

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION

+ + + + +

JOINT TRIBAL CONSULTATION LISTENING SESSION

+ + + + +

THURSDAY
APRIL 30, 2020

+ + + + +

The Listening Session convened via teleconference at 12:00 p.m. EDT, Robert Salley, Program Officer, Bureau of Indian Education, presiding.

PRESENT

- ROBERT SALLEY, Program Officer, Bureau of Indian Education
- TONY DEARMAN, Director, Bureau of Indian Education
- RUTH RYDER, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Acting Director, Office of Indian Education

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

12:01 p.m.

MR. SALLEY: I'm extending a warm welcome to all tribal leaders and other stakeholders participating today.

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Education share a joint commitment to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all American Indian and Alaska Native youth. Today's listening session is held in conjunction with the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that Ron Lessard, who is the Acting Director of the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, was originally scheduled to join us today and is unfortunately unable to participate due to other commitments. Next slide, please. Great.

So, I've provided a few up front

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

logistical notes regarding virtual participation and engagement today. This listening session is being recorded and transcribed for the record.

Tribal leaders and all participants will be given the opportunity to present remarks and comments following the presentation of the topic. Only comments presented orally or submitted in writing to listeningession@ed.gov can be entered into the record. Unfortunately, comments submitted by the chat box cannot be entered into the record.

Given we anticipate having a large number of participants in our session today, we will try to accommodate as many oral comments as we can and we ask that you limit your comments to two to three minutes.

In order to participate during the comment period, we ask that you log into the meeting room using the link provided to you in the announcement. Then, please have the system call you by entering your number. This allows us

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

to identify you for participation.

If you do not plan to orally comment, please stay in listen-only mode.

If your phone becomes disconnected at any time or if you need to be connected, simply click the phone icon in the toolbar and follow the prompts from there.

When you're called upon to speak, please make sure that the phone you're calling in on is unmuted on your end and that you check that the microphone or phone icon in the top menu is green and active.

In addition, we've provided contact information at the end of this slide for any troubleshooting needs which may arise. Next slide, please. Great.

So, on-screen now is our agenda for today. We've covered our general welcome and our logistics. We'll cover introductions here shortly this morning.

We'll provide an overview of the

topics that we'll be engaging on in today's listening session, followed by our tribal leaders and comment period. And then, we'll close out today's session promptly at 2:00 p.m. Next slide, please.

I'd like to begin by introducing Tony Dearman, Director of the Bureau of Indian Education, and Ruth Ryder, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Acting Director of the Office of Indian Education.

I'd also like to acknowledge that we have staff from both ED and BIE present on the line today.

I'm turning it over to Tony Dearman for a few opening remarks. Tony?

MR. DEARMAN: Thank you, Robert. Hello tribal leaders and stakeholders. I want to thank each and every one of you for taking the time to participate in today's listening session.

And thank you to the Department of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Education and the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education for co-hosting the listening session.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all of you for the support, dedication, and commitment that you've displayed for our communities and students during this extremely difficult time.

Your dedication to our communities is apparent in your cooperation, patience, and flexibility over the past several weeks.

I look forward to your participation and input into the important needs of our students and schools during this crisis and how we prioritize the CARES Act funding from the Department of Education.

The current pandemic has challenged our schools and communities on a scale we have never before experienced.

There may be more challenges ahead, but I am confident that with this continued

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

cooperation, we'll be able to serve all communities and students moving forward. Thank you again for your thoughtful contributions and time.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you so much Tony. Now, I'd like to turn it over to Ruth Ryder for a few opening remarks as well.

MS. RYDER: Thank you, Rob. Next slide, please.

And I too would like to welcome tribal leaders and stakeholders to our call today, we really appreciate you taking the time to provide us with your input. And thank you, Tony, for your thoughtful comments.

I'd like to start by giving a brief overview of the CARES Act. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, was signed into law by President Trump on March 27.

The program provides for \$2 trillion in assistance and of that, \$30.75 billion in

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

funding was provided to the Department of Education, under the Education Stabilization Fund.

In addition to set-asides for BIE and the outlying areas, the CARES Act created four grant programs under the Ed Stabilization Fund.

The Ed Stabilization Fund Discretionary Grant program is \$307.5 million, and information about that Discretionary Grant was released on Monday of this week, so on April 27.

And you can find more information about the Discretionary Grant program and the other programs that I'm going to discuss on the Department's website, under the coronavirus link.

The second fund that I'd like to talk about is the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, or the GEER Fund. Congress set aside approximately \$3 billion towards the GEER Fund.

This is a very flexible emergency block grant that will go to governors and they

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

will decide how best to meet the current needs of students, schools, including charter schools and nonpublic schools, post-secondary institutions, and other education-related organizations in states so that faculty continue to teach and students continue to learn.

The application for these funds was released on April 14.

The next fund is the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, or ESSER. Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion for the ESSER Fund.

The Department will award these grants to state education agencies for the purpose of providing local education agencies, including charter schools that are LEAs, with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had and continues to have on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

At a time when so many school boards and superintendents have closed campuses for the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

balance of this school year, it's important to think creatively about new delivery methods and focus on investing in the technology infrastructure and professional development and training that will help all students continue to learn through some form of remote learning.

The application for the ESSER Fund was released on April 23.

And finally, the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund was \$13.9 billion. And those funds were made available to institutes of higher ed, including funds that are available directly for students. Next slide, please.

In addition to the four funds that I just discussed, I wanted to talk briefly about the rest of the distribution of the CARES Act funds.

The CARES Act provides, with regard to the funds for BIE, that the Secretary of Education shall allocate one-half of one percent for the Secretary of the Interior, in

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

consultation with the Secretary of Education, for programs operated or funded by the BIE.

In addition, there is one-half of one percent that was made available for the outlying areas. And that is Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, and the Virgin Islands.

And the Department is working very hard on both of these funds.

I did mention the ESSER Fund earlier. Under the ESSER Fund, school districts can use the funds for any purpose under ESEA programs, such as Title I.

But they also can be used for a broader list of authorized activities that are in the CARES Act statute, including using funds for IDEA, Perkins Career and Tech Ed, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program. Next slide, please.

The Education Stabilization Fund, as I said, reserves a half of a percent of funds for

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

BIE, off the top of the \$30.75 billion. In other words, this is in addition to the four funds I mentioned earlier. This is equal to \$153 million and it's appropriated to the Department of Education and the Department will transfer those funds to BIE.

The CARES Act legislation also provides \$69 million in supplemental funding for education-related needs that goes to BIE through the Department of the Interior.

Of that funding that goes to BIE through Interior, \$20 million is specifically for Tribal Colleges and Universities. Next slide, please.

As shared on the previous slides, today's listening session will focus on the \$153 million in funds that ED will transfer from the Department to BIE.

After considering the input received from our two listening sessions this week and the written comment period, this will inform the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

final terms that the two agencies will reach on the funds that ED will transfer to BIE. ED will then be working diligently to transfer those funds to BIE as soon as possible.

I'm going to turn it back over to Rob now. Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you, Ruth. Next slide, please. Great.

So, before we begin reviewing the topics this morning, I'd like to remind everyone that the topics were sent out with the announcement today. They're also available for download. Attached to the invitation is the download support documents included on your screen today.

These topics will be available on the screen once the public comment period begins. In addition, these topics will focus on the \$153 million that ED will transfer to BIE.

Number 1, the first topic is the needs of BIE-funded schools and their students as a

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Second, the types of current physical and mental health needs of students at BIE-funded schools due to the COVID-19 crisis. Next slide, please.

