

INTERAGENCY NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES  
WORKING GROUP

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LISTENING SESSION

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THURSDAY  
MARCH 17, 2022

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The Listening Session convened via Video Teleconference, at 1:00 p.m. EST, Phillip Roulain, Facilitator, presiding.

PRESENT

PHILLIP ROULAIN, Facilitator, Tribal Tech  
MILO BOOTH, US Department of Transportation  
MARY DOWNS, National Endowment for the Humanities  
TRACY GOODLUCK, US Department of the Interior  
JULIAN GUERRERO, US Department of Education  
WIZIPAN LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT, US Department of the Interior  
HOPE MacDONALD LONE TREE, US Department of Health and Human Services  
CLIFF MURPHY, National Endowment for the Arts  
HOPE O'KEEFFE, Library of Congress  
MICHELLE SAUVE, US Department of Health and Human Services  
MORGAN RODMAN, White House Council on Native American Affairs  
RON LESSARD, Acting Executive Director, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities  
GUHA SHANKAR, Library of Congress  
ARLANDO TELLER, US Department of Transportation  
NANCY WEISS, Institute of Museum and Library Services

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ALSO PRESENT

AMI ADMIRE, Rincon Indian Education Center  
FAITH BEGAY-DOMINIQUE, Rosebud Economic  
Development Corporation  
LESLIE HARPER, National Coalition of Native  
American Language Schools and Programs  
KA'IULANI LAEHA, Aha Punana Leo  
MARIANA MANSFIELD, Elk River School District  
JUSTIN ZUNIGA, Hungry Valley Education Advisor

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

(1:00 p.m.)

MR. ROULAIN: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Interagency Native American Languages Working Group listening session, advancing the Memorandum of Agreement on Native languages. This session is now beginning.

Before we begin, some of the housekeeping is, all of the lines have been muted, and you will be unmuted when it's time to do remarks to the questions, which will be presented later in the presentation. Participants will be given the opportunity to present remarks and comments with priority given to tribal leaders. Whenever you are speaking, please announce your name, title and tribal affiliation.

As a reminder, this is a closed press event. Please contact 202-401-1576 or email at [press@ed.gov](mailto:press@ed.gov) for questions.

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located in the pull-down menu, under "More", at the bottom of your screen, on the right side.

If you are experiencing any technical issues with your sound, please contact the host, Mark Taylor, or myself, Phillip Roulain, through the "Chat" window, using the "Private Chat" feature, and we will respond to your message. You may also reach us via email at [mtaylor@tribaltechllc.com](mailto:mtaylor@tribaltechllc.com) or [proulain@tribaltechllc.com](mailto:proulain@tribaltechllc.com).

I am now going to turn it over for introductions to Julian.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you so much Phillip. And at this time, I'd like to turn it over to Wizipan Little Elk Garriott, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary with the U.S. Department of Interior. Wizipan.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT:

(Native language spoken.)

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: I am going to talk, introduce myself in Lakota and spend the rest of the time speaking in English. My name is

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Wizipan.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: I greet each and every one of you with a good heart. I am a citizen of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate, also known as the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. And I come from the Wrapped Hair Band (phonetic) in the Sicangu.

First, I want to thank you for attending today and for all of you, for joining the listening session focused on the native language, a memorandum agreement. This is an agreement among 10 federal agencies that was announced at the White House Tribal Nations Summit last November.

I also want to thank all of my, all of our federal partners for joining us today, who are signatories to the MOA. and especially welcome our new signatories to the MOA. As we expand the MOA we look forward to greater participation from across the entire federal government. And we hope that we'll be able to announce new partners in the future.

We know that native languages, my

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native language preservation revitalization is a critical priority for tribes and their citizens, because language goes to the heart of who we are.

And is at the center of our identities and culture. Our languages are not just words, they hold our past, present, and future, and make us who we are, connecting us to belief systems that have been passed down since time immemorial.

The survival of native languages is essential to the success of tribal communities and native life ways. Unfortunately, we know that there have been many challenges and obstacles placed before us that have contributed to language loss among many tribal nations. And that we've been experiencing language loss for decades.

Perhaps, the worst of these challenges was the Indian boarding school era that was designed to culturally assimilate native children. And who were removed from their home communities and relocated often to distance residential schools where their native

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identities, languages, traditions, and beliefs were forcibly suppressed.

However, native nations and native people are strong and resilient. And we have preserved and continue our strong, our traditions as powerful nations, exerting sovereignty and leading in this modern era.

Including leading on protecting and revitalizing our languages, from immersion schools, the belt learning programs, online learning, and elder housing programs that promote living languages. And tribes are developing unique and creative opportunities to protect and preserve their languages.

The federal government recognizes that we need to support tribal nations in this regard, and we are committed to doing our part. This is why in November, we announced a renewed effort on the native language MOA, that has previously been signed by the Obama administration. We worked it, to make it more robust and sought out new signatories within our federal family.

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The MOA acknowledges that the federal agencies share a mutual interest in preserving, protecting, and promoting the rights and freedoms of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop native languages, and establish a Native Language Working Group to advance the goals of the MOA, and engage with stakeholders on best practices, data collection, consultation, technical assistance, and development of an action plan based on the goals within the MOA.

This needs to be a joint effort between the federal government and all of you, our tribal leaders, native language practitioners, and community members. We know that we need to seek your input, advice, and expertise to help us make this effort stronger and more robust.

So, today, we want to hear from each of you about the success stories, the best practices, challenges, and barriers you have overcome and that you still face. Throughout the course of this listening session, my colleagues

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will post specific questions that we want to hear from you on, and other thoughts and ideas you might have.

On the next slide, or screen here, is the background I've provided to give more context about the MOA.

Now, I'd like to turn it over to my friend, and my colleague, Mr. Arlando Teller, Special Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation. Thank you, to each and every one of you. I appreciate everyone's participation. And as we say in Lakota --

(Native language spoken.)

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: Which means to give one's greatest and deepest heartfelt gratitude.

MR. TELLER: Thank you, Wizipan. I sincerely appreciate participating and supporting and encouraging this effort to sustain and maintain our native language.

(Native language spoken.)

MR. TELLER: Hello, everyone. Again, my name is Arlando Teller. I introduced myself in Navajo, my clans first, so that I can establish kinship, relationship, and also a maternal and matrilineal relations as far as my mother's clan. She is Zuni People adopted into the Redstreaked-Forehead clan. My father's clan are the Water Flows Together clan.

My mother is from a small community called Valley Store. My father is from the canyon of Canyon del Muerto in northern Arizona, called Twin Trails. And so, today I'd like to share with you the list of agency partners and introduce those key representatives who will be working throughout the years, and the programs, to ensure that we successfully address and encourage this effort.

First is the White House Council on Native American Affairs, Mr. Morgan Rodman and Tracy Goodluck. Department of Health and Human Services, Hope MacDonald Lone Tree and Michelle Sauve. Department of Education, Ron Lessard and

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Julian Guerrero. Department of interior, we've heard from Wizipan Little Elk Garriott and Travis Clark.

Here at Navajo -- or not Navajo, here at Department of Transportation, myself, Arlando Teller and the Director for Travel Affairs, Milo Booth. At the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mary Downs. The National Endowment for the Arts, Cliff Murphy. The Library of Congress, Guha Shankar and Hope O'Keefe. And Institute of Museum and Library Services, Nancy Weiss.

Again, thank you very much for joining us, and continue encourage, utilizing our native language. The next slide, I'd like to hand over to Ron Lessard, who will serve as a question facilitator.

(Native language spoken.)

MR. TELLER: Thank you.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Arlando. My name is Ron Lessard and I am Mohawk. I'm with the White House Initiative on advancing

educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity for Native Americans, and strengthening tribal colleges and universities.

Next slide, please. Next slide. A little bit of housekeeping, I would like to mention with, for questions to the public, I wanted you to know that this is an opportunity for you to be heard. We want you to please announce your name, your title, your tribal affiliation for the record.

And we ask that elected tribal leaders, have the first opportunity to speak. Please use the "Raise Your Hand" feature to be recognized for speaking. Next slide, please.

So, I'm going to pose the first four questions. I'm going to read these questions, and then we're going to welcome responses from tribal leaders.

