

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

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TRIBAL CONSULTATION FOR STATE TRIBAL EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIPS (STEP) AND AMERICAN RESCUE
PLAN (ARP) FOR TRIBAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (TEAS)

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MONDAY
APRIL 26, 2021

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The meeting convened via
Videoconference, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Ron
Lessard, Acting Executive Director, White House
Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native
Education, presiding.

PRESENT

RON LESSARD, Acting Executive Director, White
House Initiative on American Indian and
Alaska Native Education
JULIAN GUERRERO, JR., Director, Office of Indian
Education
SHAHLA ORTEGA, STEP Program Lead, Office of
Indian Education
MARDELLA RICHARDSON, Tribal Tech, LLC
RUTH RYDER, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office
of Elementary and Secondary Education
DONNA SABIS-BURNS, Group Leader - Discretionary
Grants, Office of Indian Education

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

(1:00 p.m.)

MS. RICHARDSON: Good afternoon and welcome to today's tribal consultation for State Tribal Education Partnerships and American Rescue Plan for Tribal Education Agencies.

Next slide. Today the Office of Indian Education is conducting consultation for two separate discretionary grant programs. State Tribal Education Partnership Program will be held from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. STEP -- this is an overview of the STEP Program, authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1965 as amended, ESEA, longstanding grant program.

Eligible applicants: a tribal education agency that is from an eligible Indian tribe and is authorized by its tribe to administer this program or a consortium of TEAs in partnership with the state education agency and the local education agency. Grants to establish and build capacity of TEAs, promote increased collaboration between TEAs, SEAs, and

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LEAs. Grants do not fund direct services to students.

This is an overview for the American Rescue Plan for Tribal Education Agency Program.

That tribal consultation session will take place from 2:45 to 4:15 p.m. Authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. First ever competition for this grant program. Eligible applicants, tribal education agencies only, grants to improve educational opportunities and achievement of Indian children and youth includes a specific list of authorized activities. Grants do fund direct services to eligible Indian students.

Next slide. Just to go over some housekeeping items for today's session, all lines have been muted. This tribal consultation and the Webinar audio, video format is being recorded. Participants will be given an opportunity to present remarks and comments following the presentation of tribal consultation and questions. Comments will be received first

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from tribal government officials.

Comments from the public will be received following those of all tribal government officials. When speaking, please state first and last name, along with your title and your organization/entity that you represent before delivering your comments. Comments will be limited to the consultation questions. Should you need technical assistance, feel free to contact our toll free line at 866-648-0654 and press zero, or contact Mark Taylor at mtaylor@tribaltechllc.com.

Next slide. In the event technical issues arise that should compromise our tribal consultation from being held on the Zoom platform, a traditional conference line will be used. An email with the conference call number and additional instructions will be sent to everyone registered for today's tribal consultation event. This will only be utilized in the event the Zoom platform should become compromised.

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Next slide. Now we will go over the STEP agenda. We will have a welcome and introductions, followed by backgrounds and overview, tribal consultation questions, tribal leader comments, public comments, and then there will be a break.

Next slide. At this time, I would like to introduce your moderator, Mr. Ron Lessard. He is the acting Executive Director for the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. Welcome, Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Mardella. Thank you, everyone. It's really an honor for me to moderate today's tribal consultation. First, I want to honor all the tribal leaders that have joined us today. We really honor your comments. We respect you and this is what it's about. You know, consultation with elected tribal officials with -- you know, with federally recognized tribes and their designees.

So I want to thank you again for joining us today. I am Mohawk. I'm Ron Lessard.

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I serve as the acting Executive Director for the White House Initiative, as well as the Tribal Consultation Official for the Department of Education.

At this point, I would like to go over -- We have some really distinguished folks presenting today from the Department of Education. And every one of these people I'll be introducing is sincerely committed to Indian country and the critical issues that affect our children -- our native children in schools. So I want to thank them very much for joining today.

At this point, I would like to introduce Ruth Ryder, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Second Education, OESE.

MS. RYDER: Thank you, Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you.

MS. RYDER: And thank you all for joining us today. Ron, I want to send out a special thanks to you for the leadership that you provide, especially in your role as the

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Department's Tribal Consultation Official. I know you take tribal consultation very seriously as we. And we are very pleased to be here with you and with all of our tribal representatives for today's consultation session.

The focus of today's consultation opportunity is to solicit meaningful input from tribal leaders on how we design the program for the State Tribal Education Partnership, as well as the American Rescue Plan for Tribal Education Agencies. So for efficiency, we have allowed time for consulting separately on these two programs. And we thank you again for joining.

Tribal consultation is an opportunity for us to hear from tribal communities and use tribal comments to guide our work as we deliver technical assistance and design programs that serve Native students. We at the Department are committed to ensuring that tribal consultation is ongoing and meaningful. And I especially appreciate all of the work from the Office of Indian Education as the OIE invests a great

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amount of time and effort for each of the grantees across the country.

We hope that we will -- We hope to gather your input on how to better design our grant programs for the State Tribal Education Partnership Program for one-year and three-year STEP grants. Tribal leaders are encouraged to share best practices and success stories that advance the vision of greater collaboration and coordination among state, tribal, and local educational agencies.

For the American Rescue Plan, the ARP provided \$20 million to tribal education agencies. These awards are intended to support and promote the role of TEAs in public education.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to say a few words about the importance of tribal consultation and to let you know how seriously we take our responsibilities. I thank you for attending today's tribal consultation session. And we look forward to the next time we can meet, hopefully in-person, in the near future as we

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continue this important work.