The best possibilities for prioritizing CARES Act funding that BIE receives from ED, such as internet connectivity for students, teachers, and schools, support for distance learning activities, educational technology for students and teachers, including technology to support accessibility for children with disabilities, teacher and school leader salaries, and other possibilities. Next slide, please.

And the last topic will focus on the allocation of the ED CARES Act funds from ED to be allocated, whether that should be for K-12 BIE-funded schools only versus a split between the Tribal Colleges and Universities and K-12 BIE-funded schools.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Please note that the TCUs have a specific set-aside of \$20 million from the Interior appropriation of the CARES Act. Next slide, please.

Before we begin our listening session today, we want to point participants to our resource slide, where we invite you to submit written comments through May 1, 2020 at listeningssession@ed.gov.

Second, we invite participants to read more about the Education Stabilization Fund at the link provided. And this also includes information on the other funds. You can find on our website other funds authorized underneath the CARES Act.

And lastly, we're providing our information for our staff at the respective agencies with any further questions you may have. Next slide, please. Great.

So, as shared earlier, in order to participate in today's listening session, you

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

must be logged into the meeting room using the link provided to you. Then, please have the system call you by entering your number. This allows us to identify you for participation.

When you are ready to provide a comment, you will need to raise your hand by selecting the person icon on the toolbar at the top of the screen.

Each person will be selected and unmuted one-by-one. Your name will be announced when your line has been unmuted. When you are called upon to speak, please make sure that the phone you are calling on is unmuted on your end and that you check that the microphone or phone icon in the top menu is green and active.

Once the listening session begins, comments will be received first from tribal leaders. Second, comments from the public will be received.

When speaking, please state your first name and last name along with your tribal

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

affiliation or simply your organization and title, before delivering your comment, so that we can capture them for the record.

We ask that participants please limit your comments in the listening session today to no longer than two to three minutes, so that we can accommodate as many participants as possible.

We ask that you please remain in the listen-only mode if you do not plan on providing a comment verbally.

Additionally, if you encounter any problems with your participation, we ask that you either use the chat box to get an immediate response or to send an email to the address listed on the bottom left-hand side of this slide. Great.

So, as we mentioned earlier today, the questions that we will be -- I'm sorry, the topics that we will be reviewing are on the right-hand side of the screen. The instructions will remain on the left-hand side of the screen for your use

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

in getting connected.

So, we'd like to begin this part of the tribal leader public comment period by inviting any tribal leaders to use the raise your hand icon feature on the platform today and we will begin by soliciting those comments first.

All right. So, do we have any of our tribal leaders ready to go?

MR. ROULAIN: Good morning. We have -
- afternoon. We have several people who have their hand raised, but I am not sure if they are specifically a tribal leader or not. The first person with their hand raised is Mitchel Metoxen.

MR. SALLEY: Great. We'll go ahead and start with Mitchel's comment. And just as a reminder for everybody, in this portion, we will start with just tribal leaders and we will solicit broader public comment as soon as we conclude with the tribal leaders' comments.

Mitchel, are you on the line? And Mitchel, if you are speaking, you may be on mute

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

or your microphone may not be ready to go.

MR. ROULAIN: Robert, Mitchel has dropped from the list. The next person that we have is Santa Fe Indian School Superintendent Roy Herrera.

MR. SALLEY: All right. Superintendent Herrera, are you available?

MR. ROULAIN: Mr. Herrera has lost connection. The next person we have in line to speak, I don't if this person is a tribal leader, is Jennifer McLeod.

MR. SALLEY: Okay. Jennifer, are you there? Jennifer, if you are ready to go, you may be on mute.

MR. ROULAIN: Jennifer has dropped from the list. The next person on the list is Principal of Rock Point Community School, James L. Patterson, III.

And please note, everyone, if you are planning to speak, if you're using your computer, you need to make sure your microphone is enabled,

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

or if you're calling in through a phone, that your phone has been unmuted on your side. Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Great. Let's see -- do we have this person available?

MR. ROULAIN: No, this person has dropped from the list also. There seem to be people who are on their computers, but may not have called in, and their numbers are not connected. I see that some of them are connecting through their phones. The next person on your list is Andy Werk, Jr.

MR. SALLEY: Hi, Andy, are you available? If you are connected, you need to make sure that your microphone is ready to go and that you're off mute. Okay. Why don't we move to the next person on the list?

MR. WERK: Hello? Hello, can you hear me?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you.

MR. WERK: Hello?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you.

MR. WERK: Hi, this is Andy Werk, Jr. I'm the President for the Fort Belknap Indian Community on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in Montana for the A'aninin and Nakoda Tribes.

I just wanted to call in to advocate for not only our Tribal College, the Aaniih Nakoda College here in Fort Belknap, but the rest of the tribal colleges in Montana.

I won't take up much time, because I really need to get myself up to speed, I'll be speaking with our college president here today, but we'll be submitting comments also.

But I'm calling in, like I said, to advocate for the Tribal Colleges and I think that -- and even the information provided today, I need to go back through. I was trying to keep up with the slides.

But I'm just advocating that there's an even split that I've seen between Tribal Colleges and BIE schools. So, that's what I'm

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

commenting on today and will be submitting comments also.

But just advocating for the Tribal Colleges, they need relief. Even though there's that set-aside, they still need other relief that's available that's been passed from the CARES Act for the Tribal Colleges, because some of the information that I've received that even though we're getting towards the end of school, these Tribal Colleges still have summer courses and that.

And they're impacted just like everyone else also. So, just advocating for that. Thank you. But I'll be more specific in our comments we submit before the deadline. Thanks.

MS. RYDER: Thank you, Andy --

MR. DEARMAN: Thank you --

MS. RYDER: -- for your comments.

MR. SALLEY: All right. Let's move forward to the next comment. And just as a

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

reminder, we're trying to prioritize tribal leaders in this very first portion and then we'll open up broader to public comment.

And as a reminder, we ask that all of our speakers please begin by stating your name, your tribal affiliation or your organization and title.

Phillip, do we have the next person available?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. We have Jeremy Oyenque from Santa Clara Pueblo. Jeremy, you are unmuted, you should be able to speak.

MR. OYENQUE: Hello, everybody. I'm Jeremy Oyenque, Director of Youth and Learning for Santa Clara Pueblo, speaking on behalf of Governor J. Micheal Chavarria, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Pueblo of Santa Clara. I think I'll just try and run through the topics real fast.

One of our biggest needs here at Santa Clara Pueblo is emergency infrastructural funding

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

to establish our broadband capabilities for telecommunication, just to ensure our children continue to achieve academically during this crisis.

Without this, our community simply doesn't have the capacity to implement distance learning and our schools face the heart-rending choice of exposing our children to risk in the classroom or foregoing teacher-led education during the school closures.

Tied to that, what we've also been advocating for is the waiver of the minimum instructional hours set to promote the transition of our students to the next grade level.

And if we don't have the technology to make up for that classroom time, we're just putting ourselves back, particularly on that which has been set forth at 25 CFR 39.214.

In regards to Question Number 2, in looking at the conditions that impact our students with special needs, particularly those

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

with autism and anxiety, also going back to technology, we don't have the ability to meet with our kids. Our students, most are falling behind.

In regards to the allocation, we do know that there is a set-aside for Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, but we just want it to be equitable in that fashion.

With (telephonic interference) money that's coming over from the Department of Ed that it goes to the communities that need it the most. And also, some of these smaller communities that don't have the infrastructure or the technology capabilities.

So, with that, I think we hit most of it. We will submit some written documents as well, but thank you on behalf of Governor Chavarria.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you, Jeremy. All right. Phillip, we're ready for the next comment.