Question 1, "How has the pandemic impacted the language preservation efforts?"  
Question 2, "How has the pandemic impacted the behavioral mental health of language keepers?"

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Number 3, "What does language preservation and maintenance look like from the COVID-19 recovery effort?" And Number 4, "What are the success stories of language preservation and maintenance during the pandemic?"

And now, we would like to welcome tribal leaders to respond.

MR. ROULAIN: Ron, so far, no one had indicated that they are going to respond.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. I'll ask one more time if there are any tribal leaders or tribal leader designees that could ask them to respond to these four questions?

Phillip, any response?

MR. ROULAIN: No, sir. No one has indicated that they wish to respond to these questions.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. Thank you. Next slide, please.

Again, I'd like to remind you -- if you could go back one? Again, I'd like to remind you, that this opportunity for you to be heard,

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so again, please announce your name, title and tribal affiliation for the record. We ask that the elected tribal leaders have the first opportunity to speak. So, please use the "Raise Your Hand" feature to be recognized for speaking. And next slide, please.

Now, I'd like to go through questions 5 through 8. Number 5, "How has the virtual learning helped or deterred your language lessons?" Number 6 is, "What would help your language preservation efforts to be more successful?" Number 7 is, "How do you envision your language preservation efforts growing in the next 10 to 20 years?" And Number 8, "How can technology be used to support language preservation and maintenance?"

MR. ROULAIN: Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

MR. ROULAIN: Leslie Harper has indicated to speak.

MR. LESSARD: I wanted to clarify something Phillip. If we go back to those first

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four questions, and if there were no tribal leaders responding, we could open it for others.

And then move onto the Questions 5 through 8. Is that correct?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, sir.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. Thank you. Do we have anyone with Questions 1 through 4?

MR. ROULAIN: Leslie Harper has indicated to provide some remarks. If you could please unmute yourself, Leslie. Thank you.

MS. HARPER:

(Native language spoken.)

MS. HARPER: I am Leslie Harper. I am an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. And I appreciate you folks coming together for this listening session today.

Today, I am representing language revitalizers at a community grass roots level, and through the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs.

I appreciate all of you agency folks coming together and asking these questions. And

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appreciate and respect asking the elected tribal leaders for their priority responses. And then also, am grateful that you've given us an opportunity as well, to respond.

I am here to advocate for Native American languages expansion and further support.

So, we really appreciate this. Several of our partner Native American language schools and programs, which are language immersion programs from childcare settings, all the way through post-secondary settings, have responded in previous Senate hearings that were looking at the impacts of the pandemic upon our language preservation efforts.

And then, community members have presented comments in that regard as well. But we really appreciate looking at this and talking about it in today's efforts. The pandemic across the board, had impacted a lot of native language immersion sites.

You know, we had to go into distance learning for extended amounts of time, which made

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it really difficult to deliver the language in those intergenerational ways. And had to really, really look at building up other efforts to keep our community members safe.

And many of our first and master language speakers passed away during this pandemic time, which is putting more and more immense pressure onto our new adult language learners, our new language learners to step in and fill their shoes.

So, we've talked about this for decades, in language preservation and revitalization, that we always feel like we're at the, at the, the clock is ticking, right, with losing our speakers. And are we keeping up, and maintaining, and growing new speakers to take the place, and to create a healthy, thriving language community?

I think the pandemic really impacted so many of our efforts, and said, we really need to step this up, but how do we do this in a safe manner? the behavioral and mental health of

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language keepers has been greatly impacted in some ways. And there's balance, right, when we live in our languages, and live in our cultures, we start to find these balances.

The great challenge is, and the great negative impacts on the behavioral and mental health of language keepers is, we do have reports from our language speakers, who said, I feel really nervous about my health, but I feel that we really need to pass this on. And we need to keep speaking our language. How do we make this work? And they just felt so much pressure on that.

And then, on the other hand, we'll find a bright spot, right. They'll say we are determined to help keep our language alive. And we are determined to learn the ways that we can do this. Language preservation and maintenance in a COVID-19 recovery effort, really did change.

Some folks did shift to figuring out how to do, how to use tech. How to use online meeting platforms and, you know, we really had to

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shift in our communities to even be able to get internet connection in some places, to be able to get devices that we could use to safely work with our language keepers and language speakers in a way that kept them safe from getting sick from this illness.

To teach them how to connect, troubleshooting tech efforts, purchasing equipment, such as microphones and headphones, and figuring out how to use them. Ensuring that people have their electric bills paid to access technology out in some of these very rural areas, but also in the urban areas where language revitalization efforts are happening.

So, those -- I mean all of a sudden, language preservation and maintenance efforts started looking at infrastructure and considering those kinds of things too. And all of a sudden programmatic and administrative duties became much larger than, we are going to go into a place to share some language.

Where I'm speaking contextually in our

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language about some everyday activities that would occur between children and parent generations, all of a sudden, we needed more people. We needed more resources to be able to put the pieces together. And so, that was really stressful.

But in a way, if we had the chance to do it, it was able to start looking at what is the real capacity building need of language revitalization and preservation efforts? What does that really look like in a pandemic? And it does get us looking at very critically, what are we doing right now, on the ground? But how can we look to the future?

Language revitalization is much larger than, you know, just a couple of people and a couple of young folks and speaking the language.

We started to realize that we needed many, many, many more supports.

Some success stories that we would take out of that, like I said, is learning how to use technology. Some communities, but not all,

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but some communities were able to access that and start to build out efforts through that.

Success stories was, there are some new ways of looking at language preservation and maintenance. I will say, they start to consider that we need greatly increased resources. We need many, many more human resources. We need to involve many more people on the ground. That means, we need to be able to provide living wages, stipends, and honoraria to honor that knowledge and to help people maintain their language.

Physical infrastructure, like I said, we need to make sure that people are able to connect, whether it's equipment, or virtual, or telephone. So, looking at really having the space to consider a long-term effort, I guess, would be a success story. And so, now we look forward to working with you folks to figure out how to bring more in.

(Native language spoken.)

MR. LESSARD: Leslie, this is Ron. I

had a question. What funding sources did they use for tools acquired to support shifting in service delivery during the pandemic?

MS. HARPER:

(Native language spoken.)

MS. HARPER: Ron, thanks for checking in on that as well. So, some of the real common funding sources did work really closely with our local efforts, right. They checked in and said, do you need to change your plan? ANA language preservation and maintenance grants and Esther Martinez Initiative project funding was really helpful in that way.

I am not familiar with any current NSF program, so I'm not sure how that went. That would have to be from someone else. And then the Department of Ed's NAM program had some good outreach as well. You know, they said, you know, we got checked in on. They checked in on us and said, do you need to adjust this in different ways?

And then also, just working with our

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tribes with the influx of the federal COVID relief funding that came in from different sources. So, looking to some of our early childhood efforts, or some of our K-12 and our post-secondary efforts did work with different agencies to purchase equipment. Laptops, you know, tablets, microphones, speakers, things like that, to be able to, purchase those, masks, sanitizer, those kinds of items.

Some places did purchase some, you know, COVID tests to have on hand for when they were able to look at coming back together for their efforts. And we're talking about different groups. Some of the tribes, or organizations that we work with may only have five or ten people in their language, working on this. And others have dozens or a hundred people that they work with. So, you know, really looking at the size of the group that was working on it too.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you so much Leslie, you know, those of you who know Leslie, she's champion in this effort for many, many

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years. And we thank you. Do we have any other -  
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MR. ROULAIN: Next, we have Mr. Robert Gomez.

MR. LESSARD: Robert?

MR. ROULAIN: Robert, please unmute the microphone on your end.

Ron, Robert has not enabled his microphone on his end. So, we are unable to hear his comments presently.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Possibly, Robert if you can hear us, you could enter that question you might have, into the chat, and as soon as we get your audio here, we could get back to you.

Are there any other comments to Questions 1 through 4?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, Ka'iulani Laeha.

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

MS. LAEHA: Aloha Koko.

This is Ka'iulani Laeha coming from Hawaii, working with Aha Punana Leo. And I



guess, I'm going to be responding kind of in the context of our consortium that we have here in Hawaii. So, we have our Aha Punana Leo Hawaiian Language Nests throughout the state.

