

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

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TRIBAL CONSULTATION ON NATIVE AMERICAN  
LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER

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TUESDAY  
JANUARY 10, 2023

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The Tribal Consultation met via Video-  
Teleconference, at 3:00 p.m. EST, Jason Cummins,  
Deputy Director, White House Initiative on  
Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and  
Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and  
Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities,  
presiding.

PRESENT

JASON CUMMINS, Deputy Director, White House  
Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity,  
Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native  
Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and  
Universities

JULIAN GUERRERO, JR., Director, Office of Indian  
Education

MAHOGANY HOPKINS, LPE Associates

BRITTNI WILSON, LPE Associates

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

3:00 p.m.

MS. WILSON: Hi, everyone. Welcome.

I just wanted to go over a few housekeeping items for today. As a reminder, all lines have been muted. The event audio and video are being recorded. Comments will be received first from elected tribal government officials and then, second, from proxy representatives, then members of the public. Whenever speaking, please state your first name -- first and last name --- title and tribe and organization you represent.

Also, please limit comments to consultation questions. The event of technical issues arising, a traditional conference line can be used, and there's this information below. And for any IT issues, please message Zoom Technical Support to help resolve any technical issues. Next, I'll turn it over to a Tribal Consultation official, Deputy Director Dr. Jason Cummins, White House Initiative on Advanced --- Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic

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Opportunity for Native Americans and  
Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Go to the  
next slide, I'd like to over our agenda. And  
thank you, everybody, for being here with us  
today. And I'm Jason Cummins. I'm a member of  
the Apsáalooke nation from South Central Montana.  
My Crow name is (Native language spoken.). And  
move on to the next slide. My co-facilitator is  
Julian Guerrero, the Director of the Office of  
Indian Education. Next slide.

So here's our agenda for today.  
Today, we are going to discuss the Native  
American Language Resource Center. I welcomed  
you, and I'll have Mr. Guerrero do his --- an  
introduction. And he's going to give you a  
background, an overview of the Native American  
Language Resource Center program and the  
program's purpose. And we will have our tribal  
consultation questions.

And we hope to spend this quality time  
really listening to the tribal leader comments

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and get some great feedback to help guide us in implementing this program for your communities. And then, we'll have public comments. Next slide. And Julian Guerrero is the Director of the Office of Indian Education, OIE, at the US Department of Education. Prior to joining the Department, Mr. Guerrero served at the state level as former Executive Director of the American Indian Education --- of American Indian Education for the state of Oklahoma. Mr. Guerrero brings a wealth of knowledge on topics regarding how to build and sustain meaningful partnerships with tribal communities.

The Office of Indian Education will be using today's input to drive the design of this new program. And with that, I will give the mic over to Mr. Guerrero to further give us background information.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you so much, Dr. Cummins. I appreciate the introduction. And just real briefly, I'm going to, in my own native tongue, (Native language spoken.). My name is

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Julian Guerrero, and I have the honorable pleasure of serving as the Director for the Office of Indian Education here at the US Department of Ed. For those of you who I've seen before, it's good to see you again virtually.

And in our role of today's consultation, we really, very much so, mean taking in the input to drive future planning in this work. So if I can get the next slide, please. I wanted to run through some background context over what it is that your comments will help inform as we move this work forward. Next slide, please. So today, the Department will conduct tribal consultations to inform the develop of the Native American Language Resource Center, NALRC, program.

And the purpose of this consultation is to receive that meaningful input from many communities -- those being American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian communities - - to ensure that tribal leaders' perspectives and views drive our planning of this program. Next

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slide, please. And real briefly on the purpose of the program.

The purpose of this particular program is to further align the resources provided by the Department of Education with the policies set forth in the Native American Languages Act as amended here recently and through the establishment of a program within the Department of Education to support one or more Native American Language Resource Centers. And just for additional context and background, in addition to the creation of a new program by a Senate Bill 989, there's also another Senate Bill 1402, titled, The Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2022, which requires federal agencies to evaluate their policies regarding Native American languages and to require a survey of the use of Native American languages.