At this point, I'm going to turn it over to OIE's Director, Julian Guerrero, Jr. Julian?

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, Ruth. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. You know, to everybody joining virtually, welcome. Good morning. Good afternoon. It's such a pleasure to join you again virtually and once again have an opportunity to truly advance the purpose and the essence of a government to government relationship.

Tribal consultation is a very serious process. And if anything, the Office of Indian Education is committed to the work of consultation. And committed to supporting, you know, the best ways that we can get input, receive input, and use that to meaningfully impact the way we do our business, the way we conduct business as an OIE and as a Department.

So I'm enthralled. I'm very happy to be joined, not only amongst by colleagues who I

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hold very highly, but then also with each and every one of you across the country. So I encourage you to, you know, participate, give some input, and really continue to stay connected to not only this consultation, but other opportunities to interact with the OIE.

We have many things going on and a lot of fast moving parts. But throughout that whole process, we're committed to making sure that technical assistance, tribal consultation, connecting the work to tribal communities that deserve it so much, is at the forefront of what we do. So with that being said, I want to thank you so much. And I give it back to Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Julian. You know, those of you in Indian country that know Julian know how honored we are to have Julian with us at the Department of Education. His experience and expertise are really going to continue to help and assist the work we do with Native students in Indian country. So thank you, Julian.

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It's also now my pleasure to introduce Donna Sabis-Burns. She is the group leader of discretionary grants for the Office of Indian Education. And I must say, it's always nice to have another Mohawk on the call. So please Donna, go ahead.

MS. SABIS-BURNS: Thank you so much, Ron.
(Native language spoken).

Hello. My name is Donna Sabis-Burns. I'm Haudenosaunee from the upper Mohawk area from the Turtle Clan. And I want to say good morning -- well, Hawaii time. Good afternoon, Eastern and the rest. Thank you so much for being here and taking time out of your day. Bringing you to the table is most important in doing this work. So I really appreciate your presence, your comments, and I look forward to the conversation. Back to you, Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. Thank you, Donna. And next, it's a real pleasure for me. I think most you probably know if you've worked with Shahla Ortega -- Shahla is the STEP program lead

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for the Office of Indian Education, and also the COR for the -- for the work that we do with Tribal Tech and the contractors. And I really appreciate working with her. I know the Department of Education appreciates her and all that she does. And so at this point, I'd like to introduce Shahla.

MS. ORTEGA: Thank you so much, Ron. And it's always a pleasure to be back doing another tribal consultation. I know we've been doing this for a while. And I want you to know that every time I do it, it's very exciting to me to be included. And as a non-Indian, I really appreciate the opportunity to work with many of you. And try to do my best whenever and wherever is possible to further the goals and objectives of OIE and the programs that I'm involved with.

And one last correction to make, I used to be the COR, but that opportunity has moved on to another office. And I'm still helping out, but in a non-official COR capacity. Thank you, Ron. Back to you.

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MR. LESSARD: Okay. Thank you so much. So at this point Shahla, I'm going to go back to you. I was a COR for the White House initiative, so when you're not the COR, it's nice you don't have that all work to do.

MS. ORTEGA: Right.

MR. LESSARD: But I thank you. And so I want to turn it back over to you, so that you can go through the background, you know, of State Tribal Education Partnerships today. And let our tribal leaders and designees of those on the call know what we're doing today.

MS. ORTEGA: Right. So let's have the next slide. Okay, so with that -- and I want to thank you, Ron again for all the warm and kind words that you just spoke. And I want to say hello to everyone and thank you all for taking the time to attend this session. As we know, my name is Shahla Ortega and I serve as the Program Lead for STEP.

However before I start, I'd like to just do a quick run on how we got here. As many

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of you already know, STEP has gone through some changes over time that shaped what we can offer each time we conduct a competition. Back in 2012 for example, the program started as a pilot to build capacity and partnership between tribal education agencies, TEAs, and their respective state education agencies or SEAs. I was fortunate -- I was fortunate enough to be one of the people who was brought over from another office to work in OIE on this specific program and I've been with it ever since.

Since then, we've gone through several changes, such as including local education agencies, or LEAs, in the partnership building. And also in 2019, we offered, for the first time, we offered a one year program to enable tribal nations that didn't have a TEA or tribal education department as sometimes called, TED, already established to establish one.

Last year in 2020, we went back to the three-year program. We offered the three-year program with expanded activities in

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apprenticeship and partnership building. And in that 2020 program, we also included an opportunity to convert BIE schools to tribally-controlled schools.

Today, we'd like to ask questions that help formulate the next STEP competition. Although we're not going to have a competition this year, we plan to do so next year hopefully with as much input from tribal nations to as many of these STEP questions as possible. Please note that your response to these questions are very important to us and will influence next year's STEP competition. So if you haven't already done so, please respond to these questions either through the chat box today or email your response to tribalconsultation@ed.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time tonight.

I also want to note that the PDF version of this presentation has already been uploaded into the chat box to ensure that all participants can see all of the questions to give feedback on. After collecting and analyzing your

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feedback to these questions, which may take a few months, we will publish our findings in the Federal Register. An announcement will be sent out to all participants when the notice is published in the Fed Reg and we will also put something on our website for you to access this notice that we're going to publish.