We also, have our Hawaiian Language College, Ka Haka #Ula O Ke#elikOlani, and its laboratory school program, that includes our Language Nests, also Nāwahīokalaniyōpuyu (phonetic), the laboratory school site, and representing the state's largest P through 12 Hawaiian medium program. The college and it also has three other laboratory sites.

Also in that consortium, we have our Hale Kuamo'o curriculum center, Imiloa Science Museum, and Mokuola Honua Global Center for Indigenous Language Excellence.

One important thing that I did want to point out is that the Hawaiian language consortium, we do aim to serve other Native American programs through our -- Aha Punana Leo's Hale Kipa 'Oiwī (phonetic) indigenous outreach program with visitors that we host, to see our P

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through 20 Hawaiian leading education system.

And we also provide support online to other Native American language programs through our Mokuola Honua Center. And our college does serve a number of non-native Hawaiian, Native American students at the school with a BA program, focused on linguistics, and also on, at the doctoral level, we have the only doctoral program focused specifically on language and culture revitalization.

And I wanted to echo a lot of what Leslie was saying. You know, I know that she brought up a lot of things about tech and how the pandemic kind of affected us.

In addition to that, I did want to talk a little bit about the, I guess, a lack of understanding within the educational establishment, within government funding, private funders, and also challenges in, just in general, in obtaining high proficiency, in endangered need of American languages, like Hawaiian.

For immersion in any language, I think

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it's generally agreed, or it is generally agreed upon that a teacher should have a professional level of proficiency, which takes a lot.

And it is very difficult to obtain that level of proficiency in languages -- well for speakers, first language speakers, English speakers, it's very difficult to obtain a professional level of fluency in languages unrelated to English because, you know, there is major differences in their associated cultures and also the world views. So, I just wanted to highlight that.

And then given the difficulty in reaching that professional proficiency, I think that, you know, we can see that there might need to be kind of an opportunity to strengthen Native American language programs geared towards that. Also. you know, looking into teacher's certifications that might support that as well.

So, I just wanted to highlight those things as we're working through the pandemic. Just noting that, making sure that we're able to

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maintain the level of proficiency for our language's programs for our laboratory schools is needed. Aloha.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you very much, really appreciate your comments and ask if we have any other comments for Questions 1 through 4?

MR. ROULAIN: Ron, currently no one else has their hand raised at the moment.

MR. LESSARD: I'll check one more time if we have any tribal leaders that have joined the call.

And no other comments for Questions 1 through 4, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: No, sir. Not at this time.

MR. LESSARD: And if you do have questions, when we move on, please put them in the Chat. So, next slide, please.

Again, I'd like to remind everyone this opportunity for you is an opportunity for you to be heard. Please announce your name,

title, and tribal affiliation for the record. We ask that elected tribal leaders have the first opportunity to speak, but please use the "Raise Your Hand" feature to be recognized for speaking.

Next slide, please. And again, I'll ask the question, if we have any tribal leaders?

And if there are none, do we have other comments on Questions 5, 6, 7, and 8?

MR. ROULAIN: Ami Admire.

MR. LESSARD: Yes, thank you and please come.

MS. ADMIRE:

(Native language spoken.)

MS. ADMIRE: Good morning. I'm Ami. I am from the Rincon Indian Education Center and I am Payómkawichum. We run a story telling program and we do language and culture throughout our school district and run native and indigenous clubs and classes. And that's where we disseminate a lot of our language and our stories.

And I think, to the first question,

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during the pandemic we did go virtual. We put our storytelling online. And it helped in a way that we were able to get some new books, but we still had trouble getting our students to go online.

And then what would help your language preservation efforts? I think like someone said previously, it would help our language efforts, if our school districts saw our languages as critical and essential to our students learning and development, and self-esteem and identity.

It's a struggle where we are, to have this collaboration with our districts in having them support our programming efforts. So, that would be really helpful, if again, the school could see us as critical and not guests. Throughout the pandemic, our head center was told that we were guests. And that's very traumatizing and hurtful for our people to be guests on our own land.

We are authorized by the California Department of Education to partner with the

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schools. So, we're not supplemental is what I'm trying to say. Just really feel passionately about that.

And how do we envision our language preservation? Again, it really takes everybody recognizing the importance of this language preservation and working together to find ways and means to build and support these programs for our students and our families.

And again, technology to be used to support language, yes. Like people have mentioned, we need access. And we've got mountain communities who, even if you give them all the equipment, still cannot receive internet services just due to geography. So, anyways, thank you so much for hearing me.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you very much, Ami. Appreciate your comments very much. Thank you.

MR. ROULAIN: Next, we have Leslie Harper.

MR. LESSARD: Hello, Leslie.

MS. HARPER:

(Native language spoken.)

MS. HARPER: Leslie Harper, National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs. I did speak a little bit about how virtual learning helped or deterred our language lessons previously. It's an access point. It helped in a way that, like in some of our cases, it could be like a triage kind of thing. Where we were able to still connect and give maybe a reduced amount of language, but still, you know, make a connection with our students.

For instance, if it was a childcare setting that had to close down, or an early Head Start setting that had to close down, you know, where we weren't able to be there with the children, or with the families of the children every day, it at least provided some support for a period of time. And others -- well, I guess I would say that for all ages, right, for K-12 and for post-secondary. So, it's a support strategy, virtual learning.

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For others, this was a completely new access point that may have been the first time that they were able to approach. We have a number of Ojibwe language learners in my area, here at Leech Lake, and then spread out across our region.

Adult language learners, I'll talk about that, where people are hungry to learn the language, and, you know, we weren't in person, specifically. But we were able to connect in an online way. And there were multiple, there are multiple new beginner language learning efforts happening in online setting. So, that was, you know, that's helpful. That's an access point, and it gets more people interested.

Now, we still need to be able to figure out how to create even greater access. I mean learning any of our Native American languages, I believe our colleague Ka'iulani, gave a statement earlier how difficult it is to maintain the proficiency, or to even gain the proficiency. It can take between a thousand and

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three thousand hours of instruction to gain a high level of proficiency in some of our native languages. They are so different from English or any of these other world languages that are widely studied.

So, think about that kind of an idea too, that while we have access, virtual learning has been a great access point, and a great entry point for many. And then it can help support some further study. It's not the be-all to end-all, but it is, it does create a positive language ecology. It creates a positive place, and it does create an access. So, that's how it's helped.

Deterring language lessons, one of our colleagues just stated, we're in the mountains. Virtual learning may not be accessible for us. We may not be able to get a signal even. And that's what we find in some of our very rural areas as well.

I'm out here in Northern Minnesota, very rural, very spread-out communities, and

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that's very similar to a lot of our partner schools and programs. So, if we're not able to get that access, if we don't have the supports, then that's definitely a deterrent to our language lessons.

What would help language preservation efforts to be more successful? We need massive infusions of funding support to be able to build out the capacity efforts. And we also need agency supports for policies that allow us eligibility, for tribes and tribal organizations to be eligible for agency programs. We need access and policy support that will allow us to assert our sovereignty and allow us to assert and reach those self-determination ideals.

When we come to licensing criteria, when we come to accreditation criteria, when we consider curriculum, acceptance for any of our sites, we need to be eligible entities. Whether they're tribal entities or Native American language tribal organizations, Native American language organizations that are leading these

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efforts.

We need to be seen as eligible entities to provide licensure, accreditation, to be applying safety and environmental standards that, you know, we would like to meet the efforts of state levels, federal levels, and then, you know, many of our sites actually go much, much higher than those requirements

But we need to open up those policy spaces and ensure that we are able to access that in an equitable manner to any of these English medium programs that are out there, or any other heritage, refugee, immigrant language programs that are out there. We need eligibility to be there as well.

How do we envision language preservation growing in the next 10 to 20 years?

As Ojibwes our words create our reality. That's how we're taught about our language. So, I envision our language preservation efforts growing with great sustenance, great support, policy support, doors opened, and created.

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We want more support for capacity building. To build more speakers, adult speakers of our language to be able to spread and to be able to distribute and deliver language to the younger generations. That means more support in higher Ed spaces. More support in K-12 spaces. And more support in early childhood, early learning, HHS kind of settings.

So, that we would have pre-service learning available for people to learn their language to a higher level. And that we would also be able to work with agencies to develop and implement training programs, pre-service, and in-service training programs.

