeding the community with language and cultural knowledge so that the unique phenomenon of being Laguna, can grow, flourish, and exist forever.

Conclusion. Again, I want to thank you for allowing the Pueblo of Laguna to present its views. Our Pueblo is obligated to do the best we can for our families and children. That is why we are here today and that is why we have offered comments that directly represent the views of our community. In the process of reviewing Tribal Head Start and early childhood needs, Laguna urges this committee and others, the President and the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Interior, to fully consult with tribal governments to ensure that no tribe is left behind, and that the best proposals reflect the considerable wisdom of tribes throughout the country. We look forward to working with this Committee and any others to improve the quality of comprehensive education in our communities.

Written Testimony of
Mavany Verdugo, President
National Indian Head Start Directors Association[1]
On Indian Head Start Programs and the
Reauthorization of the Head Start Act
Before the
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
September 25, 2003

The Miracle of Indian Head Start

Introduction. Chairman Campbell, Vice Chairman Inouye and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA) with regard to the reauthorization of the Head Start Act.

The Miracle of Indian Head Start. Head Start is one of the truly great Federal success stories in Indian Country. Although I will describe in my testimony a number of ways that NIHSDA recommends improving this great program, these recommendations are made in light of the extraordinary contributions that Head Start has made to Indian communities, families, and most importantly children. Indeed, it is this very success that leads NIHSDA to oppose radical changes to this program, including turning over its administration to state governments. The old saw "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," is apt here. The Head Start model of integrating a wide range of services, including education, health and family support, is very similar to traditional Indian community values and, for that reason, is very successful. We urge the Committee to support expansion of Head Start, not its reorganization.

In the week prior to this hearing, NIHSDA sent out a brief email asking Indian Head Start programs to share particular challenges they face or obstacles they have overcome in their work. We were overwhelmed by the thoughtful responses we received, which demonstrate the miraculous work of Head Start in Indian communities, often in the face of extraordinary difficulties and limited resources. We urge this

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Committee to take time to review these statements, which I have attached to this testimony for inclusion in the hearing record.

Role of NIHSDA. The National Indian Head Start Directors Association is the national voice for American Indian-Alaska Native (AI-AN) Programs within the Head Start Bureau, as well as within the National Head Start Association and other early childhood development associations. NIHSDA membership includes a majority of all AI-AN Head Start programs. NIHSDA is committed to supporting the cultural uniqueness and diversity of American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start communities by providing professional support, statistical information, training and technical assistance services in advocating for young Indian children and families and by promoting quality comprehensive early child development and family centered services for American Indian and Alaska Native people in the United States.

Head Start in Indian Country – Basic Statistics. Of the 575 federally recognized Tribal entities, 216 (38%) participate in Head Start/Early Head Start Programs, with a funded enrollment of 23,837 children. This number represent approximately 2.9% of the total number of children nationwide served by Head Start. These programs employ approximately 5,933 individuals. 3,146 of these employees are either former or current Head Start/Early Head Start parents. There are another 32,474 volunteers, 19,836 of which are parents, working in the American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs.

Recommended Improvements to the Head Start Act. NIHSDA makes the following recommendations for improvements to the Head Start Act. These recommendations are intended to help Indian Head Start programs to better serve their communities and to better tailor their programs to the unique circumstances of tribal cultures.

- **Increasing the Set-Aside for Indian Head Start.** Currently, by administrative fiat, Indian Head Start programs receive a 2.9% set-aside of Head Start funds. This set-aside is critical to assuring the stability of funding to Indian programs, but it is not sufficient to address the extraordinary range of unique challenges faced by tribes throughout the United States. NIHSDA supports a statutorily mandated increase in the set-aside for Indian Head Start to 4%. More than any other change, this would give our programs much of the resources necessary to make truly significant progress in addressing the difficult circumstances that

confront many of our communities, including such items as maintaining adequate staff salaries, etc. Other specific funding needs, not all of which would be covered by the set-aside, include:

- **Increased funding for transportation services.** The cost of providing transportation services, maintaining and meeting health and safety requirements, and providing for upkeep and replacements is an enormous disbursement for Indian grantees. Head Start funding for transportation does not adequately consider the geographic isolation of many rural Tribal communities.

- **Increased funding to support effective professional development.** The quality of Indian Head Start services is directly related to the quality of personnel managing the programs. Additional financial support would enable expanded professional development and recruitment of a sufficient number of staff to administer adequately the content service areas of the program.

- **Training and Technical Assistance.** There are not enough funds allocated for training and technical assistance(T/TA). Currently, there is a 2% set-aside for T/TA. NIHSDA supports a 3% set aside for T/TA. In Head Start, Tribal grantees represent 1/3 of all deficient grantees. AI-AN programs are behind in reaching federal mandates for teacher training because of accessibility to higher education institutions. The programs are spread across a vast geographical distance, and many do not have the training resources in their communities to meet the federal mandates. More training and technical assistance money must go to Tribal Head Start/Early Head Start programs for the above reasons. Programs are behind in these mandates primarily because American Indian-Alaska Native programs have never been adequately funded. Tribal programs should continue to receive their own T/TA dollars with additional funds awarded to a national T/TA system to support continued networking and development across all Tribal grantees. Great things happen when Tribal programs can come together under one T/TA umbrella, to learn new ideas and to be exposed to nation-wide resources – one system should not be advocated over the other since both are

really needed.

- **Increased funding for upgrading Head Start Facilities to maintain quality standards.** Tribal Head Start grantees have experienced difficulty over the years in acquiring adequate and environmentally safe facilities. There is a great need for the renovation of existing facilities, as well as a need for the construction of new facilities, in order to meet the model Tribal Head Start Health and Safety Code.

- **Expansion of Early Head Start programs including an Early Head Start Indian Set-Aside.** Indian Head Start grantees could better serve their communities if the Head Start legislation permitted seamless services for serving the birth to age five populations. In order to accomplish this, we advocate the expansion of the Early Head Start program in Indian country, which serves children from birth to age three. Currently, there are approximately 20 applications from Indian Head Start programs that have not been funded for Early Head Start. A preliminary review of the programs nationwide that have been funded indicates that Indian programs may have received less than their proportionate share of funding on a nationwide basis. We urge the establishment of an Early Head Start Indian Set-Aside. The Indian set-aside requirement for Head Start described above has provided the foundation for stable Indian Head Start programs. A similar set-aside for Early Head Start programs in Indian Country would be similarly beneficial.
- **Flexibility in Eligibility Criteria.** NIHSDA recommends that tribes be given greater flexibility to establish the criteria for eligibility for their Indian Head Start programs. This is not an effort to provide universal coverage, but is intended to ensure that each Tribe can tailor its program to the unique cultural and economic circumstances of its community. We ask that the Head Start reauthorization include a provision that specifically states that a tribal government can adopt its own eligibility criteria with preference to serving Indian children within their service area. (Currently, there is no preference language for serving Indian children). In the alternative, we ask that the WIC criterion, which permits

eligibility for 185% of income, be applied to Indian programs to allow Tribes maximum flexibility. You should know that in recent years, some Tribes have improved their economic circumstances. However, the Native families in those communities, whose incomes may have risen just enough to make them over-income, often still suffer from generational dysfunctions that are only addressed by the comprehensive character of the Tribe's Indian Head Start program. Existing eligibility requirements continue to act as a barrier to serving children who could benefit from comprehensive early childhood programs. We believe eligibility requirements are unreasonably low and inconsistent with other federal programs. Furthermore, eligibility criteria do not take into consideration traditional lifestyles in which families provide economic support to extended family members, nor do they account for regional differences in the cost of living. In order to represent more accurately the needs of low income families, Tribal Head Start grantees must have the authority to establish eligibility criteria based upon the locally determined needs of their membership residing within their jurisdictional boundaries.