Next slide. Okay, now we're going to go over the purpose and authorization for the STEP program. The purpose of the State Tribal Education Partnership -- STEP Program are to promote tribal self-determination in education, to improve the academic achievements of Indian children and youth, and to promote the coordination and collaboration of tribal education agencies with state education agencies and local education agencies to meet the unique educational and culturally-related academic needs of Indian students. This program is authorized under Section 6132 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended, ESEA.

Next slide. Now the STEP programs

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supports two different grant competitions; a one-year grant program for tribes who create TEAs, as we said, and a three-year grant program to build capacity to coordinate and collaborate with SEAs and LEAs. Under the STEP program, the Secretary may award grants to eligible applicants described under Subsection (b) (1) (A), an education tribe or tribal education approved by an Indian tribe to plan and develop a tribal education agency if the tribe or organization has no current tribal education agency for a period of no more than one year.

And eligible applicants described under Subsection (b) (1) (B), a tribal education agency for a period of no more than three years in order to: (A), directly administer education programs, including forming the grant programs. (B), build capacity to administer and coordinate such education programs. (C), Receive training and support from SEA and LEA. (D), train and support the SEA and LEA. (E), Build on existing activities or resources. And (F), Carry out

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other activities. This is the statutory language that governs the STEP Program and was the basis for what we used to run the one-year grant in 2019 and the three-year grant in 2020.

Next slide. Now I know we've already gone through the protocols for questions, but I just want to go over it one more time in case some of you just joined us. And please note that all lines will be muted -- or have been muted, actually. This tribal consultation and the Webinar audio video is being recorded. Participants will be given the opportunity to present remarks and comments following the presentation of the consultation questions.

Comments will be received first from the tribal government officials and then from the public. And whenever speaking, please state your first and last name, along with your title and organization or entity you represent before delivering your comment. And please, remember the comments must be limited to the consultation questions only. Thank you.

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Next slide. Now we're going to go over the program and what it supports. Again, some of this has been repeated but it always helps to repeat again. The STEP Program supports two different grant competitions; a one-year program for tribes to create TEAs and a three-year program to build capacity to coordinate and collaborate with SEAs and LEAs.

There are going to be 12 STEP questions. And we've divided these questions into three separate categories. Category 1 is going to be questions that are general in nature.

Category 2 will be questions that consist of one-year start-up programs. And Category 3 is going to be about the three-year capacity building grant program. And what we're going to do is we're going to start with Category 1, which is general questions and then work on our way through the other two categories.

Next slide. So here, we're going to start with general questions, Category 1. Question No. 1 is, is your tribal nation more

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interested in a one-year start-up or a three-year capacity building grant? And select one of these options. And Tribal Tech, would you open the poll for the participants to select an option?

MS. RICHARDSON: The poll is now live for responses.

MS. ORTEGA: You will have a couple seconds to respond. Some of you may be putting your response in the chat box. We'd appreciate if you'd respond to either of those two. Pick an option; either one-year startup or the three-year capacity building grant. Tribal Tech, how are we doing with the responses?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have 37 out of -- We have 37 responses out of 80 participants on the line. It seems that the responses have stopped. I'll end the polling. The results are now viewable on the screen for all.

MS. ORTEGA: Could you read the results please?

MS. RICHARDSON: Sure. We have 16 percent for one-year startup and 84 percent for

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three-year capacity building grant.

MS. ORTEGA: Great, thank you. Let's go to the next slide. The next question is also a general question. And it reads, if you're interested in a STEP grant, is your tribal nation more interested in working with an LEA, SEA, or both? Tribal Tech, please open the poll. And please select one of the options; LEA, SEA, or both.

MS. RICHARDSON: The poll is now live. At the moment, Shahla, we have 35 responses. Would you like us to close the poll?

MS. ORTEGA: Yes, I think so. I think we've gone over two seconds. Could you tell us what the results were?

MS. RICHARDSON: Sure. We have 9 percent for LEA, 3 percent for SEA, and 89 percent for both.

MS. ORTEGA: Great, thank you. All right, let's go to the next slide. And on this slide, this is the last general question that we're going to pose. And it reads, what do you

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think are the most important areas to target resources to ensure more effective partnerships with SEAs? And here are some of the areas. (A), curriculum, (B), geographic area, (C), Staff, and (D), grant or other funds. These are just some examples of what you could target to build a more effective partnership with SEAs if you choose to do so. So Tribal Tech, could you open the polls? And please select one of the options: curriculum, geographic --

MS. RICHARDSON: The poll is now live.

MS. ORTEGA: So the options are curriculum, geographic area, staff, or grant, or other funds. And let's give a couple of seconds.

MS. RICHARDSON: Alright, Shahla. We've received 36 responses. I will close the polling at this time.

MS. ORTEGA: There seemed to be a question about what is an SEA? SEA stands for state education agency.

MS. RICHARDSON: The responses to the polling: Curriculum 26 percent, geographic area

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11 percent, staff 32 percent, grant or other funds 32 percent.

MS. ORTEGA: Great, thank you. Let's move on the next slide. And the next slide is going to be about the one-year program. This is our second category that we talked about. First question deals with, what work is needed to establish a TEA? Here, we are especially interested in hearing from recipients of the FY-19 one-year grant about any challenges you might have faced or from other tribes that have recently established a TEA.

So let's open the polls and this is an open-ended question. Actually we're not polling. It's an open-ended question and you can type your question in the chat box.

MS. RICHARDSON: When typing in your chat box, please make sure the To line reads, all panelists and attendees, to ensure that everyone can see your response. Thank you.