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, we have Dr. Martín Ahumada, the President of the San Carlos Apache College.

DR. AHUMADA: Good morning. Can you hear me fine?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you.

DR. AHUMADA: Can you guys hear me? Oh, wonderful. This is Martin Ahumada, Dr. Martin Ahumada. I'm the President of San Carlos Apache College, with the San Carlos Tribe. And I wanted to advocate for an equitable distribution of the Stabilization Funds between the BIE schools and the TCUs.

We have, the Tribal Colleges and Universities have a tremendous amount of unmet need that has accumulated over the years with regard to (telephonic interference) our infrastructure needs have never been fully met or even close to being addressed. And under this pandemic and the need to really serve our students and their families well, the need could

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

never be greater.

An important point I wanted to really emphasize at this time is the need for solidarity between our K-12 schools, BIE schools, and the Tribal Colleges and Universities, the need to work together.

Our futures are intertwined, particularly as one looks at the need to prepare teachers and the critical role that Tribal Colleges and Universities will be playing in that regard.

The need to, if you will, enable the families and parenting and so on to benefit from what the TCUs can uniquely offer in terms of mental health, parenting, and so on.

I see a tremendous need to treat the BIE schools and the Tribal Colleges and Universities in a more equitable manner, in terms of a more balanced distribution of the Stabilization Funds.

I'll be sending in some more comments

in writing to emphasize or underscore the critical dimensions of these issues, but I just wanted to make sure that I went on record pointing that out. Another thing that I did want -- and I think I'm almost out of time for this.

(Telephone connection interrupted.)

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:26 p.m. and resumed at 1:05 p.m.)

MR. SALLEY: Great. I think we're ready to go and proceed with the listening session this afternoon.

MR. ROULAIN: Okay. Yes. The first caller who is ready to provide comment has a number ending in 9874.

MR. SALLEY: Okay. And just one second, so, I just want to take a second, just to apologize on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education for the technical glitches this afternoon.

We are going to continue and proceed

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

at this time between now and 2:00 to accept comments and we will do our best with this (telephonic interference) this afternoon, in order to accommodate as many comments as possible. We'll also continue to accept written comments.

Phillip is going to lead us through a couple of instructions on how this will work on this line.

We won't unfortunately have the deck, however, with the email that you received shuffling you to this conference line, are the questions that you can download and have that available to you.

So, Phillip, can you give our participants just one more time the instructions on how this will work. Both myself, Ruth Ryder, and Tony Dearman are available on the line for the comment period.

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, thank you. To provide comments this afternoon, please use your

keypad on your telephone and dial 5-Star, that will raise your hand in the platform that I am able to see.

Then, we will call on you in order by announcing your last four digits of your phone number. And then, please, when you are providing comments, state your first and last name, your tribal affiliation and/or the organization or company you work for.

MR. SALLEY: Great. Thank you so much. Again, we ask that everybody have their lines muted at this time as well. Great. So, Phillip, do we have the first participant who's ready for comment this afternoon?

MR. ROULAIN: We have the person whose last four numbers are 9874.

MR. HERRERA: Thank you very much, I appreciate this. My name is Roy Herrera and I am the Superintendent from the Santa Fe Indian School.

The Santa Fe Indian School is a

residential program that serves approximately 700 students in Grades 7 through 12, from the 19 pueblos of the Navajo Nation and the Apache Tribes, as well as tribes throughout the country.

We have been providing distance learning to our students using school-issued Chromebooks and laptops and (telephonic interference).

Student access to high speed internet remains the greatest barrier as tribal members have very limited choices for affordable high speed internet. The digital divide was created when the incumbent carriers did not build-out their networks on tribal lands.

Furthermore, many families are not able to meet the creditworthiness criteria to be eligible for a contract phone and thus rely on prepaid phones that have extremely limited data plans.

Despite the challenges, we look towards the fall and face the very real

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

possibility of starting the year in an online setting.

With respect to COVID-19 emergency funding, we have observed that funding and efforts are heavily geared towards hot spots. For learning equities, these hot spots require that cellular service is available in all of our tribal communities and it is not.

Most of these hot spots also require a one-year contract, which begs the question, after one year, who will pay for them? Many of our families do not have the credit to take them under their own names.

The estimate for a one-year service for our 700 students is approximately \$350,000. That is not sustainable.

And finally, the better solution is to allow for the flexibility used by the U.S. Department of Education CARES funding so that IT infrastructure reaches beyond the school property.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Providing internet access in student communities and homes should be considered direct support in the digital age. To do this, we ask that CARES funding for schools be allowed to help tribes build community Wi-Fi locations, as well as provide residential services to address critical homework app needs.

Because the telecommunications carriers have neglected to build-out their networks on tribal lands, we cannot rely upon their networks to provide solutions.

But building from within, we can capitalize on the recent efforts of many tribal nations to build their own middle mile and fiber optic networks as a base to connect our students and staff for distance learning and remote working. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

MS. RYDER: Thank you, Roy.

MR. DEARMAN: Thank you, Mr. Herrera.

MR. SALLEY: Great. This is Robert Salley from the Department of Education. I'll

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

repeat that one instruction.

In order to enhance the call quality this afternoon, we ask that everybody just take a moment to ensure that their line is on mute. We are kind of working through a very manual process to field comments this afternoon, but that would be great if we can ensure that every person until you're acknowledged for speaking this afternoon can go ahead and mute their line. Thank you so much.

Phillip, are we ready for the next person who has raised their hands?

COURT REPORTER: This is the court report, can I be heard?

MR. SALLEY: Sure.

COURT REPORTER: I apologize for interrupting. That echo I'm hearing, I expect other people are as well, is caused by people not muting their lines. It's making it bad enough, I'm not sure that I can produce a transcript.

MR. SALLEY: All right. We'll do our

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

best. So, once again, if we can have everybody take a moment to mute their lines, that would be very helpful in terms of enhancing the call quality and ensuring that we can capture everybody's comments for the record this afternoon. Thank you.

Already sounding a million times better. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Phillip, do we have the next person?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, I have the phone number ending in 0178.

MR. KING: Hello? Can you hear me okay?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, go ahead.

MR. KING: How does that sound, is that better?

MR. SALLEY: That's good. I think --

MR. KING: Okay.

MR. SALLEY: -- everybody can mute their lines by doing Star-6 if you're not able to mute on your phones this afternoon, Star-6 can

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

mute. If not, just the mute feature will work. We appreciate that. I'm sorry, go ahead, caller, with your comments.

MR. KING: Okay. (Native language spoken), everyone. My name is Dan King and I'm a member of the Red Lake Nation Tribe. I'm President of the Red Lake Nation College and also one of the seven hereditary chiefs of the Red Lake Nation.

So, (native language spoken) for holding this session. And I just wanted to make a couple comments on equity and the need for equity in making sure that the Tribal Colleges get their fair share. Is there music?

COURT REPORTER: This is the court reporter, I hear music, it's interfering with the voice.

MR. SALLEY: Okay. Just one moment. Great, great.

MR. KING: Okay.

MR. SALLEY: (Telephonic

interference.)

MR. KING: Okay. Yes, I was talking about equity in making sure the colleges, the Tribal Colleges, get their fair share. We're not asking for anything above the norm, but we serve totally 177,000 students across the country. And the BIE schools serve about 46,000.

So, that's about an 80 percent, 20 percent split in favor of the Tribal Colleges. But yet, on the first round of funding, the funding was actually almost exactly the opposite.

And we work very closely with our schools on our reservation, all of them, and we support them, but we still need our fair share.