And that means we need a lot more development and pilot and implementation funding to be able to do that, than currently exists. There are a couple of federal sources of funding, but they're not enough to support language preservation and maintenance efforts.

There are over, what does ANA say, over 200 applications are made to that agency in

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a year? And they are only able to fund, you know, a couple hands full per year. Department of Ed, some of those programs have remained inaccessible to Native American language programs and schools.

So, we need to be able to be eligible for those, for teacher training, for on-going training, for creating assessments and language of instructions at our spaces, for our scholarship availabilities.

And how can tech be used to support language preservation and maintenance? Tech is a very important strand. Technology can be a very important component of language preservation and maintenance. When we're able to -- again, we need the time acquire the technology, the finance, and the space. We need the time to be trained and to learn on it. That would be some helpful interagency support as well.

And then, figuring out how it best fits into our long-range Native American language preservation and maintenance plans. Those plans

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may look different in different areas. We are a widely diverse group of Native American language revitalizers out here.

You've got 500 plus tribes over here.

You've got all of the Native Hawaiian communities that are leading in language preservation and maintenance efforts. And you've got all of the Alaskan Native language communities. We've got our territorial communities. Many of these are very different contexts.

Like I said, there may be some very small groups of language revitalizers. And there may be some larger groups, geographic differences, cultural differences. Technology to support language preservation and maintenance is going to look different in different places. So, we need access that appreciates and respects that diversity from a local perspective.

Miigwech.

MS. GOODLUCK: Leslie, this is Tracy Goodluck. I have a really quick follow-up

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question for you, that you were talking about, you know, tribal entities being, needing to be seen as eligible entities to be able to do, you know, things like accreditation, curriculum development, licensing.

So, I have a question specifically on licensure of language of instructors. And I'm not clear how Minnesota does, works with tribes.

But are, is there some kind of agreement where tribes are able to certify, where tribes are able to certify their language teachers, instructors?

And if not, is anybody, are you aware of anybody in your state working on that with tribes?

I'm really interested in this idea of school licensure. I know that causes quite an issue sometimes for Native language instructors.

But, and then my second question, follow-up question is, what would a massive infusion of resources look like? Like in your perfect world, what would that infusion of resources look like?

And this question can be answered by others when it's their turn to speak.

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So, Leslie, I'll stop there and let you answer my questions. Thank you.

MS. HARPER: Miigwech, Tracy. I will try to be brief so that others can contribute as well. The idea behind teaching licensure, that I'm speaking about, is very specifically in the realm of Native language medium teachers. Persons who are in a birth through post-secondary setting, that teaches through the medium of a Native American language for all content areas, or for a majority of content areas.

So, when we talk about licensure for that, we get into, there are -- every state has its own licensure criteria. So, it could get real complex. And we start to do our spreadsheets, so we can start to track all the policies in each of the states.

However, in Minnesota, we do have a license that is tribally endorsed. And we've had that since, I believe, 1988. It is for American Indian language and culture teaching. Now, that license only allows a teacher to teach language

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or culture as a subject. If, they are using the language to teach all content areas, it doesn't cover that.

So, it doesn't allow a teacher in a language medium, or a language immersion site to be teaching math, art, geography, science. So, we have to do work arounds, and it requires a lot of different work arounds. It requires paying another licensed teacher to be in the classroom, who is doing nothing but, you know, if they don't have the language proficiency, but they have an elementary license, they're really not doing anything. And it is still the language speaker who is doing that.

So, the policy side gets really complex. We really do want to align with the ideals of the Native American Languages Act that states, there can be exemptions for teacher qualifications in the case of a Native Language immersion site.

That's from 1990 itself, and it still holds. So, we would like the agencies to really

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recognize that and talk about what would teacher exemptions in Native American language medium sites consider? And how do we implement that?

I applaud Minnesota, having a tribally endorsed language teacher and language culture license. And as well, when they put that into place, our tribes in Minnesota negotiated with the state departments to ensure that teachers would be paid equitable to all other teachers, on a wage scale.

So, that from the very beginning was also important, because we used to see American language Indian teachers getting paid less than other content area teachers. And I hear that from colleagues in some other states, that they are getting to that now. They're saying, we're finally getting our teachers on an equitable pay scale.

So, that's a really important thing to spread out to folks, because we're dealing with all these different state licensure criteria items. Just make sure that tribes are being

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treated equitably. There is an obligation to our Native American languages and, you know, make sure that we are equitably accessing our language. And equitably supporting our language, equitably to all other educational spaces.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: I want to follow up, just to drill down even more. What's the number? How, what do they say, massive infusion of money, what does it cost to run this program adequately?

So, instead of like a \$300,000 grant, you know, like what does that look like? What's a number on an annual basis?

MS. HARPER: Well, I would say that really depends on the size of your program. So, we have to look at the different planning and the different capacity pieces. More so than one single annual number, 300 is a good support for some programs. It can be supplemental to their other programming.

We also need to look at the long-term sustenance. We need permanent funding. We need

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on-going funding. So many of these efforts are only available for a three-year period, five-year period, and maybe two funding cycles.

Sometimes, we're not even able to apply for that next funding cycle. So, we get programs that just got started, with this infusion of resources, and then they're not able to continue because that support has not been sustained.

Working together with some of the other education and HHS agencies, and multiple other agencies really could help to open those doors. Again, like I said, finding those policy parts and pieces that really align with the Native American Languages Act could be helpful.

Three hundred is a good start, but if there really is equitable access to that funding, we would start looking at what does it take to implement those on the same, and even greater level than the U.S. Ed provides in, you know, public education spaces today. But we really do need to look at that in a long-term structured, supported, longitudinal support.

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MR. ROULAIN: Ron, next we have Faith Begay-Dominique.

MR. LESSARD: Okay. Thank you. Faith.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE:

(Native language spoken.)

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: Hello, everybody. My name is Faith-Begay Dominique. I am calling from the Rosebud Economic Development Corporation, REDCO. We're an arm and entity of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, and I'm the Federal Relations Director.

I wanted to comment on Question 6 and 8. What would help your language preservation efforts be more successful? And how do you envision your language preservation efforts growing in the next 10 to 20 years?

We have two major Lakota language efforts going on. We have our Lakota Language Immersion School for children, only two level right now. And we are adding a year or adding the next grade level every year.

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And we also have a Workforce Development Program where we're paying seven participants a living wage for three years. And it's going to be all focused on learning Lakota language full-time. So, that way we're able to work with the younger children and also the adults.

And I would like to encourage the federal departments to think about language preservation in the terms of workforce development. Because when we're teaching our people Lakota, you know, even as adults or children, you know, it's all about workforce development.

In our paid, three-year program, our hope is that these individuals will learn Lakota, become fluent, and then be able to work in our immersion school and continue to teach, teach our language and continue to expand from there.

I would say, you know, definitely advocate for continued federal funding for the immersion schools, but then also for workforce

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development programs like the one that we have.

We were able to do this through a private donation, but it would be nice to see funding, federal funding for workforce development programs in regards to language preservation as well. Because, you know, we only have a certain amount of years that this private donation will continue for. And to continue that work would be very, very beneficial.

And I agree with the last person's comments as well, about permanent ongoing funding. You know, our languages is the basis of our culture and people, and something that I'm very happy to see the federal government committed to working on, on bringing these languages back. And continuing, you know, the thriving languages as well.

And, you know, those of you, the basis of -- you know, the summary of my comments today.

You know, permanent on-going funding and thinking of Lakota language and indigenous language development in terms of workforce

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development when developing grants and programs.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Faith, thank you very much. Appreciate your comments.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: Thank you.

MR. ROULAIN: Next, we have Ka'iulani Laeha.

MS. LAEHA: Aloha. Mahalo again, for this opportunity to share. I realized after my last comment, that I think the first comment that I had brought up, is probably more relative and aligns with Question 6, here.

So, I just wanted to point that out, in regard to making sure that we have, you know, teacher credentials and programming that can support high levels of proficiency.

But in addition to that, I wanted to point out that at a preschool level, or early childhood education, or childcare level -- Aha Punana Leo we currently have 13 sites throughout the state -- but we're trying to serve the families who speak Hawaiian language at home and also the families that are, who have lost their

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language but are trying to reclaim it for their children through the schools that they attend.