MS. ORTEGA: Seems like somebody has a question about what a tribal education agency is.

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We often refer to tribal education agency. It's also known as the tribal education department by tribal nations. And it's usually an organization within the tribal nation that oversees the education of elementary and secondary education of Indian students.

I see some are still typing their preference response to the open-ended question. We're going to give it one more second and then move on. Remember, if you don't get to finish today, or you think of other examples that you want to include, you can always send your response in an email to tribalconsultation@ed.gov after the consultation is over. You have until 11:59 p.m. tonight to do so.

Okay, so in the interest of time, I think we're going to continue with the next slide. Okay, we're still under the year one STEP Program questions. The next question is asking you to tell us, is developing a tribal education code necessary to establishing a TEA? Is developing a tribal education code necessary to

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establishing a TEA? Again, this is an open-ended question and you can type your response in the chat box. You'll have a few seconds to do so. If you don't end up finishing or you have more to say, then you're always welcome to send us an email to tribalconsultation@ed.gov.

Okay, so we're going to go to --

MS. RICHARDSON: Hold on. There's a clarifying question in the chat box.

MS. ORTEGA: Yes?

MS. RICHARDSON: It says, are you soliciting questions from tribal representatives only, or would you like responses from all attendees?

MS. ORTEGA: I think we clarified that, that we are asking -- And I want Ron to step in to clarify as well. We're asking tribal leaders to comment first and then the public. Is that correct, Ron?

MR. LESSARD: Yes, that's correct. We will be going -- After we finish up with you presenting the questions, we will go to tribal

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leader comments first. And then we will -- we will ask for public comments.

MS. RICHARDSON: I think this is in referencing to the polling questions. Can all participants provide responses to the polling questions?

MR. LESSARD: I believe so, yeah.

MR. GUERRERO: Yes, this is Julian. So yeah, that's a great question. Go ahead and put in your information, Alex. We match the names to the registration information that was already provided in order to join this consultation. So don't worry about withholding any comments you want to put in the chat box.

MS. RICHARDSON: And there was another comment asking if we could pace the conversation so that it's not moving so quickly through the questions.

MS. ORTEGA: We'll do our best to do that.

MS. RICHARDSON: That is all. Thank you.

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MS. ORTEGA: So right now, we're on Question No. 5. It's an open-ended question. And you may type your response to this question in the chat box. So the question again was, is developing a tribal education code necessary to establishing a TEA?

I think we're going to have to move on to the next slide. Next slide. Again, this is a one-year program question. And it reads, how much time is needed between getting a one-year grant and having enough capacity to compete for a three-year grant?

Again, this is one of those open-ended questions. And you may type your response in the chat box. And we'll do our best to give you enough time to respond. So go ahead and tell us, how much time is needed between getting a one-year grant and having enough capacity to compete for a three-year grant? Very good. I see several of you already responded.

MR. GUERRERO: Shahla, if I can mention one other thing as well.

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MS. ORTEGA: Sure.

MR. GUERRERO: So if any of you are worried that you're not going to be able to verbally state your comments, once we're done with all of these questions, there will be a slide for tribal leader verbal comments. And then there will be a slide for public comments as well. And that would be -- That's the verbal opportunity to provide input. So please continue to provide your input via the chat box, but I just want to let the folks know on the line today to rest assured that there will be a verbal opportunity once we run through all of these questions.

MS. ORTEGA: Thank you, Julian. Again, the question is, how much time is needed between getting a one-year grant and having enough capacity to compete for a three-year grant? We're going to give it a few more seconds and then move on.

Okay, so let's move on to the next question. The next question -- Again, this is a

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one-year grant program question. What activities or requirements do you think is important to prioritize for one-year grants?

Again, this is one of those open-ended questions where you type in the chat box what you think it should be. Again, the question reads, what activities or requirements do you think is important to prioritize for one-year grants? So if there are any activities or requirements that you think are important to prioritize for a one-year grant, please type them in the chat box for a one-year grant.

Okay, so it looks like some of you are still typing, so we'll give it a few more seconds. Again, number seven on the one-year program, it asks about the activities or requirements that you think are important to prioritize for a one-year grant. This is your chance to let us know what you think they should be -- these activities. We're going to give it a couple more seconds and then move on.

Okay, now let's move on to the next

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set of questions. This was the last question for the one-year program. We're going to move on to questions for the three-year program. And the first one reads, how should the Department define capacity building for established TEAs?

Again, this is -- this is for a three-year STEP Program. And it's asking you, how should the Department define capacity building for established TEAs? Again, this is an open-ended question and you can type your response in the chat box.

Again, this is the first question for a three-year grant program. And it reads, how should the Department define capacity building for established TEAs? So this is one of several questions that are designed for the three-year program STEP questions that we're going to ask you. And the first one as you know is, how should the Department define capacity building?

By Department, we're talking about the U.S. Department of Education here, just to clarify. So how should the U.S. Department of

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Education define capacity building for established TEAs? So we're going to give it a few more seconds. Many of you are still typing, so we'll give it a few more seconds.

Okay, so Tribal Tech, let's move on to the next slide. Next question, again for a three-year grant program is, is your tribal nation interested in developing, monitoring, and evaluating effective culturally responsive practices with SEAs? This is a yes or no polling question. And Tribal Tech, would you go to the polls -- open the polls?

MS. RICHARDSON: The poll is live for response.

MS. ORTEGA: Great. And here we're asking you to tell us: Is your tribal nation interested in developing, monitoring, and evaluating effective, culturally responsive practices with SEAs? Choose one of the two; yes or no.