In that first round where \$69 million was given, all Tribal Colleges only got \$20 million out of that. So, that's only about 27 percent. And so, the BIE schools got the rest. So, it's almost exactly the opposite of funding.

And we will be submitting a letter with some pie charts that show the disparity in

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

funding which goes the wrong way. So, all we're asking is, as you move forward, to make sure that the funding is distributed according to the data and the numbers of people served and where that funding will go.

Because as Tribal Colleges, we're transforming our entire college operation due to the COVID. We have to change our technology, our FF&E, our classroom chairs, our tables, our whole system has to be redone for this.

So, we have some huge challenges, in addition to being the only ones that serve our market. If we're not here, 95 percent of the students in college won't even be in college, because they have so many obstacles and travel, like, an hour each way to get to the next nearest college.

So, we will be sending letters from the college and the tribe and we want to emphasize that the need for Tribal Colleges is to get fair and equitable treatment in this next round of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

funding. (Native language spoken.)

MR. SALLEY: Okay. This is Robert (telephonic interference). Thank you so much for your comment this afternoon.

In order to proceed, we want to remind everybody to mute your lines. You can do that by doing Star-6 or using the mute feature. This will help us reduce any echo and increase call quality this afternoon for everybody.

We ask that you don't place your lines on hold. When you do so, we get music that plays for everybody. If you have to take another call, we ask that you drop and dial back in.

So, we're having a lot of feedback. If you could, take just a minute and mute all of the lines, that would help us out greatly before we proceed this afternoon.

So, once again, if you could dial Star-6 or mute your line, we're getting a lot of feedback and extra participation that's not germane to our participants' comments today, that

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

would help us out greatly. So, once again, if we can ensure all lines are muted, we still have a little bit of echoing, that would help us out greatly.

Okay. Phillip, let's try our next comment.

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. That would be the call ending in 9151.

MS. MCLEOD: Good afternoon. Jennifer McLeod, I am an elected leader of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. And I'm also the Chairperson of the JKL Fiduciary Committee.

First, I want to thank the U.S. Department of Education Office of Indian Education and BIE for perseverance in making sure this listening session could take place. I know it's a challenge, everyone is approaching new technology and we're not used to using it yet, but I really do appreciate all the effort.

I have four comments that I would like to make in regards to the COVID funding.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

The first is that any moneys that are distributed to the Tribally Controlled Schools should be expended as per P.L. 100-297. The local board of education should be the one to determine the necessary expenditure.

My second comment is that funding should be expended through the grant system. The system is already there, the need is immediate, and we need to expedite things as quickly as possible.

My third comment is, schools are already in the process of readying for the new norm, whatever that's going to be, to end this school year and opening of the new school year. Is the U.S. Department of Education and the BIE ready?

And my last comment is, our facilities are still in need and underfunded as this crisis continues. Please do not lose sight of this.

(Native language spoken) for your time, I look forward to your comments. And

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

please, everyone, stay safe and well. These are challenges we've not really had to face in recent times. (Native language spoken.)

MS. RYDER: Thank you, Jennifer --

MR. DEARMAN: Thank you, Jennifer.

MS. RYDER: -- for your comments.

MR. SALLEY: All right, great.

Phillip, are we ready for the next comment?

MR. ROULAIN: That would be the call number ending in 0192.

MR. AZURE: Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you perfectly.

MR. AZURE: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Dr. Lane Azure, I'm the President of Sisseton Wahpeton College on the Lake Traverse Reservation, serving the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate in South Dakota.

And I'm a new president here, the last six months, but I've been in Indian education for

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

some 20-plus years and am very familiar with Tribal Colleges and Universities, as well as K-12 institutions.

As I sit here for the last couple days, listening, and I'm going through this whole COVID pandemic process as the leader of a college, it seems like we're really doing what Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Indian education altogether, do best, and that is resolve.

We're doing the best that we can with what we have. And, generally, what that is is less than what others have. And when I speak of that, I'm talking about other minority-serving institutions.

If we were to compare ourselves to them, we would find that our funding level is much less than them. However, running a college or a K-12 institution still requires the same amount of people, regardless of the numbers that we have in our enrollments.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

So, what we look like is fish out of water gathering, swimming towards funding that will help us survive. And it really is a shame that we have to, as tribal educational organizations, have to do this.

I'm not going to go through the numbers of funding levels that K-12 has gotten versus what Tribal Colleges have gotten, but I will say that we all serve the same people, it's just different age levels, and it comes down to resilience and resolving the issues as people.

So, I think, with that being said, I just think that it's vital that we are equitable and fair, and that each one of our institutions, each one of our students, each one of our elders are as important as the next. And we can't downlook that.

We must be able to solve this issue soon, because it continues to go on and this is not over by no means, we still have summer school, we still have fall semesters. And frankly, we're

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

not used to online education.

And when we have to make the dollars stretch, we don't buy high cost e-learning systems, we use what is available to us at the lowest cost possible, which is mostly likely free.

So, using that along with our technology that is not as par as other institutions are, it's just all difficult and we're all suffering. Mostly, our students are suffering and that's what we need help with.

And so, with that being said, I just hope that the funds that are available are spread out equitably to each and every one of us as needed. (Native language spoken.)

MS. RYDER: Thank you for your comment.

MR. SALLEY: Great. As we move into the next comment, just another reminder for folks to make sure that your lines are muted, hit Star-6, and then, we will be able to ensure that the call quality is as good as it possibly can be

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

this afternoon.

Phillip, can you let us know who the next person may be ready to go?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. That would be the number ending in 0883.

MR. BIRD: Hello. Can you hear me?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, perfectly.

MR. BIRD: Hello, my name is Rodney Bird. I am the Superintendent at Two Eagle River School for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. I just want to say, I appreciate everyone's advocacy for Indian people, we're all in this together.

And, please, let's not allow any divide and conquer tactics to prevail. While there's strength in numbers, let us all stay together and fight together. (Telephonic interference) administration of funds.

I just kind of want to put in a word for small schools, small tribes, that we are -- our needs are paramount in Indian Country. And

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

I just don't want to see like what's happening in the U.S. with small business loans going to larger companies that don't need it as much. Our needs are unmet and they're very dire.

So, I want to consider small schools and look at the number of students or the cost-benefit as opposed to just saying, well, there's only a few kids over there, let's focus on other areas.

So, again, thank you for your time and I just want to thank everyone from Director Dearman on down for their advocacy and support for one another. Thank you.

MR. DEARMAN: Thank you, Rod, appreciate it.

MR. SALLEY: Great. Phillip, are we ready for the next caller?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. That would be the number ending in 3598.

MR. SWAGGER: Good afternoon. Can you hear me okay?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: We can hear you perfectly.

MR. SWAGGER: Thank you. My name is Dr. Russell Swagger, I'm the President of Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College in Northern Wisconsin and am also a member of the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin.

And it's good to hear the conversation that's taken place today, it echoes a lot of the things that I'm thinking. I'm here to advocate across lines for all tribal education, we're all equally important and our students are all the same students and they all need our support.

As a Tribal College, I can tell you that our Ojibwa people are not used to learning online, so this is making it difficult for them, and they're ready to get back face-to-face. So, any students that (telephonic interference) that were challenged are even more challenged now.

As a Tribal College, our enrollments are not guaranteed. And so, students have a choice whether they're going to come back in the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

spring or the fall or whether they're even going to finish out this semester.

And that impacts us, because our numbers are dependent on our Indian student count. And so, we're going to see this come back later, possibly to haunt us, when we're looking at our two-year funding down the road based on our numbers from today.

And so, we have to have everything that we can at our beck and call to make sure that we are able address those things.