I think that we're going to need a dramatic increase in languages programs. And also increasing availability of elementary and secondary level schools for, through Hawaiian medium or a native language mediums.

Not only the availability of education through Hawaiian, but also making sure that we're aware of the quality of the program. And presently, there is a massive gap between what's available through English versus what is available through Hawaiian in Hawaii.

I did also have a quick comment on the accreditation process. So, for us, at last I'll speak on behalf of Punana Leo. One of the main things that we're trying to get access for our families, is funding support that the families are eligible for. And a lot of times, that depends on what level of accreditation or licensing on the facility that their child attends, is able to get.

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So, I think that for us, I guess the state's recognition of an indigenous accreditation would be huge. A huge support for our families, not necessarily, you know, an organization specific thing. But just for the families and their ability to get state support, or funding support to be able to afford sending their children to these schools.

And then again, on that permanent funding comment that two people have already brought up. I completely agree. The need for our programs, the need for our language nest programs on the education through Native American language as a medium of instruction, that's not going to go away.

So, when we have to compete or apply for funding every year, we're competing against organizations with similar missions, and similar visions, which means a lot of times, that somebody is going to get cut out. And those are needed projects.

So, I just wanted to make sure that

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that's kind of pointed out as well. Just knowing that the permanent funding, you know, often times we're kind of forced to present ideas that are new and innovative, which are great. But the core of what we do, providing high quality childcare, making sure that we have robust teacher training programs. Because often times, they can't be purchased online, or, you know, we can't just outsource that. We need to create it ourselves, is a crucial piece that needs to be understood.

So, our day-to-day work is something that we need support for. And that permanent support would, or permanent funding would help to make sure that we can have our programs survive. And also, keep them at a level that is affordable to the families that choose that for their children. And we don't cross this path of families choosing an English medium for convenience or for, because of funding. Because they can't access the programming because of the cost it. So, I think that to me, was really

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important.

And then lastly, in terms of the technology piece, I think having more popular media through Hawaiian, would be great as well. Just to help increase the language outside of the school environment and in the home. I think we would really like to see more of that as we move forward. Mohala.

MR. ROULAIN: Ron, next we have Mariana Mansfield.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Hello, Mariana.

MS. MANSFIELD: Okay, hello. Hi, can you hear me?

MR. LESSARD: Hello, yes we can.

MS. MANSFIELD: Okay. Miigwech. I'm also in Minnesota. I work for the Elk River School District. I, of course, agree with a lot of what's been said already, but I specifically want to talk about question number six.

For our middle schools, we have a world language class and during that class

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students will learn a language for four days and then move onto the next language and Ojibwa is supposed to be a part of that, but usually the teachers just don't do it. They don't do it. They don't teach it. They don't care. They say I don't know what to do. I don't understand the language. I don't understand the culture. I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be teaching. They just throw out every excuse in the book to not teach Ojibwa. They got behind on their -- on their other classes. It's just really difficult to get these teachers to want to teach Ojibwa, which they're supposed to be doing.

It's also really hard for me because, you know, I do teach Ojibwa with my students and they love it and when they have difficulties, it's good to work through it with them because they're trying, but these teachers aren't trying.

I think it would be great to change the requirements for world language teachers that they have to take a native language course in their education so that they cannot use these

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excuses of I just don't understand. Because it's frustrating that I have to spend my time on these general education teachers, who aren't really interested in native languages and don't respect native languages.

I also want to agree with the points about new media. There's a lot of Ojibwa language YouTube channels that I share with my kids, but they're really only appropriate for elementary schoolers and then there's adult Ojibwa language videos on YouTube. There's no real middle. So, I think a variety of age-appropriate media sources would be great to have on hand to share with students because many of them do want to learn outside of school, but there's not the age-appropriate variety of media for them to consume. I think it also comes in with popular media as well. A lot of other language courses can throw on the most popular latest movie with French or Spanish subtitles, but that just isn't happening with native languages, so it would be great to have more

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resources for new media.

In my school district, I have 215 students and I'm the only one in my program. I don't know how we're going to retain an assistant with the salary options available. It's not a livable wage and it's not going to retain anybody, especially if they're not going to get paid for the three months of summer break. I think that in order to retain the native staff, you need to pay them a respectable, livable wage as well. Miigwech.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Mariana. Thank you very much. Do we have more questions in the chat, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: Not at this time and no other speakers have their hand raised.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: Ron, I want to follow up real quick on that living wage.

MR. LESSARD: Yes, Ron.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: I would love to hear what folks think, like what is a living wage and also what does wage look like to

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adequately compensate a native language expert. Obviously, it's a very specialized field and in many tribal communities, there are only going to be -- it's a rare knowledge, so there's only a few people.

So what does adequate compensation look like if you're kind of looking to bring someone in to teach or to provide kind of native language expertise, you know. Is that equal to a teacher's salary? Is it equal to, you know, a college professor's salary? Some medicine men talk about the knowledge that certain elders have is equal to that of a doctorate and so, you know, what does that translate to as far as salary? Is that 50,000 a year, 75,000 a year, 150,000 a year? What does that look like?

MR. ROULAIN: Leslie Harper?

MS. HARPER: Miigwech. This is Leslie Harper, National Coalition Native American Language Schools and Programs. I appreciate that question. (Native language spoken.) So, there

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are some ways to look at that, right? Like in some ways salary scales can be looked at, you know, geographically. It may, you know, there might be a higher cost of living in some areas rather than others. I think the thing to consider really is how are we considering, what are we considering, qualifications, what do we at a local site in our Native American language revitalization efforts determine to be high quality and that a lot of our successful and ongoing developing programs, do try to provide a higher level of pay than in some other local educational sites or childcare sites because, like you were saying, there is an increased knowledge. There are increased skills at work there. You need to have the language proficiency in addition to being able to do all of your locally designed pedagogy and design that and curriculum design and so some of our spaces have said we will give a 10 to 15 percent increase over the current monolingual English teacher requirements to recognize that skill set. In

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some areas, they start them out higher on a teacher scale, also recognizing that there may be people who haven't been through formalized institutional training settings, but like you were saying, maintain an incredible amount of our Native American knowledge.

So, recognizing that as well and being able to pay them equitably to what would you pay a master's degree or a PhD holding person in your community? Yes, we would look at that as equitable pay and saying that the knowledge and skill set you have is so incredibly specialized and important that we will pay it at that higher level. Being able to recognize that and, again, sometimes it gets passed back onto us at the local community from our agency connections, to say well, you can do whatever you'd like within this, you know, that's your own local decision to make, but we may have to, you know, really pinch pennies and say we don't have enough funds in place here to honestly support a small class size, a small student to teacher, student to

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elder, native language speaker ratio and it gets tossed back at us. Well, maybe you need to increase class sizes, you know, maybe you need to let go of some of this other extraneous staff so that's where I get into like we need to really look at what are all the pieces and components of a successful and well-designed language program and make sure that we are equitably supporting that with the financial resources.

That's another important thing is keeping our learner to master speaker ratio manageable and being able to do that so instead of saying, you know, sure you can pay your people locally much higher out of the money we give you, but that means you're going to have 22 toddlers in a room, you know, you're going to have 22 kindergarten students in a room with one teacher, you know, that's kind of an unmanageable group. So, we want to be able to really support smaller cohorts of learners to language speakers. Miigwech.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Leslie and

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Mariana, thank you. I think one thing that is expressed to me quite often is, you know, is the need, the intensive need for revitalization and preservation and I think that in a lot of communities when the need is recognized like, for example, welders and plumbers and all the other needs that people have that we need to elevate this, you know, on a national level that the need for preservation and revitalization is very important.

MS. GOODLUCK: Ron, this is Tracy again. I have a really quick follow up question. This is really for anyone on the call, to provide any of their organization's or school website links in the chat, so we can save those, just so that people like me can go back and do some exploring and research on my own time of your organizations and some of the best practices that you all have been talking about that you're doing. If you have websites or any links you can provide us. Thank you.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: And another

kind of question that kind of popped up based on the comment around ratios and student to teacher ratios, student to master teacher ratios. What does that look like, you know, to do it right? Is that one to five, one to eight, one to 30? And that kind of helps people think about, you know, especially from like a staffing and funding perspective, right, you know, we're going to need one full time teacher for every, you know, X amount of students. I would like to get some more insights on that.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Wizi. Do we have any other comments, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, Dorothy Aguilera-Black Bear has stated, states need to support language preservation goals through language speaker certification pathway programming. Which states have these types of pathways to certification, is the question.