MS. RICHARDSON: We've received 29 responses so far. Shahla, would you like us to

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close the poll?

MS. ORTEGA: Let's leave it open a little longer -- maybe a couple of seconds more.

So great, are we still receiving responses?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have stopped at 33 responses so far.

MS. ORTEGA: Okay, so let's close the poll. And could you tell us what the result is and put it on the screen so they can see.

MS. RICHARDSON: Sure, it's 100 percent in favor of yes.

MS. ORTEGA: All right, fantastic. Let's move on to the next slide. Now this question is identical to the previous one we just polled, but it's for the LEA. And it reads: Is your tribal nation interested in developing, monitoring, and evaluating effective culturally responsive practices with the LEA? And the responses are yes or no.

MS. RICHARDSON: The poll is live for response.

MS. ORTEGA: Again, this question is

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identical to the one we asked for the SEA part and it's for the LEA. Is your tribal nation interested in developing, monitoring, and evaluating effective culturally responsive practices with LEAs? And you have the option to choose yes or no.

Tribal Tech, have we received responses?

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, ma'am. We've received a total of 32 responses.

MS. ORTEGA: Okay. Let's just give it one more second -- a couple of more seconds.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, ma'am.

MS. ORTEGA: Thanks. A comment is made that the yes and no creates a fuzzy picture. Do the best you can and if you still want to comment, please add your comments in the chat box. Okay, so how are we doing so far, Tribal Tech?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have a total of 38 responses.

MS. ORTEGA: Great. Let's close the

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poll.

MS. RICHARDSON: It looks like --- yes, ma'am.

MS. ORTEGA: And read the results.

MS. RICHARDSON: So we have 97 percent responded yes and 3 percent responded no.

MS. ORTEGA: Thank you. Let's close the poll. All right, now we're going to move on to the next question for a three-year STEP Program. And the next two questions are going to be multiple choice. And the first one reads: In what area would your tribal nation is most likely to receive training and support from the SEA or LEA? And this again is a multiple choice question. And here are the choices: (A) Data collection and analysis. (B) Grants management and monitoring. (C) Fiscal accountability. Or (D) Other.

Now we realize that this is just an example of what's out there, so "other" is a place where you can add your own. These are just examples of the areas you could consider when

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training and support for SEAs and LEAs are considered -- concerned. So you could also suggest other areas during the comment period.

MS. RICHARDSON: The poll is live and responses are coming in.

MS. ORTEGA: Great.

MS. RICHARDSON: Shahla, there was a comment to add research design.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. RICHARDSON: That's meant as an "other" option perhaps. I'm not sure.

MS. ORTEGA: Okay. Yes, "other" is the one that could be chosen for anything else other than what we listed here. And you can add it in the chat box if you don't get a chance to add here.

MS. RICHARDSON: We've received a total of 31 responses so far.

MS. ORTEGA: Let's give it a few more minutes because there are some people who are typing.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, ma'am.

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MS. ORTEGA: Again, the question is: In what area would your tribal nation most likely to receive training and support from the SEA or LEA? And you've got several choices. It's a multiple choice. You can either choose one of the areas we have listed here or add your own under "other". We're going to give it a few more seconds and then move on. Okay, very good. So could you tell us what the results are, Tribal Tech?

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, ma'am. Ending the poll. For data collection and analysis, there's 45 percent. Grant management and monitoring, 27 percent. Physical accountability, 6 percent; other, 21 percent.

MS. ORTEGA: Great, thank you. Let's move on to the last question for the three-year program. Okay, this is our last question for the STEP Program, you know, for the three-year program. So this question is also a multiple choice. And it reads: Which, if any, of the following priorities would you like to see in the

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next competition? And these priorities listed are: (A) TEAs with limited prior experience. (B) TEAs who operate or authorize tribal schools. (C) TEAs who have at least three affected LEAs that engage in ESEA 8538 consultation. And (D), TEAs who are prior recipients of a STEP grant.

And here I'd like to add something about the Section 8538. Under this section, an affected LEA is one that either has 50 percent or more of its student enrollment made up of American Indian/Alaska Native students or received an Indian education formula grant under Title VI of the ESEA as amended by ESSA in the previous fiscal year that exceeds \$40,000. So those were the -- sort of the parameters for the affected LEAs under C.

So this is a multiple choice. Please open the polls. Again, the question is the last one for the three-year program and the last question for the STEP tribal consultation portion. And it reads: Which, if any, of the following priorities would you like to see in the

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next competition? And those options are: TEAs with limited prior experience, TEAs who operate or authorize tribal schools, TEAs who have at least three affected LEAs that engage in ESEA 8538, and TEAs who are prior recipients of a one-year STEP grant.

And under Section 8538, an affected LEA is defined as having 50 percent or more of its students' enrollment made up of American Indian/Alaska Native students or received an Indian education formula grant under Title VI of the ESEA as amended by the ESSA in the previous fiscal year that exceeds \$40,000. Multiple choice.

I see a comment, someone wants to change their answer to another option they choose. Can they do that, Mardella?

MS. RICHARDSON: They're not able to unsubmit their response in the poll here, but we can make a note of it for the record.

MS. ORTEGA: Thank you. And for the person or those of you who are interested to

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switch with --- your response to this multiple choice, also please be sure to make a note of it in the chat box so we can have a record of it. Thank you.