My students are trying to cope with their new normal and their kids are at home with them and all the schools are shut down. And so, now, they not only have their homework that they have to do, but they have to be teachers to their kids and they have to help their kids. And so, if you have one or more kids, that can be a real challenge for any student to try to keep up with.

And our students are not engaged, as they used to be when they were face-to-face. So,

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

that's presenting us with new support service trouble that we didn't have before.

And we're also having students experiencing poor internet connection or no connection at all and that's presenting huge challenges for us in Northern Wisconsin. Students are experiencing food insecurity issues.

And our enrollments for this summer semester are already showing a trend downwards and we're hoping that that's just a blip. We're hoping that's not indicative of the future and what's to come for both our fall and spring semesters.

And I especially want to echo what was said earlier about us all being in this together. As the Nishnawbe people, we need to support each other and we need to take care of each other. And students, whether they're in pre-K-12 or in college, they're all our students. (Native language spoken.)

MR. SALLEY: Thank you so much for your

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

comment, we really appreciate it.

Just a reminder for everybody on the line to just take a second, we're hearing part of a conversation that we don't want to capture for the record. We want to ensure that we have really high call quality this afternoon.

So, if you can't mute your line yourself, you can do Star-6 and that should mute your line so that we're not getting that reverberating feedback. Once again, please take a moment to mute your line so that we don't have the bleed-in of the call, of other conversations this afternoon during comments. Thank you.

Okay. Phillip, I think we're ready for our next participant.

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. The call number ending in 4505.

MR. CALDWELL: (Native language spoken.) This is Chris Caldwell, the Interim President at the College of Menominee Nation. And (telephonic interference) --

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: And could we have you go ahead and state your name again, just for the record? We lost you, you faded out.

MR. CALDWELL: Hello?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you, you faded out for just a second. If you could state your name again, we heard --

MR. CALDWELL: Okay.

MR. SALLEY: -- just very little.

MR. CALDWELL: Chris Caldwell, Interim President at College of Menominee Nation. And I just wanted to echo all of the other comments about being in the same community.

I would even say that I am a product of both K-12 and our TCU at Menominee. And I do know that the families that are TCU families, BIE families, K-12 families, working through these issues.

And so, in that regard, when you look at how these funds are being allocated out, or proposed to be allocated out, I would echo

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

similar comments from my fellow TCU presidents, in that we look for equity in terms of how those funds are handled.

And that we look at it in terms of support for College of Menominee Nation, as my example, that we're not only building up our infrastructure for our faculty and our students to be able to connect, but also our administration in sorting out how to facilitate that work as well and the responsibilities on that end.

And so, that equity in funding and the flexibility in how we are able to use those funds to apply them within each of our tribal communities and settings.

And I think there are many examples here at Menominee, similar to other tribal communities, where we do engage the BIE-funded K-12 schools in our community, because we see those students as our future students of the TCUs.

And so, I would just say that I do

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

echo the comments of working together and collaborating as tribal communities. And I would just (telephonic interference) federal agencies administering these funds reflect that sentiment as well.

And I think taking all of these comments together is an indication that the CARES Act funding provided thus far is wholly inadequate in terms of what could be provided or what is needed.

And so (native language spoken) to facilitators of this call, to all of the people working in their communities for their students and families. (Native language spoken.)

MR. SALLEY: Great, thank you so much for your comments this afternoon, we really appreciate it.

And just as a reminder one more time as we proceed through the comment period this afternoon, if you would like to raise your hand for participation, please press Star-5. To mute

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

your line, we ask that everyone mutes their line until they are acknowledged, Star-6 or the mute function on your phone.

Phillip, may I (telephonic interference) the next commenter?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. That is the call number ending in 3911.

DR. JOHNSON: (Native language spoken.) My name is Sherry Johnson, Dr. Sherry Johnson. (Native language spoken.) I am the Tribal Education Director from Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation and I have a statement that I'd like to read into record. And then, I also will provide you with a written response on this. It's concerning the overview and the topics and the questions.

I am Dr. Sherry Johnson, the Tribal Education Director for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation. And I am the appointed Tribal Consultation Representative for all education matters for the Sisseton

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation.

After meeting with stakeholders and gathering input, I will provide the following consultation comments on behalf of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of Lake Traverse Reservation.

Regarding Overview and Topic Number 1, the needs of BIE-funded schools and their students due to COVID-19.

Immediate needs for the education entities is the guidance for continuing education and barriers that are faced. There was very little guidance provided to the BIE schools, especially at the initial stages of COVID-19 hitting Indian Country.

Good communication on a regular basis is important. Our schools were struggling to connect by email, phone, with their families, on the needs in their homes. Communication was halted due to the lack of family resources and that barrier has to be surpassed.

Technology resources for students,

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

teachers were not available for digital learning. It is a struggle and in some cases, impossible for schools to provide 100 percent of their students with a device to connect to digital online learning.

Funding was a huge concern. Concerns about if our schools would ever get their devices returned, care for devices in the home setting, even when schools were able to order devices, they were so back-ordered that they're still waiting for orders after two months.

Students' homes did not have internet conductivity. Families were not able to afford the monthly payments or lack the infrastructure. Some schools were able to order some MiFis to help families, but again, those were back-ordered and at a cost to the school.

Students and families did not have technology-based knowledge to utilize the programs that the schools were attempting to use to provide an educational platform, such as

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Google Classroom, ClassDojo, Plato, Khan Academy, et cetera, or other programs such as FaceTime, Webex, or Zoom to provide a visual connection to their teachers.

Some of our schools had to go to a learning packet method due to lack of technology. This created a huge amount of concern. How to get packets to the students? How to get the work back from them? How to remain safe while passing physical papers back and forth? And more.

Or how copies could be made of learning materials for students? How to get books to students? How can teachers be safe in the school buildings?

Also, teachers did not have the technology-based knowledge to provide a digital platform of education. Teacher training had to be conducted through distance learning opportunities by knowledgeable peers and in trial or error. Time was rushed and along with that was the learning. People, teachers are coping.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Coding attendance and grading due to distance learning was another concern that had to be figured out by educators and completed in the student information system.

Adequate funding to pay for the extra demands on the school budget due to COVID-19. Food programs had to be figured out to help our community. Our educational entities stepped up to continue to feed all of our children. This had to be figured out to keep social distance and to be safe for all.

And of course, funding is a concern. No action regarding the minimum number of instructional hours has yet to be stated from the BIE and Department of Interior.

Number 2, Overview and Topics. Our current physical and mental health of students due to COVID-19 are counseling, mentoring, and connecting with caring adults.

The children's world as they know it has been disrupted drastically. Routine and

consistency is important to children and they are reassured that life is good and safe through those daily rituals.

They cannot play with each other. They can't go into the stores. Parks are closed. Movies and other events are cancelled. And this is a detrimental effect on children's well-being. Physical activities are not happening on a daily basis.

Mental health needs due to stress and trauma of COVID-19 are high. Young children just don't understand. One young boy could not go into the store and said, is Walmart sick?

Another concern is the lack of food in the home and availability at the stores. When money and food get tight, then children do not get fresh vegetables and fruits. Even meat has gone up so high in the stores, it's hard to afford. Nutrition is at risk and whatever our schools can do to help is needed.

Number 3, the best possible

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

prioritizing for the CARES Act funding should be at the local level, where they know their direct needs. The superintendent and the school boards are the ones making the direct decision for their students and their school communities. They are at a ground level in dealing with COVID-19 and its repercussions on a daily basis.

Number 4, the allocation and distribution of CARES Act funding. Once again, the BIE is pitting tribal entities against each other in a battle for funding.