- **Maintenance of a Separate Indian Head Start Region within the Head Start Bureau.** Currently, the Indian Head Start program is administered as a separate region within the Head Start Bureau. Some policymakers have suggested merging Indian Head Start with another region to form one new region. NIHSDA objects to this as unworkable and requests that the Head Start Act specifically provide for a separate region for Indian Head Start. In addition, NIHSDA supports the continued separate provision of technical assistance for Indian Head Start. The unique needs of Indian programs require the support of individuals and organizations that have knowledge and expertise working with tribal grantees. State and local programs do not have the capacity to develop and support such expertise. The current structure allows Tribal Head Start grantees direct access to the Federal policy makers within the National Office of the Administration for Children and Families (Head Start Bureau). The American Indian-Alaska Native Program Branch has also developed knowledge and experience which enables it to respond more effectively to tribal programs as well as to explain, advocate and articulate the issues, within the Federal government.
- **Formal Consultation Requirements for the Department of Health and**

Human Services. Despite numerous laws, executive orders and policies committing the Federal government to consult with Tribes, NIHSDA does not believe that HHS has done an adequate job in this regard. NIHSDA asks that the Head Start Act be amended to mandate a minimum of six day-long consultations a year between HHS and Tribes on Head Start. Tribal Head Start Consultations must provide Tribes and Tribal Head Start grantees a forum that will allow greater opportunity for significant participation in the administration and operation of Head Start programs, and greater opportunity to express their issues and concerns with existing or developing federal policies, regulations and other related directives that affect services in Tribal communities. We would like to note that many of the radical proposals for reorganizing Head Start have come from Federal officials who have not consulted adequately with tribes.[2]

- **Enhanced but Flexible Degree Requirements for Staff with Expanded Distance Learning Opportunities.** NIHSDA supports increased degree requirements for Head Start staff, but due to the unique circumstances of Indian Country, including the remote location of many reservations, we urge flexibility in the application of those requirements to Indian Country. Currently, only 19% of Indian Head Start teachers have AA degrees in Early Childhood Education. Even fewer have BA degrees. NIHSDA recommends that, in addition to providing a period for new hires to enter and complete a degree program (see H.R. 2210, Section 112), that there also be a provision for the Secretary to waive

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[2] **The Federal Government has a Trust Responsibility to Indian Peoples.** The Constitution of the United States, treaties, federal statutes, Executive orders, Supreme Court doctrine and other agreements define the Federal government's trust obligation to protect the interests of Indian peoples. They also set forth Federal recognition of Indian tribes as sovereign nations with inherent powers for self-governance. The Federal government has committed to dealing with Tribal governments on a government-to-government basis, which manifests itself in many ways including direct and meaningful consultation between federal agencies and federally recognized tribes on legislation, regulatory policy and other actions that may significantly impact Tribal communities. In this regard, Federal agencies should consult directly with Tribal governments prior to the implementation of any policy changes that may appreciably affect Tribal governments, their people, their land and their resources. Presidential Executive Order 13084 (May 14, 1998), *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, directs federal agencies to be guided in their duties by principles of respect for Indian Tribal self-government and sovereignty, for Tribal treaty rights and other rights, and for the responsibilities which arise from their unique federal trust relationship.

requirements in specific situations at the recommendation of an Indian Head Start program. However, many of these barriers could be addressed through distance learning. NIHSDA supports expanded distance learning opportunities for Tribes as one way to address the difficulties in meeting degree requirements. We support maintaining adequate funding for Tribally controlled colleges and universities with additional funding specifically for distance learning. As an organization, NIHSDA believes greatly in the value of well-educated teachers, but this does not always mean a formal degree. For example, often an elder, who may have no formal education, is the best instructor for teaching traditional matters.

- **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Testing.** Indian Tribes have distinct and well-preserved cultural and linguistic identities. If testing is to be effective, it must take into account these cultural and linguistic differences. We urge that these differences be acknowledged and provided for in the Head Start Act reauthorization. Specifically, we ask for an evaluation of the National Reporting System in light of Tribal Cultural and Linguistic Values. While the goals of this system are laudable -- to measure children's language and literacy skills in order to track child outcomes and progress in educational achievement – culturally skewed assessments will hurt both schools and kids. We are concerned that the emphasis on promoting children's language and literacy does not account for the preservation and protection of Native American languages and cultures and that the current proposed assessment tools are not culturally or linguistically appropriate for Tribal children.
- **Preservation of Language and Promotion of Culturally Relevant Programs and Research.** NIHSDA acknowledges the importance of learning English, but we also know first hand the importance of reinforcing the language and culture of a child's home environment, not only as a matter of cultural preservation, but also as a matter of academic excellence. We request that the Head Start reauthorization include a provision encouraging programs that are culturally relevant, supporting the use of home languages by children enrolled in the Indian Head Start Programs, and expanding research into the education of our constituencies. The Native American Languages Act (Public Law 101-477) made it official federal policy to "preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice and develop" their languages. We believe the Administration's proposal, along with existing Head Start Program

Performance Standards and outcome measures, do not take into consideration Public Law 101-477. As a result, these standards serve to undermine the importance of Native languages and culture, as well as the importance of young children to learn in their first language.

- **Greater Flexibility in Cost Sharing.** Tribal communities affirm their responsibility to provide a share of in-kind or cash match to support Head Start programs. However, it is a constant challenge for impoverished Tribes, with a small volunteer pool, limited "third party" in-kind contributions in their remote locations, and low-value facilities (which have limited depreciation or use allowance matching value) to meet the cost-sharing requirements of the law. NIHSDA asks for increased flexibility to be incorporated into this requirement. Also, in the event a grantee has difficulty meeting the non-federal share requirements, the Secretary of DHHS seldom approves a waiver for a reduced match requirement as authorized in the Head Start Act. When the non-federal share is not earned, Tribes are required to pay back to the federal government with Tribal funds that portion which is not earned. Greater flexibility is needed for Tribal grantees in meeting their non-federal match.
- **Undertaking of Culturally Appropriate/Relevant Research and Evaluation.** American Indian and Alaska Natives have been left out of the Federal research agenda by not being included in major research activities that will have a major impact on the organization, structure and measurement of success of Indian Head Start programs. The Head Start Bureau must target funds to support culturally appropriate research and program evaluations related to Tribal communities in addition to the inclusion of these groups in major research activities on Head Start. We are also awaiting the outcome of a survey of Indian Head Start facilities for structural problems. We expect many problems to be identified, but must also emphasize that even structurally sound buildings are all too often functionally inadequate. These studies must be completed so that Tribes and the Congress can proceed with remedial action.