Again, this is the last question for STEP and it involves the three-year program. Which, if any, of the following priorities would you like to see in the next competition? TEAs with limited prior experience, TEAs who operate or authorize tribal schools, TEAs who have at least three affected LEAs that engage in the ESEA 8538 consultation, and TEAs who are prior recipients to a one-year STEP grant.

And as we mentioned, Section 8538 about affected LEAs is defined as: That the LEAs have at least 50 percent or more of their students enrolled made up of American Indian/Alaska Native students or that they receive an Indian education formula grant under Title VI of the ESEA as amended by ESSA in the previous fiscal year that exceeds \$40,000. So Tribal Tech, how are we polling on this one? Are

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we still --

MS. RICHARDSON: There are 35 responses so far. It looks like the responses have slowed down.

MS. ORTEGA: Okay, let's give it a few more seconds. Okay Tribal Tech, let's close the polls. And show us what the response was. Could you read them?

MS. RICHARDSON: TEAs with limited prior experience received a response of 39 percent. TEAs who operate/authorize tribal schools, 22 percent. TEAs who have at least three affected LEAs that engage in ESEA 8538 consultation, 33 percent. TEAs who have prior recipients of a one-year STEP grant, 6 percent.

MS. ORTEGA: Great, thank you. Close the polls.

MS. RICHARDSON: Yes, ma'am.

MS. ORTEGA: Great. And this brings us to the end of our tribal consultation questions for STEP Program. I want to thank all of you who took the time to respond to these

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questions. We look forward to receiving your comments on all or any of these 12 questions later on. Now I'm going to turn it over to Ron. Thank you. Ron, go ahead.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Thank you, Shahla. Thank you, Mardella for going through those questions -- our 12 questions. Important information we can look forward to, to gather that information from you as we look forward.

At this point, we're going to enter into tribal leader comments. We want to, you know, indicate to you that you have seen the questions. You've looked at the questions in the chat box. You'll be able to access the slides with all the questions. And that we would like you to do, tribal leaders, is to raise your hand to be recognized, state first name -- your first name, last name, title, and tribal affiliation and tribe. And state the question to which you are referring. And with that, we'll open it up for any tribal leader comments.

MS. RICHARDSON: Hi, Ron. There is one

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person with their hand raised. Chris Meyer.

MR. LESSARD: Yes, Chris. Hello, Chris.
How are you?

MS. RICHARDSON: Chris, you should be
able to unmute yourself.

MS. MEYER: Can you hear me, Ron?

MR. LESSARD: I can hear you, yes.

MS. MEYER: Okay. Chris Meyer, Coeur
d'Alene tribal member and the Director of
Education for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. And our
Chairman, Chief Allan has designated me as the
representative for our tribal leadership.

And I would really like to support the
STEP Project. But I'd like to see it revert back
to the initial purpose of the STEP Project. And
that was for tribes to develop relationships --
working relationships with our state agencies,
our LEAs. I found that to be very, very
effective. It provided the Coeur d'Alene Tribe
the means to be able to enter into a very strong
relationship with our state education agency and
our LEA.

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MR. LESSARD: Great, thank you. And Chris, I want to thank you for reminding me that now we're opening for tribal leader comments, but any designee or tribal leader that has, you know, designated you to participate in the tribal leader portion of this -- the comment portion. So thank you.

MS. MEYER: You're welcome.

MR. LESSARD: Do we have any other tribal leader comments?

MS. RICHARDSON: Ron, we have one additional hand raised from Laurie Harper.

MR. LESSARD: Hi, Laurie.

MS. RICHARDSON: You should be able to unmute your line.

MS. HARPER: Hi, Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Hi. How are you?

MS. HARPER: Good. So I am the Tribal Education Director and the designated authority by Chairman Jackson of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and our tribal council.

And one of the comments that we want

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to make sure is on record, one of our recommendations is that the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe recommends that the Department increase the collaboration and communication amongst the STEP Program grantees.

The number of grantees is small and increased collaboration and communication could be accomplished either by the Department assuming a more active role in coordinating the collaboration and communication or by adding a program requirement that would require STEP grantees to participate in and report to the Department on collaboration and communication with other STEP grantees. That's about our capacity building. Right?

We would -- so I work for a tribe that has not received a STEP grant. And it would be really helpful if we were to be able to hear from other tribes -- other tribal educational agencies that have established those relationships with SEAs and how they define them. So having that increased communication amongst the grantee and

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best practices is what Leech Lake would be recommending.

We also recommend that the Department of Education assume a more active role in providing technical assistance or other support for STEP grantees. And that's about sustainability of work accomplished under the STEP grants. As you see in those comments, several grantees often are starting from scratch in their partnerships. And while the grant itself is an important component of developing a partnership, more assistance is needed to help the grantees maintain that partnership beyond the term of the grant.

Again, sustainability. The Department could establish a program requirement for annual post-grant reporting to the Department by former STEP grantees or solicit voluntary feedback from former STEP grantees through surveys or other means.

So those are just a couple of the comments. We are working on submitting a letter

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before 11:59 p.m. So, (Native language spoken).

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Yeah, those are great comments. And soon I will let everyone know how to go ahead and submit written comments if you're not able to or --- today respond or if you want to, you know, have some extra time, we'll set -- we'll put that up there soon. So next, do we have any other tribal leader comments?

MS. RICHARDSON: Ron, Quinton Roman Nose has his hand raised.

MR. LESSARD: Hello, Quinton. How are you, sir? How are you, sir?

