



January 23, 2020

The Honorable Jonathan Nez
President
Navajo Nation
P.O. Box 670
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

Dear President Nez:

We are writing in response to the Navajo Nation's request that the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) permit the Navajo Nation to have a one-year extension of its waiver of the Bureau of Indian Education's (BIE) standards, assessments and accountability requirements so that the Navajo Nation may continue to implement the assessment and accountability systems detailed in the Diné Accountability Workbook, which we approved on September 20, 2016, for school years (SYs) 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, and extended for SYs 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. After considering this request, we believe that this waiver will advance student academic achievement by providing stability in these systems and so we are extending this waiver through SY 2019-2020.

With this one-year extension, the Navajo Nation will continue to implement the standards, assessments, and accountability system provisions previously approved in the Accountability Workbook through SY 2019-2020. Our decision to grant this extension is based on the determination that the Navajo Nation's ability to continue implementing its waiver will promote locally tailored strategies to improve educational outcomes for its students, close achievement gaps, and improve instruction. This extension is being granted pursuant to the authority in section 1111(k)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and the orderly transition authority under section 4(b) of ESSA.

We acknowledge that the Navajo Nation submitted a new waiver request by letter dated September 10, 2019, for a new assessment and accountability system to be implemented in SY 2020-2021. We will review that request and provide technical assistance from our Departments in accordance with section 8204(c)(3) of the ESEA. As you know, the Navajo Nation's request must be consistent with new accountability provisions in section 1111 of the ESEA, taking into account the unique circumstances and needs of your students.

We appreciate our continued relationship with the Navajo Nation and remain committed to working with you. Thank you for your commitment and continued focus on improving academic

achievement for all of your students. If you need additional assistance please contact Dr. Maureen Lesky, BIE Program Manager, at Maureen.Lesky@bie.edu or Mr. Robert Salley, ED Program Officer, at OESE.TitleI-A@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Tara Sweeney
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior

/s/

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and
Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

cc: Tommy Lewis, Superintendent, Navajo Nation Diné Department of Education
Jonathan Hale, Chairman, Health, Education, and Human Services Committee