MR. LESSARD: Would anyone like to answer that? Leslie, do you happen to know?

MS. HARPER: Miigwech. I do not have

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an all-encompassing picture of all the states across the U.S., just because like I said, it gets complex when it gets down to individual state's roll outs and even in titling and what they title, different teacher programs and different teacher licenses. So that's an ongoing project to unwind all of that, that would be another great cooperative kind of piece between different groups and different agencies. That could be its own listening session or a call for comments itself, you know, coming from the Department, coming from Ed, coming from DOI, coming from HHS to look at the states where they fund their projects and see what those requirements are in combination with so many of the people on this call today. That's an important data gathering piece.

MR. LESSARD: Okay, yes, thank you very much. I know if you remember Leslie when the Department of Education funded the comprehensive centers and we had, you know, various states enter into MOAs with the tribal

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communities as to who are, you know, certified teachers so that the tribe is involved in who can be a certified teacher. It's not just a state certified linguist. I think that's something that was very important at the time and would be again.

MS. HARPER: I appreciate --

MR. ROULAIN: My apologies, Leslie.

MR. LESSARD: Go ahead, Leslie.

MS. HARPER: I'll go real quick because I do want to let other people speak here as well. I just appreciate that hearing from you folks and, Wizipan, it's really good to hear these kinds of questions because that helps us figure out how we can communicate these needs better.

Again, I'm not going to say any ideal ratio for any one space. We have a great diversity of language preservation and maintenance efforts across this country, but we do know from promising practices and from successful practices and research, you know, that

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a smaller student to teacher ratio does end up being more effective than overly crowded classrooms. I mean that's just a general universal statement in education, but we do find that in Native American Language media programs that having a smaller cohort of learners to teacher is a lot more effective and you're able to pay more attention to their language development and their subject area and development.

Again, that would be another great exploration where you invite in the practitioners to talk about it and where you could survey some of the different agencies' programs and work in coordination with current practitioners to put the data together. Again, that's another, you know, real data collection kind of effort or interview or listening session kind of effort, that would be really helpful to hear. Like I said, we're all different contexts and different tribal areas with different capacities to enact this.

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MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: Just to kind of follow up on that line, you know, kind of looking at the best educational practices, you know, tend to favor smaller teacher to student ratios with kind of that ideal sweet spot typically being around eight to 12, but nothing over 15. Would that be like a safe kind of general rule to go by?

MS. HARPER: That's a pretty helpful, a more reasonable kind of thing to look at.

MS. LAEHA: (Native language spoken.)

I also wanted to comment on the ratio piece. I think that obviously it depends on the children's age, but from a childcare provider standpoint and the majority of the children that we see are between two years and eight months through five years old and, I guess, the current state ratio and this goes among all childcare providers industry wide that we understand those ratios are there for health and safety.

A lot of times what they see as a minimum, in real practice a lot of times we find

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that insufficient. So, I just did want to point that out, too. A lot of times, you know, if you have one to 12 required ratio, for example, by the state, if your restroom, for example, is a walk away from the room, it makes it very difficult to just have one staff on site. So, I just wanted to point that out that a lot of times what we, you know, put as a minimum we may need more than that and particularly, you know, with the difficulties that we face with finding qualified staff, I just wanted to highlight we might need more than what is typically accepted as industry standards. (Native language spoken.)

MR. LESSARD: Thank you. Phillip, do we have any other questions or comments?

MR. ROULAIN: Not at present. Gloria Hale has put a comment in the chat box that is kind of lengthy. Would you like me to read it for you?

MR. LESSARD: Yes, please.

MR. ROULAIN: The New Mexico government signed a state legislative bill on

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March 10th, given pay parity to Native American language and culture teachers, certificate holders, must be paid same as a level one first year teacher. This establishes the minimum pay for teachers who hold Native American culture and language certificates as equal to what level one teachers earn at 50,000 dollars base pay.

The public education department issues certificates to individuals deemed by the Pueblo tribe or nation to be a Native American language and culture specialist. There are currently 155 certificate holders throughout the state. Previously, there was no state required minimum salary for these language and culture teachers.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you very much for that. Do we have any other comments?

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: Another kind of just general question. Are there other systems that we should be looking at as best practices and examples, you know, really around not only kind of indigenous language education and revitalization, but also just from kind of a

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general educational standpoint. You know, I know that there are some other countries that, you know, certain education or child care have standards that would kind of exceed some of the minimum standards in the U.S., and that when thinking about what those standards can and should be for tribes, then thinking about tribal sovereignty, you know, they have the ability to look beyond, you know, kind of minimum state standards or minimum standards in the U.S., to really kind of help and think about what's going to be best for their specific native nation.

I just kind of wonder are there other places that we could be looking or should be looking for examples of kind of standards or success or models?

MR. ROULAIN: Ron, Justin Zuniga has raised his hand to request to speak.

MR. LESSARD: Okay, thank you. Justin, please do.

MR. ZUNIGA: I was muted, okay.  
(Native language spoken), Ron and all of the

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other panelists today for putting this on.

I would like to -- I'm not sure who asked that last question. I'm trying to figure out the voices here, but I would like to respond to that last remark and then answer a remark for number seven.

So, around the world, I would like to point to New Zealand. They've got a beautiful language immersion program. I had the honor of studying in New Zealand as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar and got to experience some of the full immersion schools that they have. Full immersion, of course, meaning all of the content is in the native language, which is te reo, Maori and it's quite something what they've done in that country. For one, the te reo, Maori is a national language so I think that would do a lot towards, you know, this MOA of if we can put into legislation making native languages, tribal languages, actual national languages in that way preserving them, you know, for posterity. I think that would be very symbolic. So that's a

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big piece there.

Also politically, you know, when any political official goes to New Zealand, there's the ceremony there. They have the haka, I think, to welcome them in and so there's a real embrace on every level the culture and the language. That's my suggestion for case study kind of best practice, what's going on in New Zealand and, you know, the language renaissance that they had there. I believe it was the '70s.

Okay, so that was that. My remark for number seven, I envision the language preservation efforts growing over the next 10 or 20 years in a very similar direction to that. So that's what's going on in New Zealand.

I see a lot of hope for individual tribes and local education agencies to be able to write their own charters or form their own 504(c)(3)s to be able to keep their students and teach them, to offer their own public charter schools. We teach them to our standards as well as bolstering and equipping parents so just home

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school to take their students out of the public school system and teach their own families in accordance to their own best practice. That is my full comment. So, I guess the question would be is there any real pathway for individual tribal entities or individual tribes to have their own charter? (Native language spoken.)

MR. ROULAIN: Ron, Charles Wagner has asked how about integrating language culture immersion into the school systems? For example, Ojibwa math class, Ojibwa science, Ojibwa language and so forth?

MR. LESSARD: Thank you for that. Thank you for the comments in the chat from Julie as well. Do we have any more questions or comments, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: Not at present.

MS. SAUVE: Ron, I can respond to Justin's comment a little bit --

MR. LESSARD: Yes.

MS. SAUVE: About --

MR. LESSARD: Thank you.



MS. SAUVE: About the charter schools, because we funded a program who was going to apply to their state to become a charter school.

The grant that ANA, Administration for Native Americans, provided to them was to help them develop all of the preplanning to apply for that through the charter process. So those schools are typically done through the state's Department of Education, so whether those have charter availabilities or not, but I think for the Feds that something for us to think about. You know, if they're on a nation-to-nation basis, there should be something beyond having to work with the states.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Michelle. Do we have any other comments? Phillip, any more comments or questions?

MR. ROULAIN: No more questions and currently there are not any hands raised, but Julie Taylor did remark in Oregon, if you Google Senate Bill 13, Tribal History, and Oregon Secretary of State for Teacher Standards and

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Practice Commission, Chapter 584, Teaching License 584-210-0080, American Indian Languages Teaching License, Julie Taylor, CTUIR.