MR. ROMAN NOSE: Just fine. Good afternoon. Quinton Roman Nose. I'm Cheyenne -- citizen of Cheyenne Arapaho Tribe, but I'm calling today as the Executive Director for TEDNA, Tribal Education Departments National Assembly. There's so many questions to be answered and so many answers. But I really appreciate OIE doing this and getting the turnout that it has gotten.

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We are going to submit some written comments but I want to verbally address Question 12. It says: What are the following priorities?

One of the answers I wanted to provide was that, there should be a separate category for TEAs who have already received a STEP grant so they wouldn't be competing against TEAs who have never received a grant.

So then also, you know, I was sitting here listening to comments and you know, getting the input. But unfortunately there's more tribes out there that don't have a TEA than the ones that do have a TEA. So unfortunately, they probably didn't get the information or probably don't have the person or you know, whatever, they're not in attendance. So I would really like to see TEAs without, you know, any experience -- you know, never have receiving a TEA or STEP grant. So I would like to see that as a priority in a separate competition.

We were able to help a group of federally recognized tribes of Virginia, our VA

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STEP Program. They created their own consortium to serve as their TEA. It's been a very successful project to be able to help those tribes who are really small and don't have that ability to sustain a consistent TEA. The consortium would be able to band together and address many of the issues that we talked about.

So I would ask that, you know, OIE consider those options or some of the choices that, you know, you're going to give these new tribes who have never received TEAs. Thank you.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Thank you, Quinton. I sincerely appreciate your comments and I want to thank everyone -- those of you who know Quinton has many, many years of, you know, helping our Native youth to achieve all these things that are important to them and important to their communities.

I wanted to ask one thing, is if Joe Garcia, Brother Joe if you are still on the line, if you would like to make a comment.

MS. RICHARDSON: Ron, we have two more

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hands raised and we have ten minutes left to the STEP tribal consultation section.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. First of all, Joe, are you there? Okay, we can go on to the next person.

MS. RICHARDSON: Okay. Next, we have Dr. Sherry Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON: Hi there. I'd like to -
-

MR. LESSARD: Hi.

DR. JOHNSON: My name is Dr. Sherry Johnson. I'm the Education Director for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate out in Sisseton, South Dakota. And I am the council appointed and approved council -- tribal council representative for all matters in education.

And with that said, I know one of the -- we have chartered three tribal schools. One is an off-reservation boarding school, two on tribal schools. And we have five public school systems that we work with. And three of them have over more than 50 percent Native American. And

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one of the things that I really wanted to comment on was the fact that, you know, I've tried as the Educational Department to get a STEP grant for capacity building. And being that I stepped into this role as the Education Director for the first time as our tribe really didn't even know how to provide me any guidance in what to do. And I actually just had a computer and a phone. So the support was very little and I had to figure out what this job was. And so you know, I did try to get into having the opportunity of having the STEP grant. And when I approached my local education entity, my biggest one is the public school system. And they says well, what do you want -- what do you want from us? And so it was real vague on how to develop those partnerships with the public school system. And they didn't understand what I wanted either.

And so you know, as I was building my capacity, I wasn't sure of what questions to ask them. So it's huge that we have that support and that support be provided in the -- they usually

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have a pre-grant workshop. And so that part really needs to come out in the pre-grant workshop.

I see a huge need for additional funding for the STEP Programs to increase if it's that competitive that we have a hard time getting these fundings. And these are the only fundings that are available for these capacity buildings and it still is a struggle.

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

DR. JOHNSON: And I will reserve the rest of my comments for written comments. And I will have them in before 11:59 tonight. And I want to thank you again.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you so much, Dr. Johnson. Thank you. Who else do we have in the chat box?

MS. RICHARDSON: The next hand raised is Patricia Whitefoot.

MR. LESSARD: Hello, Patty.

MS. WHITEFOOT: Yes. Good morning, Ron.

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MR. LESSARD: Good morning.

MS. WHITEFOOT: I'll be brief here. I just want to -- okay, so my name is Patricia Whitefoot. I'm with the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians. And I serve as the Education Committee Chair for our tribes here, I have 56 tribes here with the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians.

I just want to go on record to also reiterate what was said previously that was shared to maintain the original intent of the STEP grants to build capacity in our tribes and also sustain those working relationships with the state education agencies on an ongoing basis beyond the grant periods.

And in our case, we have a few that are here. But I'm just concerned about that sustainability beyond the grant period. We want to make certain the good work that's going on with the state education agencies continues and that we do whatever we can to promote that working relationship that's been established.

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Further, in many of our Northwest communities, we are also faced with unique geography and ecological issues in the environment. And so we want to pay attention to this in terms of these types of grants that are available to address also the health, safety, and climate-related issues that's facing our tribal communities.

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

MS. WHITEFOOT: And then finally, I'd like to just say that I think we should take a look at the kind of criteria that we're considering given the fact that in some of our tribal communities --- you know, we have community villages that may be located a ways from us and they're small villages. So I would not take into consideration the \$40,000 Title VI threshold. And we need to seriously take a look at all of these thresholds because our tribal villages are still a part of our community. And so we need to just take a look at that in another way.

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MR. LESSARD: Thank you.