Conclusion. On behalf of NIHSDA, I would like to thank the Committee for holding this hearing and listening to the views expressed today. NIHSDA stands ready to work with the Committee to assure that the Head Start Act reauthorization reflects the needs and concerns of Indian Head Start programs. We take seriously, as we know you do, our obligations to the children and families of Native communities. Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

VOICES FROM INDIAN HEAD START PROGRAMS

Southern Ute Head Start/Early Head Start
Ignacio, Colorado

Family Support

Our young mom is the mother of twin ten-month-old boys who enrolled in Early Head Start as infants. Her common law husband and father of the boys was abusive and unstable. This volatile home environment was having a very adverse affect on the boys who were inseparable, clingy and cried at the least provocation. Last summer, the boys' father threatened their mother at gunpoint. Following a struggle, she escaped with injuries to her face and arm. As she was fleeing the home, he shot himself in the head and lingered close to death in a coma for several weeks. Through the Early Head Start program, she and the boys have received professional help, medical support, referral and transportation to services providing safety, legal advice and assistance. She is working very hard, with the support of the Family Advocate, to pull her life together and stand independently for the benefit of her children. The boys are now in separate toddler classrooms, dev eloping strong and independent personalities and beginning to enjoy their childhood. Clearly, she has a long way to go but with the support and resources of the program, she has the courage to move forward and is currently enrolled in college classes and is working part time in the Early Head Start program.

Intervention Services

Our young Native American mom came to the Head Start program as an abused common law wife. She was being physically and emotionally abuse by her partner and their male children, ages two and four, both enrolled in the program. She was unable to make eye contact, cried easily, was alcoholic and had virtually no self-identity as a valued human being. Her partner was in and out of the home for various reasons, including prison. The children were physically violent and verbally abusive to her and in school. Through the program she was given information, support, professional help and hope. She asked our nurse if she would administer her medication to her every day so she could stop drinking and she enrolled in college classes offered at the program. Head Start paid off a bad debt so that she would be eligible for a financial assistance grant. She is on a repayment plan to repay Head Start for the loan on her debt and has only two remaining payments. She was recently hired by Head Start as a Teacher Trainee and is holding her first "real job" with a real paycheck, which has enabled her to buy her first car. Her children are doing better as she is learning parenting and coping skills. There have been some rough spots but each time she recovers in a shorter period of time and more independently. She may actually be an inch taller from pride!

Suellen Hixon, Director
970/563-4566

Washoe Tribe Head Start
Gardnerville, Nevada

Parent Involvement

I am sending this letter to support the **Washoe Tribe's Head Start Program**. I am a former Head Start Parent. My daughter, who is now 11 years old, attended the Stewart Head Start Program for two years. During those two years I was involved with the Parent Policy Council and was nominated as the Secretary. Most of the parents involved with this program learned quickly that it would be up to us to provide a great deal of "In Kind" (non-federal share) in order for our program to succeed. Many of us committed days and weekends to the Head Start Program. That was the first time that I had been on a committee. I am now on the Stewart Community Council as the Vice-Chairperson, The Washoe Health Board, and the Washoe Tribal Council. This program helped me and my daughter feel that a small group of people could make a difference. It changed my life as

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well as my daughter's. She recently finished the fifth grade and received academic awards in math, having straight A's, Computer Programming, and Outstanding Indian Student for the fifth grade. We both have been more successful in our daily lives due to the Head Start Program.
Courtney Hardin
312 Delahedeh (Mother Earth)
Carson City, NV 89701

Parent Involvement leads to Professional Development

I have been in Head Start for over 25 years, starting when my children were 3 and 2 years old. As a young parent I had no clue what "parent involvement" meant. Like most parents, I saw Head Start as a childcare or daycare program for my children. I was fortunate, however, to be in an Indian Head Start program where "staff cared" not only about my child but also about me. When "pushed" on the parent committee, I learned how to conduct meetings. When "pushed" onto policy council, I learned about budget and program management. I learned to become an advocate for my children when they transitioned into the public school system.

Head Start gave me the tools to speak up for my children's educational needs. As my children progressed through the school system, I served on the school's parent committee as a member, as an officer and as chairperson. HS gave me the confidence to stand up in a room filled with "white faces" when I was the only "brown face" and say "I don't understand" or "I disagree with that."

As a single parent, HS helped me to pursue my bachelor's degree in business administration. While attending college, I worked part time on campus and became involved with the Indian student organization. After obtaining my degree and continuing to work at the University of Nevada-Reno, I served as advisor to the Indian student organization. I also was part of the team that fought for and established the first Native American Alumni Association at the University of Nevada-Reno.

HS provided me with all that I needed to become a Tribal Council member in my community (I only left when I became a HS staff member). Today, I am a Head Start Director for the **Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California** -- of all the titles I hold (other than "mom") this is the greatest title I am thankful for. To help one child succeed makes all the hardship and tears so worthwhile! As we all know, once in Head Start, you are in the "Head Start family" forever. Thank you, Head Start!
Dorothy McCloud, Head Start Director
775/265-6240

Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Head Start
Reno, Nevada

Family Self Sufficiency

My son began his Head Start experience at this Center 18 years ago. We moved after his first year; but my son was fortunate enough to enroll in another Head Start Program. I was a single parent at that time and took advantage of all that Head Start has to offer. I participated in parent activities, volunteered in the classroom, served on the parent committee and eventually became the Policy Council Chairperson for the Center.

The Head Start experience provided opportunities for growth for my son and me. Our inner strength and self-esteem received a boost with each learning activity and parent meeting. We developed a "can do" attitude. The most valuable lesson Head Start provided was that parents are privileged with the right and responsibility of participating in their child's educational experience.

My son continued to do well in school, and I continued to attend parent/teacher meetings throughout his school years. My son set his goals and attended the University of Arizona at Tucson, Arizona. I obtained my Bachelor of Science degree, and became the Head Start Director for the White Mountain

Apache Tribe. Today my son is in the United States Army, and I live in Nevada and am the Head Start Director for the **Reno-Sparks Indian Colony**. I continue to believe that Head Start is a very valuable program that offers families and the community it serves opportunities for positive growth; opportunities that better equip parents with the motivation and knowledge to support their children's education; and fosters positive self-esteem and a "can do" attitude in the children of our communities.

Please lend your support to a valuable institution, Head Start.

Elaine R. Bender, Head Start Director
775-265-6240

Professional Development

I have worked for the Indian Head Start Program for many, many, many years!!!!! I have seen many, many, many changes. The one thing that has not changed in Indian Country is how Head Start has helped Indian Parents and Indian Staff instill confidence in themselves, in their education and how to spend QUALITY TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN. Head Start Programs involve the total Indian community and educates the non-Indian community to our culture. Many of our children would not have the opportunity to attend a quality early education program if it were not for Head Start. The Head Start program has not only helped parents and staff, but me personally. Because I truly believed in the opportunities Head Start provided, I changed my profession and received an AA in Early Childhood Education. I began my training as a volunteer, moved on to become a teacher aide, lead teacher, education manger, C.D.A Advisor, C.D.A Trainer, Parent Policy Representative, Tribal Council member, N.R.S Trainer, and a Program Manger. We need not only Indian Head Start, but all Head Start Programs to give all children a "head start" into their education.

Josephine Astor, Program Manager
775-265-6240

Parent Involvement

The **Reno-Sparks Indian Colony** Head Start Program is a great program for pre-school children. My husband and I support it completely. We are former Head Start parents. We have seen all of our children "graduated" from Head Start. One of our children was diagnosed of having a "learning disability" by the Head Start Program. This early detection has helped our child succeed throughout his academic life. There were times when it was tough but thanks to all his teachers (including the Head Start teacher), he will be graduating from high school with all his peers in the Spring of 2004! I thank the Head Start Program for this! Thank you, Head Start!

Dave & Becky Hunkup
Reno, Nevada

Head Start Teacher

My name is **Yvonne Capucci** and I am a Head Start teacher at the **Reno Sparks Indian Colony**. I have an AA degree and I am one class short of my BA degree. Twenty-five years ago I attended Head Start in Fallon, Nevada. I give credit to Head Start not only for the success in my education, but also for my success in life. Head Start gave me the start I needed in life. I not only learned academics, but I learned my culture. I met my first friends in Head Start and gained the social skills that I needed to succeed in Kindergarten, grammar school, High school and on through college.