MR. LESSARD: Thank you, Julie. If we have no more questions or comments, we can move on and I just want to reiterate that if you continue to have any comments or comments on the questions to go ahead and continue to put those in the chat. I'll check one more time. No comments, no questions, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: Not currently.

MR. LESSARD: Okay, thank you. At this time, it's my honor to hand our presentation over to Hope MacDonald Lone Tree, who is Navajo and the Deputy Commissioner delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of the Commission of the Administration for Native Americans, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you, Hope.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Good afternoon everyone. (Native language spoken.)  
Hope MacDonald Lone Tree (Native language

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spoken). I am so happy to be here with you today, but before we begin, I really want to take just a few moments to remember our loved ones, our friends, our elders who have lost the battle with COVID and we know that our elders that we have lost were also keepers of our language and so if we could just a few moments here to pause and remember them as we continue this work.

(Moment of silence.)

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: (Native language spoken) and thank you again for joining us today. I am so very excited that the administration is broadening the federal support for our indigenous languages by including more federal agencies to collaborate and coordinate on this critical need to reverse language loss. We know that it's been more of an emergency during this time, the pandemic and we are here to support you and also help you leverage resources as we continue this dialogue and make sure that we are improving our own processes as well as helping to provide technical assistance.

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We appreciate the partnership that we've developed here and we turn to them now to provide their reflections on your comments and suggestions. So, first, I'd like to ask Morgan the first question and this is to the panel, but we'll start with Morgan. What did you hear from today's participants?

MR. RODMAN: Can you hear me?

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Yes, Morgan, I apologize, yes.

MR. RODMAN: Thank you, Hope. I'm sorry little technical snafu here, but thank you, Hope. I'm Morgan Rodman, Executive Director of the White House Council on Native American Affairs and I am Cherokee and Osage.

I heard a lot of good information today. Basically more resources, of course, in particular resources that are permanent -- permanent funding, human resources including living wages and stipends honoraria and teachers should have a professional level of proficiency, that should be a standard we should expect, even

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though that is difficult to attain. So putting the resources in place to attain that, keeping in mind the infrastructure needs as well, especially broadband and some of the geographic barriers that are presented that we have to overcome for broadband. And then equitably supporting native languages when compared to other languages that are in the curriculum, and then think of language preservation as work force development.

So those are just some of the ideas that I heard and the last one that kind of piqued my interest was legislation making tribal languages a national language, so some of the things I heard, Hope.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you, Morgan. So very true. I'd like to also hear from Michelle Sauve from HHS.

MS. SAUVE: Great, thank you so much.

(Native language spoken) Michelle Sauve (Native language spoken.) Our words create our realities. Thank you, Leslie, for that, so I'm going to frame it in that way.

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What I heard is we envision more support at the state and local level that recognizes the importance of native languages and services like childcare and preschool will be in the language and we will have a native determined accreditation for those services. Like Morgan just said, language learning is work force development and we need that throughout the health and human services.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: (Native language spoken) Michelle and onto Ron and Julian.

MR. LESSARD: Julian, are you there?  
(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. GUERRERO: Yes.

MR. LESSARD: Please go ahead first.

MR. GUERRERO: Okay, well, I will definitely say that I heard resounding evidence today that, you know, there's real capacity needs. How can we look into the future? How can we think about non-Ed programs and making sure that we're taking into consideration the needs of

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the community -- past, present and future, really approaching the work and making sure that we keep the mission at hand, but then also work with the field to make sure our programs are accessible, understandable, comprehensive and we really strengthen our technical assistance in the ways that will truly matter and this input today is definitely going to be helpful for us in real time.

How we can advance the Agency mission, especially in particular the OIE, is without a doubt preserving, protecting and promoting native languages and particularly the comments that I heard about certification are real. Having worked from an SCA level of the work, there was a lot of talk around alternative certification pathways. I think there needs to be a reality we have to face and not just alternative pathways, but real pathways, permanent pathways for native language certification. I'll stop there and think about how we can further this conversation, but I pass it to you, Ron. Thank you.

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MR. LESSARD: Thank you very much, Julian, and thank you everyone. Thank you, Hope.

So what I hear today is, you know, we've talked about the need. I really feel that we're doing what we can do where we're beginning to elevate this issue to the crisis level that it is. We need to continue to engage, you know, as federal agencies to the practitioners and the folks on the ground, doing the work like you, Leslie, and then also to bringing in philanthropic organizations to help support and maybe sustain some of the funding, you know, to supplement some of the federal work that we do. We have a lot of work to do and I think that we need to keep this elevated at a level that shows that it is a crisis in Indian Country with our communities. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you, Ron, and next, I'd like to go to Tracy.

MS. GOODLUCK: There we go. Thank you. (Native language spoken.) My name is Tracy Goodluck. I'm a member of the Oneida Nation of

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Wisconsin and I'm also Muscogee Creek (Native language spoken) tribal town from Oklahoma and an in-law (Native language spoken) to my Dine in-laws. I'm an in-law to the Quades (phonetic) and Goodlucks out of (Native language spoken). Thank you.

First off, I just want to say (Native language spoken), thank you to all of you for your questions and comments in the chat as well as those of you that spoke today and gave us such amazing information on the work that's being done all across Indian Country and in our native Hawaiian communities to preserve and protect our native languages. This is near and dear to my heart. I'm a former educator. Those of you in New Mexico, I'm one of the cofounders of the Native American Community Academy, so I really am hearing a lot of the issues that I used to deal with as an educator. What I wanted to touch on is that it seems like there's a great need for us to really get active and collaborate together as federal agencies, as tribal nations, tribal

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language practitioners and organizations as well as how do we engage our state level practitioners and agencies and folks in the states who are making decisions to really engage in a collaborative effort to tackle some of these things.

I heard that there's still a lot of education that we need to do with our state agencies around how to respect our tribal languages and cultures and see them as something that I think, Justin Zuniga, you said it as a national language, I would say a national treasure in terms of being able to protect and preserve our languages and cultures and respect and have respect for our tribal nations and what we bring to the table here. You know, I heard a lot about funding and resources and that's not an uncommon comment that we hear from folks in Indian Country, not just on this issue, but on a lot of issues that I think that, you know, this administration is really working hard to address funding issues in Indian Country.

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I was very pleased to hear that some of you mentioned that you're using some of your American Rescue Plan funds, the ARPA funds, that were provided to tribes as part of that 20 billion that we infused into Indian Country last March, on some programs, whether it's to purchase speakers or laptops or provide masks and hand sanitizer, I was really grateful to hear that you're able to utilize your funds in that capacity. I hope that you will continue to do that because that was the purpose of those funds to support a whole approach to battling pandemic issues within Indian Country so that includes native language efforts and culture preservation efforts.

I heard a lot about an agreement around work force development and that native language should be seen from that lens and providing a working and living wage for both our instructors, who should be seen as high regard and high esteem because it does take a high level of expertise to become a language instructor.

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But I also heard particularly from you, Faith, that programming around providing work force development, a living wage so that our community members, our adult learners, can take time to learn their language and provide for their family and that this is a full-time work effort. So, I'm excited to learn more about that as well.

I'm going to stop there. I have a lot more that I heard and I just want to thank each and every one of you for all your thoughtful examples and comments today. Thank you, Hope.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you, Tracy, appreciate that and onto Wizi.

MR. LITTLE ELK GARRIOTT: Okay. (Native language spoken.) Thank you everyone. You know, ditto to everything that everyone else kind of said in terms of the remarks and kind of summarizing what they heard. I think the two biggest things that resonated most with me were one, that this is an ecosystem and that language revitalization is an ecosystem that begins, you know, a lot of people talk about child care,

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schooling and in adult learning, you know, teacher preparation and that probably from an indigenous perspective, you know, when we think about an ecosystem it actually, you know, child development begins preconception and all the way to when we leave the Earth. When we think about revitalization, it should mirror that kind of indigenous knowledge and indigenous thinking and, you know, kind of life cycle for our time here on the planet. In particular, we need to be thinking about day care and how we support language emergent day care leading into pre-K then leading into kind of kindergarten through elementary school and in high school, college and then also supporting adult learners who are kind of past college or not in college. So, if we're going to be serious about the work that it really should encompass, you know, kind of that entire ecosystem. So those are some of the points that really resonated with me. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you, Wizi, and onto Arlando. Phillip, are we not able

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to hear Arlando?