Funding which is greatly needed in Indian Country, and thus, we are forced to provide input into the distribution. This has caused a further delay in distribution to the schools of any money. As of this date, the schools have yet to see any CARES Act funding in their banks.

We believe that the distribution should be proportionate to program funding. The Department of Education funding usually is only

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

reserved for K-12 systems and other education programs, and not Tribal Colleges.

But due to the vague wording, there is no clarification on the distribution. Thus, this creates confusion and division among tribal people. The funding should be distributed according to the BIE FY 2020 budget as a guide to be more fair to all.

One hundred percent of the funding should be distributed out and nothing should be held back by the Bureau. BIE, there is adequate funding for the BIE program management due to the lack of filled positions.

The tribe works directly with our tribal schools, but we have to remember that our Tribal Colleges have a need too due to COVID-19. Thank you. (Native language spoken) Dr. Sherry Johnson, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you, Sherry, we appreciate your comments this afternoon. Phillip, may I ask to see who's next in the queue?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. It's --

MR. SALLEY: Actually, Phillip, just a moment. Before we move forward, this is just a reminder to everybody on the line this afternoon, mute your line. If you're unable to mute your phone directly, you can do that by doing Star-6.

We want to ensure that the call quality is good for everybody, as best we can, this afternoon, that we reduce echoes and other conversations bleeding into participation. So, thank you so much.

Those who would like to participate, we ask that you do Star-5 to indicate that you're raising your hand. And we'll try to get as many comments as we can this afternoon.

Phillip, may I ask who the next presenter is?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. It is the number ending in 0155. We're looking for the caller ending in 0155.

MR. ROBERTSON: Hi, my name is Paul --

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

can you hear me? This is Paul.

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you perfectly.

MR. ROBERTSON: Hi, my name is Paul Robertson. I'm President of Tohono O'odham Community College in Southwestern Arizona, an area covering 2.78 million acres, about the size of the state of Connecticut.

Our Tribal College, like the other 34, serves a diverse population, but it is primarily Native tribal members who are rural and who live across a broad geographic region.

Their access to internet and the Wi-Fi they need for classes, even in normal times, is limited. During this COVID-19 era, the very nature of the digital divide is more apparent.

We have students parking in college parking lots and in front of the Shell gas station in Sells, Arizona in order to get the connectivity they need in order to complete their classes. Their dedication is great to see, but

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

the situation is not acceptable. Not everyone can do their work at the Shell station.

We need assistance to develop a more robust capability for students to succeed. Meanwhile, our student body is facing tremendous pressures during this era of coronavirus.

Our nontraditional student body, with an average age of 31 and 70 percent women, many of whom are now taking care of children and homeschooling them during this crisis and still trying to succeed in their studies.

And many are succeeding despite the obstacles. Others are not going to make it and will lose precious time through no fault of their own.

Money will help. We, the TCUs, have demonstrated that we're good stewards of the funds we do have. We qualify, for the most part, as low-risk auditees in many cases.

In sum, we're asking that the BIE Education Stabilization Fund be distributed

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

equitably. That equitability should be determined by the number of persons we serve.

TCUs serve over 31,000 students and K-12 BIE schools serve about 46,000. An equitable share for TCUs would be 35 to 40 percent of the portion of the Education Stabilization Fund that's identified for the BIE, which is what our understanding was when the CARES Act was drafted. Thanks for your time.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you so much for your comments this afternoon, we greatly appreciate it. Phillip, we're going to move to the next participant this afternoon.

MR. ROULAIN: Yes. That is the number ending in 0761.

MS. VANDERHOOP: Hello?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you.

MS. VANDERHOOP: Great, great. Hi, my name is Martha Vanderhoop. I'm with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

And I actually have a question about, for the presenters, how the funds are going to be allocated and if we will be included?

We're a very small rural tribe on an island off of Cape Cod and we have no BIE-funded schools, but we do have many programs for our K-12 children, which includes after-school programs, vacation and summer programs.

And all of these children include components of cultural and language education. But it is also a huge help to all of our working parents, where we are able to help them with their childcare needs.

So, I am wondering how a small tribe like ours, if we would be included in this funding? Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Ruth, I wonder if you wanted to respond to that? That may be one that you could provide a little bit of insight to.

Ruth may not be able to respond at this time, but we're happy if you want to reach

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

out to us at learningsession@ed.gov to provide a little bit more information regarding your question following today's listening session. Thank you so much.

Let's move forward to the next caller that we have.

MR. ROULAIN: I have a number ending in 4505.

MR. SALLEY: Great. Caller, are you there? 4505?

MR. CALDWELL: This is Chris Caldwell. That's my number, but I already provided a comment.

MR. SALLEY: I'm sorry, can we have you speak just a little bit more clearly? We are losing you here, we had a little bit of break up.

MR. CALDWELL: This is Chris Caldwell. That's my number, but I have already provided a comment.

MR. SALLEY: Oh, great, thank you so much. Thank you. Why don't we move, Phillip,

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

forward for another commenter?

MR. ROULAIN: Okay. The call number ending in 2214. 2214? Okay, that person is not responding. We have the extension 6261.

MR. CASTRUITA: Hello, can you hear me?

MR. SALLEY: Yes, we can hear you --

MR. CASTRUITA: Hello?

MR. SALLEY: -- perfectly. Yes, can you hear us?

MR. CASTRUITA: Yes, my name is Alberto Castruita. I'm Principal at Crystal Boarding School in the Navajo Indian Reservation. Crystal Boarding School is located in a very remote area in the Chuska Mountains in Northern Western New Mexico.

We're a very small school, but we have about 120 students. The problem is that we're in such a remote area that we're going to need all that infrastructure for online teaching and learning for our students.

And it's very difficult to get all

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

this without funding. I was making some estimates as to how much it would cost us just to get the Chromebooks for our students and we're looking at about \$25,000.

When we look at the hot spots needed for the students, we're looking at about \$55,000. So, all in all, about \$100,000 just to get internet access for our students and to be able to do online teaching and learning.

And of course, there is other needs, such as we don't have a counselor at our school. We would need a counselor because of all the impact that this pandemic is having on our students and also their families.

And we have a lot of other needs. Our school is very old. It was built in 1935. And so, it's over 80 years old and it's a facility that doesn't lend itself to a lot of technology infrastructure. So, we would need to have upgrades in our Wi-Fi and other technology infrastructure.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

I'm not sure what the conditions are of all those colleges and universities out there, but we're just one of the many BIE schools and I know that a lot of them are in the same conditions, that they're pretty old.

We have a lot of students and the access to our students for technology is not going to be very good. So, I would appreciate that you look at BIE operated schools, which are really dependent on the number of students, and the formula for the ISEP distribution.

We don't have tuitions coming into our schools like the universities do. So, we would appreciate that you focus on the BIE K-12 schools, because, like I said, we don't charge tuition and I know that the colleges already have their allocation for the CARES funds too. Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you so much (telephonic interference) go ahead.

MR. CASTRUITA: Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Okay. We appreciate your comment, thank you so much for your comment. We may have got our wires crossed at the Department. All right. Phillip, could you please reveal who the next caller is?

MR. ROULAIN: The number ending in 3955. We're looking for the caller ending in 3955.

MR. SALLEY: We may have lost that person, why don't we go forward?

MR. ROULAIN: Okay.

MR. SALLEY: We also do appreciate everybody taking the time to mute their lines to continue with the call quality this afternoon, thank you.

MR. ROULAIN: Okay. The next extension is 2214.

MR. METOXEN: Hello, this is Mitchel Metoxen.

MR. SALLEY: Hi, welcome.