I am now teaching my second year at the **Reno Sparks Indian Colony Head Start**. I have been given the opportunity to teach fifteen wonderful American Indian children and have been able to watch them grow. I have seen them grow academically, socially and physically. Head Start has given them a "Head Start" to mainstream into the public school system.

Student to Teacher

My name is **Brandy Harney** and I'm from the **Duck Valley Indian Reservation.** Where I attended Head Start for 2 years in 1976 through 1978 at the Owyhee, Nevada Head Start Center, I believe

that it gave me a real jump start in to the public school. I graduated and went on to college where I am only 6 credits away from receiving my AA in Early Childhood Education. My three children all went through this program at the **RENO-SPARKS INDIAN COLONY** Head Start, they all came out and went to the public school being the top students in their classes. They have accomplished numerous achievements, they are helpers in the class and they also tutor their peers in their classrooms. Their self esteem is very high and they are very socially active in what they decide to do. My daughter has special needs and she is also a very good helper and has a very high self-esteem level. I am now a teacher aide at the **Reno Sparks Indian Colony Head Start** and this opportunity has opened many doors for me not only has it made my self esteem rise, but it put the self confidence in me to speak to people in the public and not be that shy person any more.

Colorado River Indian Tribes Head Start Program
Parker, Arizona

Cultural Diversity

The Colorado River Indian Tribes Head Start Program is among one of the most unique in its racial and cultural diversity. The Colorado River Indian Reservation is located on the western boundary of Arizona and the eastern boundary of California in a desert area remote from large cities. The **CRIT Head Start Program** is among one of the most unique in its racial and cultural diversity. The diversity is mostly a result of two factors. One, the **Colorado River Indian Tribes** is made up of **Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi, and Navajo** members. The other factor is that non-Indians reside on the Reservation. While diversity is a wonderful thing it does bring challenges. The Head Start Program has been steadfast in its effort to provide all the comprehensive services of Head Start and to incorporate a culturally relevant environment. Although the Grantee has serious concern over the income eligibility and service area limitations of the Head Start regulations, the Program has been able to enroll all the Tribal member children who apply. Unfortunately, this is so because of the high rate of poverty due to lack of good paying jobs in the community. In fact, LaPaz County is the second poorest county in Arizona. In years where the economy was more favorable, the Program was not always able to enroll all the Tribal member children who applied due to the Head Start income eligibility limitations. The Program had to enroll non-Indian children over their own Tribal membership because they were income eligible and resided on the Reservation.

There have been many successes in the Program over the years but perhaps some of the most significant include the following.
85% of the Head Start staff are current/former Head Start parents
All teachers have a CDA - Child Development Associate Credential
In spite of the fact that staff have to regularly travel over 240 miles to take some Early Childhood courses they have made the following progress:

- Of the 10 Teachers, 5 have their AAS in Early Childhood Development
- Of the 10 Assistants - 9 have their Child Development Associate Credential
- Of the 10 Assistants - 3 have their AAS in Early Childhood Development, and 3 others will have their AAS by June 2004
- NOTE: *These staff are parents who also work full-time while going to class. Head Start teachers with degrees and over 20 years of experience are earning the same salaries as beginning teachers in the public schools.
- All 5 bus drivers have Commercial Driver's Licenses and Arizona School Bus Driver Certificates

The public schools and the CRIT Head Start Program have formed a strong collaboration.

The school district pays the salaries of pre-school therapy aides who work full-time in the Head Start classrooms that have children with disabilities. The school district has hired a Kindergarten specialist who is on-site at the Head Start Center two days per week, providing mentor-coach services to the Teachers and Assistants.

In addition to the income eligibility limitations, two huge problem areas are the need for new school buses and facilities. The unfunded federal mandate for child and adult safety restraints is causing the Program to have to choose between meeting the mandate and cutting back on services to children and families. With a great lack of daycare in our community, and I mean any kind of daycare, cutting back on class days is not a good thing for our children. With regard to facilities, those lawmakers who have traveled to Indian country can tell you that this is a tremendous challenge. Lastly, I will say with confidence, that any interested lawmaker is invited to visit our Head Start Center and hear right from our parents how highly they regard the Program just the way it is.

Caroline Alcaida, Head Start Director
928-662-4311

Shoshone & Arapaho Tribes Head Start and Early Head Start
Fort Washakie, Wyoming

Head Start: A Comprehensive Program

Native Language: There is a great need in Native Head Start to provide more adequate language instruction and culture training. The current funding from JOM funds 24% of the costs of very basic language and culture instruction.

Education/Staff Development: The rural setting of most Native Head Start programs means that education and degree programs are not always accessible. Distance and on-line learning are options sometimes but institutions are only making courses available that are profitable. The Heads-Up Network has some good stuff but it does not appear to be streamlined for an acceptable degree.

Transportation: The rural nature of Native Head Start programs means a higher cost for transportation both due to logistics and to the wear and tear on vehicles.

Facilities: Head Start facilities in Native Head Start programs are inadequate both in environmental, health and safety and in spacing.

Special Needs: Children with Special Needs are not fully served. The Part C organization at this location is unable to maintain a full staff to insure services are completed on time and in a professional manner. It is the full responsibility of the Head Start program to provide full and complete services for severely handicapped individuals. Also, T/TA for staff in the area of disabilities is non-existent.

Need for Services: Approximately 60% of the children on the Reservation are getting Head Start 0-5 services. There is a need to expand those services to serve all children.

Availability of 0-3 Head Start Slots: There is an enormous demand for more slots in the 0-3 category.

Health Services: While many IHS clinics provide adequate services for Head Start program children there is a need to make this uniform where each and every health need is met.

Nutrition: There needs to be a more comprehensive and continuous partnership to provide nutrition

training and nutrition workshops for parents/community.

Testing: Testing and Outcomes in Native Head Start programs are modeled after the general population model which discriminates against Native children. These are the children of the parents and Grandparents who were forced to attend religious schools however, the government abandoned the project leaving the Natives in "no mans land" for language culture and identity. Consequently the Native philosophy, the language and the way they speak English needs to be taken into account when you set them down for testing.
Joseph Henry, Head Start Director
307-332-7163/7180

Ute Indian Tribe Head Start
Fort Duchesne, Utah

Fatherhood Initiative

When looking at Head Start, whether it is a tribal program or not, people should first look at the benefits the particular program provides for the children and their families. In our geographic area, which happens to be the eastern corner of the state of Utah we face many challenges. Our reservation currently has a 78% unemployment rate among tribal members. The local economy off the reservation is still depressed so the need for services to families is greater than ever. Health issues, especially diabetes, are on the rise both on and off of our reservation. Chemical dependency still remains a challenge to our people. Transportation issues are very much a concern. Especially with the rising cost of fuel. Our program runs 8 buses with each traveling over 1,000 miles per month.