MR. ROULAIN: It appears that Arlando is not in the meeting room presently.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Okay, how about Milo?

MR. BOOTH: (Native language spoken.)

Thank you everybody for coming today. It's really good to see all of you, albeit virtually.

One of the things that we hear a lot of is how our agencies can help. For those of you who don't know, I'm the Director of Travel Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. We get a lot of questions on signage and we think that that is a good steppingstone to making it every day, as an everyday part of your life when you drive through. I know back home in Metlakatla, Alaska, which you can see behind me in my virtual panel, we do have signs. We do have the signage across the village and it really does help.

I come from a tribe that has less than

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50 fluent speakers left. I had a language class last night because of a four-hour time difference I don't get to go to bed on Mondays and Wednesdays until midnight. So it's very personal to me and I feel like if we can work on the small steps, eventually we'll get to the top of the big steps. I know that as far as asking speakers to come to open with prayers, to make it a very normal event to hear languages at everyday interactions that we have as federal agents, I think that says a lot. We did it as recently as this week when Deputy Assistant Secretary Teller hosted the first FAA tribal aviation symposium. We brought in singers. We brought in folks to kick us off with prayers and I think that that is something that we can really commit to, but also make sure it becomes normal for us. Because growing up in a household where we didn't have it fluent. My parents didn't speak the language, my grandparents did. So how do we sort of bring that back into everyday life and I think a lot of the interactions that we have, especially lately

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there's been a historic amount of tribal engagement on behalf of the federal government and the more we can normalize that, we're here for that.

Please continue to reach out to us. We really appreciate all the folks who have engaged us at DOT but across all the federal government who help bring your language into our aspects of day-to-day work. When you have those requests for signage, if it's slow down, children playing or what not, talk to us about it. We need to hear about that and we want to hear about it.

Thank you for attending today and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you, Milo. I'd like to go to Mary Downs.

MS. DOWNS: I am here. Good afternoon. Thank you to our organizers and to our tribal leaders for sharing your thoughts with us today. I'm Mary Downs. I'm a senior program officer at the National Endowment for the

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Humanities.

What am I hearing in terms of language preservation needs and I'll say that this is coming through the lens of the funding that we provide at the National Endowment for the Humanities, what I heard people talking about is work force development, training of instructors, language proficiency, technology, hardware and software, continued funding and permanent funding for things like immersion schools, infrastructure and capacity building.

I was interested to hear about learning from other successful models, both those in the United States as well as elsewhere and lastly, I would say collaboration is so important and the need for all of us to work together in these efforts. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you, Mary. We're running close on time so I just wanted to go off to Cliff.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Hope. My name is Cliff Murphy. I'm with the National Endowment

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for the Arts and it's an honor to be here today.

One thing that I heard was the need for support for language keepers, who aren't employed within the educational system. I heard a number of speakers talk about language as an integral, necessary piece of holistic culture that doesn't always fit neatly into classrooms. What's encouraging to me is that these are areas that our Agency can support through grant making and I'd be happy to talk with people about that and I can paste some stuff into the chat here in terms of resources. I realize that's getting into question number two, so I will pause there, but it's an honor to be here.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you very much and over to the Library of Congress.

MR. SHANKAR: Thank you --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. SHANKAR: This is Guha Shankar.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. SHANKAR: I'm so sorry. Thank you, Hope. Thank you all to the participants and

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everyone else for making it possible for the Library of Congress to speak our piece. I'm here with my colleague, Hope O'Keefe, from the General Counsel's office.

I echo a lot of what the other respondents have said already in terms of sustainability of language programs, the need for funding, some of which the Library can address, but I'm going to confine myself by saying that we will support you all in the best way that we can and I will come back to question two perhaps and talk more specifically about the resources that we have that can support language revitalization and preservation from the National Library.

But in all efforts, we at the federal level in our various agencies and our various capacities are supportive of the work that you all are doing at the local level. We have a long track record of it and we will work with you to the best of our abilities to sustain that. I will pass some resources to review shortly. Thank you.

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MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Hope, did you want to say a few words?

MS. O'KEEFFE: No, I don't think you need any more. (Laughter.)

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Okay. All right.

MS. O'KEEFFE: I have posted resources in the chat just in case we run out of time.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Excellent, thank you. So, we'll go to Nancy.

MS. WEISS: Hi, my name is Nancy Weiss. I'm the General Counsel of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. I'm on the road so I may look a little purple for those looking at the video. I'm joined by my colleague, Cam Trowbridge from IMLS.

I just want to thank the organizers and the tribal leaders and all of the participants here for a really riveting discussion. I heard a few things. I heard that it's a moment. The clock is ticking in some ways. There have been a lot of change. There's

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also an enormous opportunity, so I think I was really struck also with the thought of the ecosystem and the beginning to learn language prior to birth and reading throughout the life. I do appreciate that it's museums and libraries, you know, that we can really focus on lifelong learning.

Another thing I heard was the process of learning language is very intense, for lack of a better word, and that it's also important to have resources that are age-appropriate. First of all, for the individuals who are learning so that they are at different places within their development as people, but also that helps with individuals who are at different places in development with language.

I also heard the importance of capacity building, work force development and thinking about how to think of all of the different individuals who are involved in this process. I actually heard some interesting discussions about the technologies and the

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relationships among different providers in this approach as well as thinking through broadband and also licensing type of issues so that you're able to get the resources that are necessary.

Finally, I just wanted to say I did hear very much about the moment with respect to mental health and thinking about healthy communities and what kinds of resources are necessary to help individuals thrive at all levels. So, from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, thank you for letting us be a part of this.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Thank you. We greatly appreciate that. We have one last question and that's "How can your agency help tribal nations leverage their resources for their language preservation efforts?" I know many of the agencies put resources in the chat, so please check out those resources and the links.

Do we have anyone, let me go back to the list and we can start with Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Okay, I'm sorry. Was

that for me to do question two?

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Yes, Ron, thank you.

MR. LESSARD: Okay I'm happy to. I would just say within our agencies, it's important across all our different offices that whether they have tribal portfolios for grants, we need to express to our colleagues within our agencies the importance of preservation and revitalization of native languages so that they can also be aware and be on the lookout for possible priorities and, you know, opportunities to include those priorities into future grants, you know, so that we can expand our resources for tribal nations around native languages. Thank you.

MS. MACDONALD LONE TREE: Okay, thank you, Ron, appreciate that. I know we're at time and I just wanted to thank everyone again for participating. Please don't think that this is the end of the conversation. There are a lot of resources and partners in this and please feel

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free to reach out to any of us for additional information.

I'd like to end there and hand it back over to Ron.

MR. LESSARD: Well, thank you very much, Hope. Now I'd like to hand it to Julian.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, Ron, I appreciate that. Again, I'll be very brief with these remarks. It's incredibly encouraging to see so many federal partners gathered around today digitally to talk about a very serious topic, a critical topic, but an important topic, nonetheless. Just to end today with native language in my own Comanche language, I'd like to share a little bit of a philosophy and it goes as such. (Native language spoken.) And it goes in English, it is said that a person of importance does not search to lead for others, they are called to it and they answer from the heart.

I think it's very clear through today's conversations that we all want the same thing, a community of collaboration more than

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competition. We all want our native languages to flourish in their rightful indigenous spaces and places that are accessible, reliable, consistent, all these things matter, but going beyond that is to stay ever focused on our commitment. We are committed to listening more than talking and clearly working on doing better than we have ever done in the past as federal partners.

There are no alternatives to our sacred responsibility to carry on native languages. Help ensure that they persist into the future, to see them, to hear them, to feel them in our public classrooms. There is no alternative to this. This must be our collective reality moving forward.

My friends, colleagues and relatives, our federal community will collaborate and carry this work forward. I look forward to that time.

I look forward to those days, those sessions and continuing the conversations.

Thank you all for joining us today and one last slide to share, could I get next slide?

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Written comments will be closing March 31st at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. You can submit those comments to [Indian.Education@Ed.gov](mailto:Indian.Education@Ed.gov) and I encourage you to take your time, write thoughtful comments as we will be looking for how we can take this work forward. Again, thank you all for joining us and wishing you safe travels and a warm day. Thank you. Take care.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 3:00 p.m.)

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