MR. METOXEN: This is Mitchel Metoxen

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

with the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. I'm the Manager of our Higher Education Department.

In 1996, the Oneida Nation created our own higher education scholarship and decided to use our funds to fund tribal members attending accredited colleges across the United States.

With COVID-19 and our choice to shut down our casinos, we don't have revenues to continue. We don't anticipate revenues to bring us back in line with our scholarship for at least two years.

My question is, are dollars going to be given to colleges with a direct purpose of supplementing tribal scholarships? Or will there be dollars given directly to tribes to process for their members? Can the amounts considered for college students (telephonic interference) pre-COVID-19 amounts that that tribe would have given?

And when resources are directed for this purpose, can we get a website, a phone

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

number, a funding code, or some place that we can give out to our tribal members so the students can do research on their own and/or educate financial aid officers that such funding exists? Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Great, thank you. Thank you so much for the comments.

Just as a reminder to all of our participants who have called in this afternoon, we appreciate the folks who have taken the time to mute their lines. That helps us to continue with enhanced call quality. If you cannot mute your line, you can do Star-6 on your phone and that helps us to ensure that participants are uninterrupted in their comments.

Once again, we're hearing a couple of feedback points here, if we could get everybody to mute their lines, that would be really helpful in terms of ensuring that we have uninterrupted participation.

We're still hearing a couple more

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

people, if you could mute your lines, that would be very helpful for the call this afternoon. All right.

Phillip, could we proceed with the next comment?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, that would be number 6261.

MR. CASTRUITA: I already made my comment, thank you.

MR. ROULAIN: Okay. We're now at --

MR. SALLEY: Okay, great.

MR. ROULAIN: -- number 4790.

MR. SALLEY: It doesn't look like we have that person. I know we have some tribal leaders on the line this afternoon who may not have had an opportunity to present. I've gotten a couple emails of folks who would like to participate.

I do want to acknowledge a couple of the tribal leaders who have expressed interest, we want to make sure that we get in those

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

comments.

And then, just a general announcement for everybody, we are going to extend our participation for 15 additional minutes beyond just the close. We were initially going to close in about three minutes, but we recognize that during this disruption, we lost some valuable participation time and want to ensure that we can get in as many folks as possible.

If we could acknowledge the Navajo Nation and their designee, I believe they have a designee for presenting this afternoon, that would be helpful to have those comments.

MS. KANAZBAH CROTTY: Yes. This is Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty with the Navajo Nation.

MR. SALLEY: Okay, go ahead.

MS. KANAZBAH CROTTY: All right, thank you. On behalf of the Navajo Nation, I'd like to submit our position in terms of the distribution factors and methods.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

The schools in the Navajo Nation represent a third of the entire Bureau of Indian Education system. The land of the Navajo Nation extends over 27,000 square miles, three states, and nine counties.

There are 66 Navajo BIE-funded schools and two Tribal Colleges and Universities that service the Navajo Nation. Within the BIE school system here, 31 are P.L. 100-297 Tribally Controlled Grant Schools and one P.L. 93-638 Indian Self-Determination Contract School.

We urge the Department to consider both land mass of the tribe reservation and the cluster of the number of schools serving tribal communities in addition to the weighted school units.

We urge the Department to include tribal education departments in the allocation of this fund. The Navajo Department of Dine Education is not only an oversight entity ensuring compliance with federal, state, and

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

tribal laws, but it also ensures schools implement the Dine language.

The Department of Dine Education staff provide direct and on the ground support to all the schools on and off the reservation who serve Navajo students.

Providing a percentage of this allocation to tribal educational departments will create more support to the various schools, staff, and students across the expansive Navajo Nation.

We support including Tribal Colleges and Universities in the distribution formula. We also support allowing local schools the flexibility to determine their own priorities on how to use those funds.

However, we support balancing flexibility with appropriate guidance as determined by (telephonic interference).

We support a distribution process that does not require reporting requirements and

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

support a simple, blanket statement, such as the certification or attestation of the funds dispersed as provided in the CARES Act, similar to the certification tied to the U.S. Treasury distribution.

If there are reporting requirements, please consider (telephonic interference) short form, as opposed to a long and detailed (telephonic interference).

Our needs of our BIE schools and students on Navajo Nation, we have a dire need to increase access to broadband spectrum, technology and accessibility is limited, or absent even, throughout the Nation.

Although some schools have issued Chromebooks to each of their students, many students are not even able to access their assignments. (Telephonic interference) along with other community partners have established Wi-Fi hot spots for our Navajo students --

MR. SALLEY: Amber, we're starting to

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

lose you, here. Can you -- we're losing you, as well as call quality.

MS. KANAZBAH CROTTY: So, if you could improve our cell service too, that would be wonderful. How am I coming through now?

MR. SALLEY: This is much better. I understand the challenges you're dealing with on your call here.

MS. KANAZBAH CROTTY: Thank you. I'll wrap up. So, making --

MR. SALLEY: No, we appreciate your comments, you don't have to wrap it up, I just wanted to make sure we capture them accurately.

MS. KANAZBAH CROTTY: Okay, I appreciate it, thank you so much for helping us moderate.

Navajo Nation must have access to broadband, just like urban areas. Broadband access in every home is now a necessity, just like any other public utility.

With this fund split for distribution,

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

not only one school will have the capacity to ensure broadband access to each of their students.

Navajo Nation would (telephonic interference) wholly equitable broadband access (telephonic interference) to support tribes in their advocacy efforts and pressing Congress to pass a comprehensive infrastructure bill that will support rural tribal governments in constructing cell towers and installing all extended fiber optic cables needed to bring this public entity to our Navajo citizens.

Our schools are doing a lot of printing and delivering of academic learning packets. This has put a burden on their administrative cost allocation.

Our schools are also utilizing their school buses to deliver grab-and-go meals, learning packets, over long distances and harsh terrain. We anticipate a need for additional funding for necessary upkeep, repairs, and

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

replacement of these seasoned school buses.

The Navajo Nation has not only been hit hard by COVID-19 and many of our students are feeling the loss of loved ones and family members, they're dealing with that grief.

And so, we request that the Department allow traditional healing practices and the purchase of traditional medicines as an allowable cost. And in addition, increase allocation for sanitizing schools. (Native language spoken.) Thank you very much.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you, Amber. We appreciate your comments on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

I just wanted to see if there are any additional tribal leaders on the line who would like to provide public comment before we move back to the general public comment period this afternoon.

MR. JACOBSON: Hi, this is Mark Jacobson, I'm the Superintendent with the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Quileute Tribal School, and I'd like to share a few things.

First of all, thank you for your time. It's embarrassing that gas stations and Kwik-E-Marts have more technology available than many of our schools. This issue needs to be resolved for all of our schools and colleges alike.

I'm not here to argue that one school deserves more money than another or that one college or the colleges deserve a bigger share than the BIE schools, that's not my issue.

What I'm suggesting is, over the next few months, the BIE and colleges and schools should get together and come up with a plan, what is the minimum technology that should be available or provided to every one of our schools and colleges? And we call that an equity matter. The State of Washington --

MR. SALLEY: Did we lose you from Quileute? We may have lost the gentleman. If you call back in, we're happy to accept the

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

comment, or by written comment, we can still do that.

Are there any additional tribal leaders on the line this afternoon before we move forward?

And just as a gentle reminder this afternoon, if you could mute your lines to ensure that we have enhanced call quality, that would help all of us out, so that we can hear everybody and everybody's comments are adequately captured for the record.

Since we do not have -- if you cannot mute your line, you can do Star-6, that would help us. Once again, just a reminder to please mute your line. And Star-5, we can accept comments if you use Star-5.