However, our Head Start program has committed itself to help our communities improve, and while funding is limited we are still reaching out to more and more children and their families. Our program is setting in motion efforts to help our children and families learn new nutritional and health habits. Our program has recently begun a new fatherhood initiative called the F.i.r.e.men (**F**athers **I**nvolved in **R**eading **E**ducation) to bring our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and brothers together to help children. Activities are literacy based and revolve around the **Ute** culture. Each male member becomes part of the Firemen's Brigade in there particular area. The activities are a great way for the men to become more involved with their children. To assist in the unemployment situation our program sought out other funds to purchase 10 computers to be used in conjunction with our tribal adult education department. These computers are loaded with the latest software to allow our families to finish their GED's. They also have a direct link to the Department of Workforce services that allow the participants fast access to available job lists. New working relationships have been formed with the local school districts. This effort has brought the school district personnel into our program, where they are now housed at our facility. The school district has already observed that the children they work with are progressing at a faster rate than ever before. They attribute this fact to the children being in a more structured atmosphere around other children. The **Ute Indian Tribe Head Start** program will continue to work for the benefit of the children and families they serve, and we invite all others who care about children to join us in making all Head Start programs strong.
Tom Morgan, Director
435-722-4506

Turtle Mountain Chippewa Head Start
Belcourt, North Dakota

Community Involvement

The **Turtle Mountain Chippewa Indian Reservation** is located in north central North Dakota, ten miles from the Canadian border. This reservation is made up of many small lakes, is wooded and affords the opportunity for limited farming and ranching. We are the most densely populated reservation in the United States with a population of 16,000 tribal members residing on this six mile by twelve-mile reservation. The American Indian Reservations in North Dakota were the first in our state to see the value of quality comprehensive child development programs. The first eight-week summer Head Start programs were funded on the four Indian Reservations in our state. Our leaders saw a need, and they saw what a positive impact this program would have on our children and families. The Head Start program currently serves 330 three and four year old children in a center based setting. There are a total of 17 classrooms located in five different very rural communities. Public transportation is non-existent and we are located 120 miles from the nearest major city and airport. In spite of these very visible geographic challenges or perhaps because of them, we have a community that believes and practices the belief that we are all related and that we care for one another.

Where does one begin when you want to share the success and challenges of the past thirty-eight years? I have been the director of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Head Start program since 1973. During this time, I have witnessed the very positive impact that Head Start has had in our community, and I have seen the challenges that would have made ordinary people drop in their tracks.

During the past thirty-eight years, over 10,000 children have participated in this Head Start Program. Due to the large number of children that have become economically independent, it is difficult to single out the individual success stories that Head Start has played a part in. It should be noted that our Head Start graduates make up a majority of the graduates from the high schools in the communities we serve. Some of our Head Start graduates in addition to completing high school have been honor students, have excelled in athletics, music, art, science, and poetry. In our communities today the majority of former Head Start students attend college or vocational schools, some who have graduated and are now nurses, architects, special education teachers, artists, electricians, plumbers, contractors, lab technicians, carpenters, data entry workers, welders, machinists, farmers, construction workers, business owners, lawyers, politicians, secretaries, accountants, food service workers, teachers, teacher aides, or work in other areas of Head Start, or at the schools, or other jobs in the community. They work in tribal government, serve on school boards, and are positive role models in the community. This all takes place in a community that has an unemployment rate that fluctuates between 65% and 78%. A community that deals with major problems with chemical and alcohol abuse, housing shortages, limited medical, dental, and mental health services, and the biggest curse of all -the growing use and production of methamphetamine. North Dakota in general, and Rolette County in particular, has one of the largest methamphetamine production and usage in the United States. More children are being placed in foster care due to this drug. Using this drug results in immediate dependency. Treatment for this drug requires a two year plan and the success rate is minimal. During the next three years we will be facing a population of pre school children that have been impacted by this drug their mother's pregnancy. We have not begun to scratch the surface on what impact this will have on the Head Start programs or public schools.

Since 1975 this Head Start Program has served children with special needs. These needs have included profound mental retardation, spina bifida, diabetes, physical impairments, cerebral palsy, hemophilia, severe hearing impairments, down syndrome, autistic, visually impaired, blind, emotionally disturbed, speech and language delays, attention deficit, and developmental delays. All of these children have been mainstreamed into the regular program. Turtle Mountain Head Start began to identify and serve special needs children long before the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction became aware of early intervention and were mandated to provide services to our young population. It is out of this involvement that the continuum of services for all Head Start children had its beginning.

The Head Start Program has consistently had the support of the community. The program has grown from one classroom that operated as an eight-week summer experiment to a program that serves 330 children on the **Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation**. During our most recent PRISM review, one of the major strengths the review team noted was the extensive involvement of the community in the Head Start program. Community partnerships exist between Head Start and the school, Indian Health Service, special education units, parents, community college, child welfare, and the FAS prevention program. This reservation's major natural resource is its people. This is a time when we need to support Head Start philosophically and financially. Head Start needs to have the resources to address the needs of the vulnerable population that it serves. Children that experience the poverty and unpredictability that exists in their daily environment need more than a numeracy or literacy program. Our Head Start program was approved to serve an additional thirty-five children in 1997. This has not been done due to the lack of funds to renovate an existing facility. This means that at a minimum 235 children have gone unserved due to Head Start's lack of funds to construct or renovate facilities. In Indian country, we do not have philanthropic organizations, benefactors, or private industry to provide funds for Head Start facilities. What we do have are children and families that need a chance to be all they can be and families that need our help along the way to become more economically independent.

Jennifer Ramey, Head Start Director
701-477-0260

Kenaitze Head Start
Kenai, Alaska

Community Working Together

Kenaitze Head Start has had three siblings that were in foster care with a relative. When they came in, they did not look at anyone, hold their heads up...When the oldest child started at KHS, Jason (pseudonym) hid under the table most of the day. By the end of the first school year he was able to sit with other children, and adults. The next year Jason and his sister, Susan (pseudonym) were in our program. When Susan entered she too was unwilling to speak to or interact with others....by the end of that year, they would both look at and visit with adults, and peers. When Susan began her second year, the third child, Donna began school.

By this time, these children were in counseling with our tribal counseling center. Their mother had abandoned them, and their father was in jail for child molestation. When the father was released from jail, the state was going to place them back with their father. Through a tribal agreement between our village, and the village the children were enrolled in, our tribe was able to intervene to ensure these children were not placed with this molester. While this is an ongoing custody case, it has been through the advocacy of the Head Start and our tribal intervention that has ensured these children remain in the only positive family setting they have ever known.

The children are now in school, and doing well. They are functioning socially, and academically in a way that would not have been possible without intervention. A non-tribal Head Start would not even know these resources, or channels are available.

Our tribe's ICWA workers and Head Start have facilitated the adoption of 9 children in four years. These children now live with families that are loving, dependable, and very supportive. Our tribal program has facilitated these cases, and these children would probably still be waiting for families, in another environment. The tribe stepped in with one boy who was removed by the state from a foster home to go to an adoptive home in another city. The new family did not want the child, and the state was placing him back in our community with a different foster family. The only stability this child had at this point was his connection with our Head Start staff. The tribe was able to advocate getting him back into the original foster family, and he is now adopted with that family,

and they also adopted a family of three siblings as well. Our ability to know our community, and the needs of our Indian children and families is significantly better than the states.
Connie Wirz, Head Start Director
907-283-0707

Association of Village Council Presidents
Bethel, Alaska

UNUSUAL PROBLEMS FACED BY THE GRANTEE

Travel. Since all but one of our centers are off the road system we must fly to all of the centers in light aircraft. There are several unique issues which this kind of travel presents:

- Travel to villages is always "weather permitting". Trips by plane are often cancelled in bad weather. Every year we have several trips cancelled. Cancelled trips produce many issues: The time that is spent sitting at the airport waiting for weather delays that then turn into cancellations-most often a minimum of/2 day is lost to work. Rescheduling trips is often difficult. In addition to weather conditions, trips are also cancelled for illness, funerals, etc. The reschedule trips require a 3-4 day open block on your calendar. It is not unusual for the next available time to be a month later, which wreaks havoc with our planning calendars.
- Getting "stuck" is the reverse of the cancelled flights. There are many times when flights back to Bethel are cancelled and the staff is unable to return to their families and jobs for several days. Staff is very hesitant to fly on Friday for fear of being "stuck" for the weekend.
- The cost of flying staff to our sites is very expensive, as is the per diem.