We're excited, in addition to the work of developing a Native American Language Resource Center program, to also make sure that we are conducting rightfully and implementing the

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program in alignment with other requirements of us, such as through a 1402. So there's a lot to do. There's a lot to talk about. And I'm really excited as the Director of OIE to make sure that we're doing right and driving this work in a meaningful way.

I encourage many of you to, and especially our tribal leaders, to speak freely in an open dialogue with Dr. Cummins and myself as we conduct this tribal consultation because it truly informs the development of priorities and the development of design and make sure that the work that we are setting forth in this program is reaching the needs. And we welcome any and all comments related to this. In addition to that, I'm just so thankful that many of you have spent time out of your day to join us virtually. And albeit, it might be late in the day for those of you joining in the Eastern time zone, but for those Western time zones, your day's just getting started, so again, we appreciate all of that.

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That being said, if I could get the next slide, and I just want to reiterate the protocols one more additional time in that all lines have been muted. Event audio and video are being recorded. Comments will be first received from elected tribal government officials, and comments will be received second from proxy representatives, then members of the public.

Whenever speaking, please state your first and last name, title, and tribe organization that you represent. And please limit comments to the consultation questions at hand. Again, that's a friendly reminder, and we will maximize this full amount of time until we go to the next section, which I hand it back over to Dr. Cummins to facilitate the questions for us moving forward. Dr. Cummins.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you, Julian. I can get the next slide. So our first question in today's consultation regarding the program is, Should the Department administer the Resource Center via contractual agreement or grant



competition? So if you have a comment, raise your hand, and ---

MR. J. GARCIA: Hello. I've been unmuted. Can you hear me?

DR. CUMMINS: Yes.

MR. J. GARCIA: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Cummins. This is Joe Garcia. I'm Head Councilman from Ohkay Owingeh, Little Pueblo in New Mexico. Well, the question is kind of loaded. It depends on what the functions that are to be taken care of or administered by the Department. And if we knew what the functions were and how many things could be taken care of as well as what the budget looks like, then we can better answer if should be contracted or grant competition.

But firsthand would be that a contract agreement probably would suffice. Grant competition means, you know, the ones that have the most prestigious grant writers and the most resources are the ones that are going to get the grant versus somebody else that the

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undercontractor bid in and so, thereby, might diminish the quality and the type of functions and programs that are to be administered. So a contractual agreement might work very well. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you for your comments. Sure appreciate that. Next, we have --

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, next we have Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais.

DR. CUMMINS: Yes. I see you there, Chairwoman.

MS. ANDREWS-MALTAIS: Good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity. And I agree wholeheartedly with my brother, First Councilman Garcia. First off, knowing what we're talking about as far as budget and scope and perimeters, it will help guide a better response. However, do not favor grant competition as articulated about, you know, those with effective grant writers or the financial capacity to hire grant writers.

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Usually, displaced tribes that don't and oftentimes are the tribes that need this funding the most. Additionally, it doesn't put for commodities within the tribes, pitting tribe against tribe in a competitive nature. And the other --- the last point I'd like to make is that it really doesn't enhance the trust and treaty obligations of the United States and the Department of Education to provide for all tribes as we have all paid it forward with the lives of our ancestors, our lands and natural resources as part of the trust and treaty obligations. So thank you very much.

DR. CUMMINS: Yes. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Garcia, we have --- I'm sorry, Dr. Cummins. We have Peter Garcia followed by Faith Begay-Dominique.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay.

MR. P. GARCIA: Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

DR. CUMMINS: Yes, Peter. I can hear you.

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MR. P. GARCIA: My name is Peter Garcia, Junior. I am also from Ohkay Owingeh, like my younger brother, Joe Garcia. I'm a former governor, and I also sit on our Tribal Council, and I am the President of our Board of Education. And your question is also --- I have questions about it because, like my brother said and the chairwoman said, we don't know what it all entails or how a contract agreement should be put in place or how the grant competition should be put in place, but I think that we need to understand what the contractual agreement would be about and who would be the contractee, consulting people, or maybe some of the tribes that have a good Language Department could run the --- as a contractor and support the services.