Phillip, can you move us back to any of the callers who may be in the queue?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, I still have two numbers that are showing as wanting to provide comments. The first one ending in 8560.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: Okay. 8560, is the caller on the line for 8560?

MS. BEAUDIN: Good afternoon, this is Michelle Beaudin, Secretary Treasurer of Lac Courte Oreilles, Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians. And I have our Vice Chairwoman, Lorraine Gouge, and our Councilwoman, Glenda Barber, as well as our College Chief of Staff, Dr. St. Germaine here. And we would like to provide comments.

We would like to support, along with the other tribes, the availability of internet access to some of our rural areas. We have quite a disparity in our area and some of our communities have no communication or access to any types of internet.

We would like also to have support in flexibility in spending of the funding that comes down, between both the BIE schools and the college that we have here on our reservation. We have needs at both, in both areas.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

And one of the big barriers is internet access. With our casinos shut down, and we support these programs, we are unable to (telephonic interference) tribal levels. So, that also is (telephonic interference).

MR. SALLEY: Great. Thank you so much for your comment this afternoon, that's very helpful. Are there any additional callers who are in the queue?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, I have call ending in 8196.

MR. SALLEY: 8196, okay.

MR. SHENDO: Good afternoon, everyone. This is Kevin Shendo, the Education Director for the Pueblo of Jemez. And I'm listening on the call on behalf of our tribal leadership.

And I have one comment that I wanted to make is, there's been a lot of mention about infrastructure and investing in technology and high speed access for schools in the rural and tribal areas.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: Please, go ahead. Kevin, did we lose you here? Okay. We may have lost Kevin. If Kevin calls back in, we'll be sure to get his participation.

MR. SHENDO: I'm right here.

MR. SALLEY: Oh, go ahead. Go ahead.

MR. SHENDO: Okay. I got a message that my line was muted, so I stopped talking.

MR. SALLEY: I'm sorry about some of the technology glitches here. We appreciate your persistence.

MR. SHENDO: Okay, not to worry. So, one of the things that we're running into here with our BIE school is, we have a consortium fiber that is E-Rate funded that is supporting our tribal libraries and our charter schools.

However, we are having problems with connecting to the BIE because of a federal contract. So, and our entity not being a part of the federal contract and different contracting rules that the government has.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

So, as you're looking into investing in technology at the local schools, please also consider the internal policies that may be within the government or the government agencies to make sure that there is flexibility given to access technology or fiber or connectivity that may be supported by the tribe, not necessarily under the government contract, but that is more cost-effective and more efficient.

That's one of the challenges that we're having in connecting our local BIE-operated schools. So, if you can consider that as well as part of the investment, not only financially, but internally in terms of rules and regulations, in making things accessible, to happen more timely. Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you, Kevin, we appreciate your comments this afternoon. Phillip, do we have any additional callers in the queue?

MR. ROULAIN: No, we do not.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: Okay. Given that we do not have any additional callers left, if you could -- I'm sorry? I think that's it.

Given that we don't have any additional callers in the queue this afternoon, ordinarily, we would have a couple slides to close us out this afternoon, with all kinds of information. But I will send that to you guys early this afternoon --

MR. ROULAIN: I'm sorry, Robert?

MR. SALLEY: -- first, I just want to -- yes, Phillip?

MS. BLUEEYES: I've been trying to --

MR. ROULAIN: I've had two --

MS. BLUEEYES: -- push Star-5 this whole time.

MR. ROULAIN: I've had two --

MR. SALLEY: Yes, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: -- new numbers show up as being ready to give comments. One is --

MR. SALLEY: Do we have more comments?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. ROULAIN: -- 6980.

MR. LOPEZ: Yes. David --

MR. SALLEY: Why don't we go ahead and take that comment right quick, and then, we'll close out this afternoon?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. LOPEZ: Okay. Hi, this is David Lopez, calling from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Can you hear me?

MR. SALLEY: Go ahead, David. Yes.

MR. LOPEZ: Hi. I'm from Taos Pueblo, an attorney in Santa Fe, New Mexico for grant schools on the Navajo Nation and other states. Glad to see so many clients and colleagues and friends on the call today.

Proud to say that one of my clients, Shiprock Associated Schools, is being used as a recovery facility for pandemic patients over on the Navajo Nation.

Which raises the issue of facilities planning, because Shiprock Associated Schools is

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

going to need some more facilities money for deep cleaning once the recovery facility moves out.

Plus that, whether grant schools that have residential operations will need additional money for facilities to set up for the fall and also for deep cleaning, which is an issue that Delegate Crotty raised.

Also to echo Delegate Crotty, whatever reporting requirements are attached to these funds should be as simple as possible. I think that should do it for me for today.

MR. SALLEY: Great, thank you so much, we appreciate your comments. And then, was there one more caller on the line who was trying to get in?

MS. BLUEEYES: Yes, there was.

MR. SALLEY: Please, go ahead.

MS. BLUEEYES: This is Faye BlueEyes with the Dzilh-na-O-dith-hle School, Program Director, Director of Finance/Special Projects here on Navajo Nation.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

MR. SALLEY: Please.

MS. BLUEEYES: My comment is, we are aware the Department of Interior regulations published in 25 CFR Part 39 serve as established agreed upon rules for distributing Indian Education funding among all schools in the BIE system.

By using the ISEP methodology as set forth in the Part 39 regulations, the Department will be able to get the \$49 million in emergency funding to schools quickly and equitably.

As for the \$157.75 million, we recommend that these funds from the Department of Education are distributed to BIE system schools using the existing mechanisms in place in the interests of fairness and efficiency.

We also strongly recommend that the Department and the BIE do not try to create a new ad hoc method for the distribution of the CARES Act funding and that these funds are not used for BIE administration.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

Our schools here, as Tribal Community Controlled Schools, we are the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis in supporting our students, families, and communities as they suffer tremendous unanticipated hardships.

As our schools and dormitories have closed, we are seeing families in crisis and making choices as to whether they should buy milk or soap. And our cafeterias continue to prepare food and our buses are transporting meals to ensure our students have breakfast and lunch.

And lastly, in listening to this session, it seems like the Native tribes are being pitted against each other for these funds, TCU versus K-12 programs. If so, this is not part of our culture, as we all support our own people and provide valuable services to them. Thank you.

MR. SALLEY: Thank you so much, Sage, for your comments, we do appreciate that.

At this time, we're going to conclude

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

the comment period this afternoon. Ordinarily, like I had started to say, we would have had a deck that, a slide that would have had all of our resources.

I do want to take a minute to acknowledge that we do appreciate everybody's patience and persistence through the technology issues that we've had this afternoon. Once again, this was unforeseen by the Department of Education.

What we will do, as kind of next steps from here, our listening@ed.gov box is open to accepting comments through May 1, which is tomorrow.

We encourage anybody who was not able to participate today or wants to have some additional comments to share in writing to provide those. Those will be entered into the record and considered as we work with both the Department of Education and the Department of Interior around these funds.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

A couple other kind of key points. On the Department of Education's website is the Education Stabilization Fund. We'll provide that information to you so that you have that information, where to locate that.

And certainly, we encourage you guys to reach out to staff at both the Department of Education and BIE.

We try to (telephonic interference) for participants today and we hope that we reached everybody's inbox and that we didn't leave anybody in the transition to new technology today.

We wish everybody well. We thank everybody for your participation this afternoon. And we do appreciate your patience through these technology glitches today. Thanks again, have a great day.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:17 p.m.)

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

NEAL R. GROSS
COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com