Fear of plane crashes is a constant drain on the staff. In 2001 a Grant Air plane crash killed a beloved Head Start Director, village Elders, policy council and staff members. Many of the staff knew this former Director well. This tragedy was very unsettling for all of us. In 2001 the staff from Akiachak were coming to a pre-service training when they were involved in a plane crash. Fortunately everyone survived.

Funerals-The high number of funerals brings more lost time and more time when staff are not working to their fullest potential because of grieving. Funerals can often shut down a whole village and even affects surrounding villages because of the number of relatives This is especially true if the funeral is due to some kind of tragedy such as a suicide, drowning, killing or plane crash.

Subsistence lifestyle.- It is difficult for Caucasians who usually purchase all of their food to appreciate the amount of time that goes into preparing food from the time the hunter (man of the home) brings home the catch until it is ready to eat. Yet Yup'ik women, including our Head Start staff, do this every year. Spring, smelt, King Salmon, Summer, many kinds of fish, Fall, Moose, Tom cods, Silver Salmon, berries, ptarmigan. Winter, moose, caribou, seal, small animals. It is not unusual for a staff member to leave work and then work at home from 6.OOpm until midnight or later preparing and preserving food. Because the people now "live in two worlds" it means that people not only must maintain full time jobs, raise families, but they also catch and collect their food to survive. The word **SUBSISTENCE means to maintain life, to exist, to remain in existence.**

Language, Writing, Paperwork-English is not the first language of most of the Yup'ik/Cup'ik and yet all of the Head Start materials are written in English. The vast majority of Head Start

trainings are held in English. Reading and writing are new to the Yup'ik culture, which once was a primarily oral culture. Culturally it is hard for native peoples to give credence to the importance of paperwork, because they think, "if I say it it's done"- the Head Start way is " if it's not documented it's not done." A cultural clash! Many of the staff are enrolled in college credit courses, adding one more demand on their life. Change is also happening within the Yup'ik culture, elders write and read an older version of Yup'ik while the younger generation have made colloquial changes to "keep up with the time." Sometimes this makes translation more difficult.

Remoteness- The remoteness of our Head Start sites and their isolation from each other produces unique issues:

Lack of examples of other programs to visit and learn from.
Lack of face-to face support
Everything is harder due to distance

- Everything takes longer to repair due to distance, i.e. the problems which occur with mail when a flight is cancelled, or parts are missing.
- Everything is more expensive due to the high cost of freight.
- Lack of tools, certified electricians, plumbers, no access to hardware stores, when we need to fix things.
- Some villages too small to warrant an internet server provide service, therefore no e-mail access.
- Almost every year villages will run out of fuel oil, so that means sites must close and homes are without heat.

Weather- The extreme cold temperatures on the Y-K Delta can wreak havoc with the best laid plans. Children cannot go outside and schools have to close due to dangerous wind chill factors, frozen pipes, furnaces which breakdown. This is hard on families, children and staff, and program attendance.

Rodney Thomas, Acting Director
AVCP Head Start
P.O. Box 219
Bethel, Alaska 99559
907-543-3157

Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Head Start
Service Area – Southeast Alaska
Juneau, Alaska

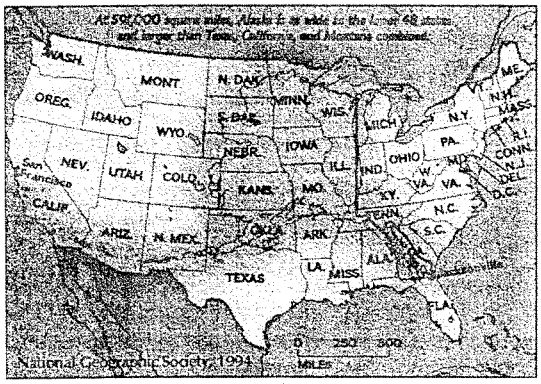
Traveling in Alaska

It is important to become familiar with the distinctive aspects of doing business in Southeast Alaska. Unique to Alaska are costs associated with administering and coordinating programs. The cost of maintaining links with field staff from other communities is significantly higher than other areas in the nation.

Our Southeast Alaska service area is 60,000 square miles (150 x 400 miles) along the Pacific Northwest Coast. There are no roads linking our towns and villages. Most of our business requires extensive travel, phone calls, faxing, and computer e-mail use. Extra staff time is essential to coordinating, training, and monitoring programs from a distance. When coordination staff conducts site visits, they are typically on-site for 4-5 days at a time. Because travel costs are expensive, we

have to maximize their time while they are on site.
Summary:

- 60,000 square miles.
- Most communities are located on islands along the inside coastal waters called the "Inside Passage."
- Only Juneau is located on the mainland.
- None of our Head Start communities are accessible by roads.
- The primary mode of transportation between communities is by jet service, float plane, or ferry boat.



Johnnie Cain, Head Start Director
907-586-1432

Eastern Band of Cherokee Head Start and Early Head Start
Cherokee, North Carolina

Healthy Communities

Qualla Boundary Head Start made a difference for members of the **Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians**. One major health problem for our Cherokee children and families is encephalitis. Studies showed that incidence of this deadly disease was five times more likely on the reservation than elsewhere in surrounding communities. The Head Start program sponsored a community forum and invited advanced experts to talk about the disease. Indian Health Service Environmentalists, North Carolina Cooperative Extension agency, the HOPE center (local education agency) and others came together to provide facts, dispel myths, and action steps needed to promote community awareness about encephalitis. Most importantly, parents who have lived through encephalitis spoke about their experiences. As a result, Head Start along with other Tribal community programs conducted a "reservation wide" clean up. This included educating families about getting rid of any item/container that can hold standing water (breeding ground for mosquitoes), clearing bushes around the high school stadium, and having stands at ball games that give out the right kind of bug repellent.

The Head Start/Early Head Start program serves 265 children 0-5 and their families. Head Start has been on the Qualla Boundary since its inception in 1965. When Head Start talks in our community

– people listen. Head Start in our community provides high quality comprehensive services that provide educational, health, etc., and when children enter Kindergarten they are ready to succeed. Head Start is a tradition in our community that continues to serve family generations. I am thankful to be able to serve the little ones and their families.
Tina Saunooke, Program Director
828-497-9416

Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
Oneida, Wisconsin

Need for Expansion

The **Oneida Tribe of Indians** has 108 children in our Head Start program supported by federal funds and another 8 supported by supplemental state funds. In our immediate service area we have recorded another 45 children for our waiting list. Our community assessment tells us we have another 40 children who live on the east side of Green Bay who are well outside of our service area.