MS. WHITEFOOT: So as you pursue this opportunity for next year, really need to take a serious look at -- even though we have our villages that aren't on our reservations, they're still a part of our communities. So just pay attention to the geography of our --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

MS. WHITEFOOT: --- our lands. Thank you very much.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Patty. Thank you so much. I sincerely appreciate you and all the work you have done. I am going to ask one more time if Joe is on the line. Joe Garcia? Okay, if we don't have any more questions in the chat box -- Mardella, do we have any others?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have four minutes left to the tribal consultation and we have one more hand raised. Russell "Buster" Attebery.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. And then we have -- and then we will -- if we have no others,

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we'll go to some public comments too before we move to an intermission.

MR. ATTEBERY: Can you hear me?

MR. LESSARD: I hear you, yes.

MR. ATTEBERY: (Native language spoken). My name is Buster Attebery. I'm the Karuk Chairman out here in Northern California. And I co-chair the subcommittee for TIBC, along with Councilman Joe Garcia.

MR. LESSARD: Oh.

MR. ATTEBERY: So thank you. I know we only have a few minutes and my apologies for getting on a little late. It seems like we have all kinds of Zoom meetings these days. But my question is something that's come up at TIBC and it's -- we're seeking funding for Native students that attend public schools. Because across the country, 93 percent of Native students attend public schools. I know we have Title VI funding, but those are -- those don't meet our needs. And we would like to look into how we could structure, if we could get more funding for

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Native students that attend public schools.

(Native language spoken.)

MR. LESSARD: Thank you very much and give our best to Joe. So Mardella, at this point, I'd like to -- do we have time to do some public comments?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have two minutes if there's anyone who would like to provide a public comment, please raise your hand.

MR. LESSARD: Yeah and I just want to remind folks, the public comments again, that the questions -- you've seen the questions and they're in the chat box and in the slides. Please raise your hand to be recognized. State your first name, last name, title, tribal affiliation, organization, and the question to which you are referring to.

MS. RICHARDSON: There are no hands raised at this time.

MR. LESSARD: I'm sorry?

MS. RICHARDSON: There are no hands raised at this time.

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MR. LESSARD: Okay. We'll just wait one more minute and then -- I do want to mention for those of you on the line --

MS. RICHARDSON: One hand has been raised.

MR. LESSARD: Okay.

MS. RICHARDSON: Songtree Pioche. I apologize if I said that wrong.

MS. PIOCHE: No, you're good. Thank you for recognizing me. I appreciate it. My name is Songtree Pioche. I am in rural Taos Pueblo, Oglala Lakota, married to Navajo.

MR. LESSARD: Oh.

MS. PIOCHE: I'm Zooming in from Bloomfield, New Mexico, which is in the Northwest corner of New Mexico. And we have three school districts here with a significant population of Native American students. I'm on the Indian Education Committee.

And my comment is one of the issues we ran into recently in our work session is that -- so in Aztec School District, there's about 11

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different tribes recognized -- or tribes --- yeah, recognized in like the CIBs or the Form 506 ones. But all of the programs are specifically for Navajo students. So as the staff person said that there's Title VI verbiage that there's only a requirement to consult with tribes that are less than 50 miles away. So now that, you know, a lot of tribal languages including Pueblo of Taos, Tohono O'odham, Navajo, Lakota, like they all have online language --

MR. LESSARD: Right.

MS. PIOCHE: -- programs available. Like if that is true -- because I haven't taken the time to research that -- I feel like those updates, especially like with President Biden doing the Tribal to Tribe -- Nation to Nation Tribal Consultation Initiative, like the school staff that are serving Native students need to be, you know, aware of these changes in laws so that our Native students can be served.

In New Mexico, we have some amazing work happening. We have the Indian Education

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Act, multicultural act, Yazzie/Martinez. We have a lot of things happening that are great -- is great work. But once you get down to like a parent like me advocating at the local level, you know, you run into school staff that are still operating on policies that are like years old. So that's my comment.

MR. LESSARD: Yeah, thank you very much. You know, one of the things that the Department of Ed has done with administration of Native Americans in BIE is the -- our MOA on the preservation and revitalization of Native languages. And we'll be doing another summit. We've done seven of them. But we've had several requests to emphasize that in the future, including funding that could support some of that work. So --

MS. RICHARDSON: There's one more hand raised.

MR. LESSARD: Okay, one more. We'll take one more question.

MS. RICHARDSON: Isaac Salcido. And

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that will be the last comment we will take for the STEP Program.

MR. LESSARD: What is your name again please? Could you state your name again please?

MS. RICHARDSON: Isaac Salcido, you should be able to unmute your line.

MR. LESSARD: No? Mardella, could you put the next slide up please?

MS. RICHARDSON: Sure, the next slide?

MR. LESSARD: Yeah. Did we hear back from that person just now?

MS. RICHARDSON: We have not.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. So here is the slide for submitting a written comment. So please, all written comments will be collected through tribalconsultation@ed.gov, which is the email address. The comment period is currently open and all comments must be received by 11:59 tonight. I know it's short and quick, but we really do need to get these comments in. So you know, I appreciate you joining us today.

So I want to mention -- so with that,

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I'm hoping -- we're going to take a brief break. It's 2:34. So we've got about ten minutes. We'll come back at 2:45 exactly and start again. And then at that point, we'll be starting the American Rescue Plan -- that's ARP -- for tribal education agencies. And we'll go from 2:45 to about 4:15. So those of you that can stay with us, please do. And we appreciate all your comments regarding the STEP Program. And please get those comments in. And then again, if you're able to stay with us for the American Rescue Plan portion of this, we would sincerely appreciate it. And we'll see you back in about ten minutes at 2:45. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:35 p.m. and resumed at 2:45 p.m.)

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