Further, we know that in Milwaukee, Wisconsin there are another 70 children who we can't serve because the government will not provide expansion funds. The Oneida Head Start program has proved its worth. As an example we received a perfect review from the federal review team. Over 90 fathers participated in our program because of our initiatives. Because our disability program is so strong we are able to help the tribe initiate an early intervention program for all children under the age of 5 but only in the geographic area we call our service area. With more money we could do more.
John Pavek, Head Start Director
920-869-4369

Karuk Tribe Head Start
Happy Camp, California

High Costs in Rural Communities

The **Karuk Tribe** was a spin off program from ITCC in Sacramento in January 1994. Little did the Tribal Administrators know that we came in at a very low cost per child, and because of that 9 years later we are still at a low cost per child compared to Regional Programs. I know there are also other tribes caught in this same problem and they tell us unless we expand we cannot get our cost per child up.

The costs in rural communities are higher because of the distances we travel for transporting children, food costs and resources. Our fuel prices range from $2.05 to $2.49 per gallon. How can we expand when our towns are losing population because there are no jobs? We continue to struggle to meet all the costs for our program. Congress sends us mandates for bus monitors and child restraints with no money to hire monitors and purchase $5,000 child restraints. We have an excellent program designed to meet the needs and challenges of tribal and non-tribal children and their families.

The **Karuk Tribe** is not a gaming tribe and has very little resources to put into the Head Start Program. We have low wages for our staff that are now mandated to have degrees. We are not meeting the cost of fringe benefits for Head Start employees; the tribe has to pay out for their Health Insurance.

After sharing the National Reporting System Assessment with staff we show that the test is inappropriate for the children we serve in our geographical area. We want to know who came up with this test and what geographical areas are they looking at. Congress needs to look at geographical areas more! Sitting in DC and not taking into account where people live and being out in the field is taking away from the quality of life we know in our communities.
Toni McLane, Head Start Director
530-493-5305, Ext. 53

Grand Traverse Band/Ottawa & Chippewa Head Start and Early Head Start
Peshawhestown, Michigan

Scarce Resources

I am the Center Director for the **Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians** Head Start and Early Head Start Program located in Pellston, Michigan. I am also a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Pellston is a very rural part of Northern Michigan and we are located approximately 25 miles from the nearest Tribal offices. We also do not have a reservation with housing, so our families are wide spread and our transportation costs are high and our bus runs are long. We have incorporated central pick up and drop off locations and they do help if the family has transportation available to them to help transport their children. There are also several other children that we cannot provide transportation to and are brought to Head Start each day by their parents inflicting cost on the family. We also serve a wide variety of Tribal affiliated children. Not all children are from the same Tribe and some services are not available to them, so alternate services must be sought.

Many of our children are Medicaid eligible and with the cuts to the Dental portion of Medicaid for adults, our children our being put on wait lists for dental treatment. There is also a high incident rate in our area for dental problems requiring several dental visits or even hospitalization and surgery.

We have a high incidence of speech disabilities in our young children. We also have a high incident rate of child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, and substance abuse. We have several children whose parent(s) are incarcerated.

We have individual family needs that are addressed on an individual basis but their needs vary widely it is sometimes difficult to meet them and costly. We are 25 miles from the nearest hospital and rely on a volunteer fire department in the area for emergency assistance.

Adequate and licensable facilities are difficult to find and rent in our current location is expensive. Our current location is a wonderful building. It is just high rent.

We also have a difficult time finding qualified Native American Teachers and other staff. Child Care pays too little to sustain a family.
Trish Sterling, Center Director
Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
231-271-6302

Morongo Band of Mission Indians Head Start
Banning, California

HOW MORONGO INDIAN HEAD START SOLVED STAFF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

In the fall of 2001 the **Morongo Indian Head Start** program was in trouble. Staff turnover was high. Morale was low. The program had been found seriously deficient and was placed on a Quality Improvement Plan. There was no formal curriculum in the classrooms and teachers were floundering. Not one staff member had an AA degree or even a CDA.

A new director immediately began an intense push to train, train, train and upgrade, upgrade, upgrade. She offered to pay the tuition and books for any and all staff members who would go back to school and begin working on a degree or continue one previously started. Practically the entire staff, including the cook and the custodian, took her up on the offer! Staff members were encouraged to bring their homework with them, and many a late afternoon found numerous staff members studying and using center computers to do their school work! At the end of that school year the Director gave out $200 merit checks to 6 out of a total 12 staff members who had stuck with it and continued going to school all year.

Today the program has a Director who will finish her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education within 18 months, an Education Coordinator with a Master's Degree, a Family and Community Partnership Coordinator with a Bachelor's degree, a Health & Disability Coordinator with a Bachelor's degree, 2 lead teachers who will finish their AA degrees before the end of 2003, 2 teacher assistants who are working on AA degrees, and 1 teacher assistant who will finish her Bachelor's in May. The cook continues her pursuit of an AA in ECE, and the custodian has plans to re-enroll in January.

A follow up monitoring review of the program by the American Indian-Alaska Native Program Branch, Head Start Bureau last April found no deficiencies whatsoever and the children at **Morongo Indian Head Start** are receiving professional, high quality services and outstanding pre-school readiness training.

However, with the loss of T&TA and Quality money over the past year and no new money in sight, our program will suffer. We will not be able to continue paying for our employee's education and with COLA money being so very insignificant any staff turnover will leave us in the position of not being able to continue offering competitive wages.

We would implore the members of Congress who have the power to help us, to do so! One only need to see a program like ours, "before & after", to recognize the power of education and training in giving all our children a Head Start!
Helen Carson, Head Start Director
909-849-1291

Rincon Indian Reservation Head Start
Valley Center, California

Reservation Uniqueness

American Indian-Alaska Native Head Start programs have unique circumstances that set them apart from regional programs or urban programs. For example, **Rincon Head Start** is one of many Indian Head Starts that service reservations that operate casinos as their main economic endeavor. This appears to provide nothing but a positive impact; however, it has negatively affected programs.

While per capita distribution to enrolled families is helpful, it is not a fix-all to conditions that are generational to low-income families. While the family may not qualify for services due to over-income status, the needs of the family remain unmet because there are no other preschools in the rural reservation area where they can purchase services. And even if they were able to get their child into a daycare center or home, the comprehensive services are still lacking as well as the emphasis on early literacy.

Another "curse" of casinos is in the non-federal share area of the program. Agencies and individuals in surrounding communities are much less likely to donate services or items to the reservation Head Starts because they believe the casino dollars should provide everything needed. There is actually a negative attitude towards the prosperity of successful tribal enterprises.
Mavany Verdugo, Head Start Director
760-751-9821

Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Inc.
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Parent's Path to Professional Development

I am a Site Director on the **Keweenaw Bay Indian Reservation**, where I am a member of the Tribe as well. When I started with our Tribe's Head Start Program, back in 1992, I worked as the Parent Child Center Teacher. When I started, the program had about 3-4 parents participating. With a lot of help from determined staff, we got our numbers up to 27! This was three over our enrollment. Since then, I was able to obtain my Infant-Toddler CDA, and Preschool CDA when I transferred to the position of Head Start Teacher. I've been an advisor to 14 other teachers in our Community, for their CDA's. Most of these Teachers were all prior Parents of our program! I feel good about this as I attended Head Start in 1965, when I was four!

Making our Tribal Head Start a successful program has always been my goal especially since my daughter was enrolled in 1986 & 1987 and my son in 1990 & 1991. They attended the Community Head Start as I couldn't get them in our Tribal Program. While they were in this program I was always the Parent Manager and top volunteer of the Parent Committee. I also made a promise to myself that I would work as hard as I had to, so I could make our Tribal Head Start the best program in the county and I believe, with the help of excellent staff, and support of our **Inter Tribal Council of Michigan** staff, that our program is just that! I thank the Head Start Bureau for providing the funding to make this all happen. Our programs have grown immensely over the years, and my opinion is, there is always room for expansion!
Terri Denomie, Site Director
Contact: Ann Belleau, Head Start Director
906-632-6896 x3033

Bad River Tribe
Odanah, Wisconsin

SAVE HEAD START ....SAVE HEAD START ....AS IT IS !!!!

The **Bad River Tribal Council** strongly opposes ANY significant change to the Head Start Program. We have operated the Head Start Program here on the **Bad River Reservation** for 30 plus years. An estimated 650 – 700 children have received services through Head Start dollars appropriated to our Tribe.

Our Reservation is located in Northern Wisconsin isolated from any large Community and/or City. Services are basically received from a small Town located 10 miles away. Services are limited.

The Head Start Program is the only Early Childhood/Pre-School Facility in the Community. Students in K – 12 are transported to the Public School System 12 miles from our Reservation. Lack of Native American Teachers, Administrators, etc. within the School system does not give the students feeling of ownership and/or belonging into their new environment. Our program is 100% Native American staff.

Children with potential disabilities are identified as early as possible. Parents trust and depend on Head start staff to guide them and attend screenings, testing and placements. Without the understanding of and guidance of people from the Community many parents do not seek the help of a non-native. With Head Start working with total families it provides insight into the child's life. Family Service workers and other managers provide a support system when ever possible.

Dental health and mental health are the two major services NOT available within 50 miles to our children. We struggle each year to seek assistance to provide follow up service for dental and mental health to students in dire need of help.

The program has transported students 45 miles to get dental treatment completed in the past. Dentists in this area turn away new patients on medical assistance as well as patients who don't keep up appointments. Thus, making it harder for parents to get help when in dire need. The Tribal Indian Health Services does not have dollars needed for the population here and places "priorities" on services. Dental Health is not always a priority. We contract with a retired I.H.S. Dentist to provide screening services here at the Head Start Center. However, the follow-up care is hard to seek.

Through Community Assessments "Mental Health" is a issue in the community and affects people of all ages. The Tribe contracts for these services on a once a week basis, the waiting list is overwhelming. To meet the needs of children services are NOT available within 50 miles.

The Head Start Program sponsors a Networking Planning Committee of Tribal programs that work with children and youth. The target population reaches all ages since we work with total families. This Committee sets objectives and pool resources and dollars to address those objectives.

1) National Speakers to address the growing mental health issues our community faces. Targeting the following identified areas; drugs, alcohol, stress, truancy, lack of community involvement, etc.
2) TOT/Baby Olympics promoting early intervention of Diabetes, obesity and wellness.
3) Wellness program to address the growing number of community members including children as young as 3 years old with obesity, high sugar counts, high cholesterol, blood pressure, heart murmurs and early signs of diabetes.
4) Contract with a Nutritionist on a monthly basis to provide education to staff, parents and children in good eating habits.
5) We hold monthly family/parent events to get parents involved in their child's education, support groups as requested.
6) Monthly newsletter in partnership with the Housing project since a majority of our families live in low housing projects here on the reservation.

In ending, without Head Start services our children here at Bad River would not receive any services until they attend Kindergarten at the age of five (5). Child Care Providers used by Head Start Families is either Family members or with a private day care provider.

Judi Blanchard, Director
715-682-7144/7891

Redding Rancheria Head Start
Redding, California

Transportation and Culture

Our Head Start program serves 34 Native American children from throughout Shasta County. One challenge that faces our families is the lack of transportation. Without our Head Start bus, these children would not attend preschool, since the regional Head Start programs bus routes do not go out that far.

Additionally, because our program is Native American, we can celebrate our children's culture; it becomes an important link that strengthens the bond between school and home. For most of our families, our Head Start program is their first contact with "school". By understanding our families, we're able to make this a positive experience both for the child and for the parents.
Diane Coe, Program Manager
530-225-8925

Nez Perce Tribe Early Childhood Development Program
Lapwai, Idaho

Head Start Parent to Employee

My second to oldest son started the Head Start program in 1996. He was in the three year old class. I spent many in-kind hours at the center with him while he went through the three-year-old class. I was able to spend several hours here with him because I was unemployed. I was a mother of two boys and pregnant with a daughter, all the while being married to an alcoholic. In a family that was full of dysfunction, my son found peace and quiet here at the center with new friends, and new teachers who honestly cared about him and his needs. When my son graduated the four-year-old-class, I thought my time at ECDP was done. In 1999 my husband was laid off of his job and we were short on money. My husband's aunt suggested that I apply at the Head Start. I had little self worth and self-confidence and with that I just knew I wouldn't be hired. I was wrong and so began my journey back to my old self. I worked at the Nez Perce ECDP through the birth of my fourth child. Through the ECDP's education program, I was able to attend college, another dream of mine that had gone out the window when I became a mother. With the program's help, I attended several trainings and was able to receive my A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education in May of 2003. I am a Head Start success story. I was never told I couldn't by the program, only that I can. Three of my four children have been through the Early Head Start and Head Start programs.
Amiee Moses
Contact: Connie Guillory, Head Start Director
208-843-7330

Nez Perce Tribe Early Childhood Development Program
Lapwai, Idaho

Early Head Start Supports Single Parenting

My son was born while I was completing my undergraduate degree; I was very worried about how I was going to support my child as a single parent, and just out of college. My son and I relocated from the state of Washington to the **Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Idaho**. I applied to have my child in Early Head Start. I didn't know hardly anyone in Lapwai, so the scenery was as new as parenting! The staff at the Early Childhood Development Program made my son and I feel very welcome. After a year, I applied for a position in Family Services and was offered the position! I was overwhelmed, with all of the polices and procedures - the Performance Standards and the 190 families ECDP serves!

As an Early Head Start parent, an employee and advocate for Early Childhood education, I cannot stress enough how much Early Head Start did for my family. My son is very social, it takes forever to get through the store aisles - he talks to his classmates, or their parents. He is now in Head Start, and continues to learn and grow everyday!

Had it not for been for the **Nez Perce Tribe Early Childhood Development** program, I wouldn't have had these excellent employment and professional opportunities, nor the support system for my family. The Family Services Division offers families their own advocate, in that each family will have a program-parent liaison. The relationship, and opportunities for parent involvement is great, as advocates do not let families slip between the cracks!

I am truly blessed, as to be in the same building of my children while I am at work. I am very thankful to Head Start and Early Head Start programs and the **Nez Perce Tribe ECDP** for giving our family a "head start!"
Jackie L. McArthur, Family Services Worker
Contact: Connie Guillory, Head Start Director
208-843-7330

Coquille Indian Tribal Head Start
Coos Bay, Oregon

Language and Culture

One of the biggest challenges we have had is putting our native culture into our classroom. Our tribe was just restored in 1989 so we are still just now working on what the Coquille culture means to us. Our Tribal Council appointed a culture liaison to work with us. At this point in time our Head Start classroom has led the way in restoring the Miluk language to our children. We learned a Miluk song and are working to incorporate and learn Miluk words in our classroom experiences. It has taken hard work and persistence for this to happen. Another wonderful aspect of our Tribal Head Start is that our Tribal Community now understands the importance of what the transition process means. Tribal Council and others are now seeing the importance of tracking our Tribal children throughout their education process. Before the transition process was established in our Head Start Program our Tribal children were falling through the cracks in our educational system. Their disabilities were not being recognized and tracked, thus the children were not being given the chance that each and every child deserves as to their educational and social needs.

Jane Metcalf, Head Start Director
541-888-9494