But I think on the grant part, I don't know how that would work. I know we would have to write grants, but I think you're --- even if it's a contractual agreement, you can do grants through the --- whoever is the consultant on that part. So I don't think, from my standpoint, I

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quite understand how we can answer this because it's still --- I still have a lot of questions about this question that you're proposing. So those are my comments. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Thank you. And before we move to Faith, I just want to say that this is a --- the Department is going to have a Native American Language Resource Center here within the Department that is going to be able to serve tribal communities in the capacity that we can serve tribal communities to help provide expertise and insight in language revitalization efforts and to explain that a little bit more, I'm going to ask Julian to explain that. And then, we'll move on to Faith to give feedback on this first question.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Thank you, Dr. Cummins. I'm happy to provide additional information. And for the tribal leaders on your wish to receive more information around this, thank you for raising that question and those comments. Just to provide additional context to

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this is that the program that Dr. Cummins was just talking about --- I'm going to read from the recently passed Senate Bill 989 language, which is in the process, and now is law, and to read directly from the law itself to tell you a little bit about what it describes for us to do in this program.

So as I mentioned, the purpose is to further align resources with policies set forth in NALA through establishment of a program within Department of Ed. to support one or more Native American Language Resource Centers. The law also says, In general, the Secretary of Education is authorized to make a grant to or enter into a contract with an eligible entity for the purpose of --- and there's two them -- the first, establishing, strengthening, and operating a Native American Language Resource Center and, two, staffing the center with individuals with relevant expertise and experience, including staff who speak American Indian and Alaska Native languages and the Native Hawaiian language and

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have worked in language education in the American Indian and Alaska Native languages and the Native Hawaiian language in a preschool, elementary school, secondary school, adult education, or higher education program.

In addition to that information, in terms of the money, there are two things to make note of. The first is that the law itself authorizes up to \$3 million a year to be appropriated. Now, that doesn't mean that that's the actual appropriation for that year. It authorizes (Simultaneous speaking.). Contractor, could I get a mute for the participant who didn't mute yet?

MS. WILSON: I muted her.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you so much. So again, so there's authorized \$3 million annually, each year. That doesn't mean that's the actual appropriation for the year, but it authorizes up to three million. The second bit of information there is that in this current FY '23, federal

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fiscal year budget, the Department of Education has been given 1.5 million to implement this program and work towards implementing the Native American Language Resource Center program.

So this year, the challenge in front of us, and it's a good challenge to have because the need is incredible for us, is to devise a program that best implements \$1.5 million to make sure that this program is administered. So what we will do is we will share a hyperlink to the law itself with that text. Preferably, we'd want to cite the public law and hyperlink the (Audio interference), but things are moving so quick, and the law just passed here recently.

So we don't have full-fledged hyperlinks ready, but we do have hyperlinks we can --- think --- I do want to note here that just because the consultation ends, the actual live consultation ends right now, there's still an opportunity to provide written comments, which Dr. Cummins will share that later on. So, I took a lot of time.

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Dr. Cummins, I'm going to give it back to you. Thank you so much.

DR. CUMMINS: No. Thank you. And that helps understand the question a little bit more, I hope. And so, I'm going to move on to Faith.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: (Native language spoken.). Hello, everybody. My name is Faith Begay-Dominique. I'm the Federal Relations Director for Sicangu Co. We're an arm and entity of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. And our comment on this would be that we would prefer to see a contractual agreement. What we find is that grant competitions tend to be more project-based, whereas a contractual agreement is more through the lens of sustainability.

It is sustained over time, more so than just one project, and also allows for the everyday kind of functions that we have to complete and do in a emergent school or any of our language programs. So contractual agreement would work better, in our opinion. And also, to

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kind of echo some of the other comments, it would be better do a contractual agreement to uphold the treaty and trust responsibility of the federal government to tribes rather than having us all compete against each other for a grant. You know, it would be better to administer those funds contractually where we, you know, are all able to receive this type of support. And, you know, thank you for the opportunity to comment, and we look forward to seeing, you know, how this goes.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, next, we have Serrell Smokey.

DR. CUMMINS: Glad you're with us, Serrell.

MR. SMOKEY: Can you hear me now?

DR. CUMMINS: Yes.

MR. SMOKEY: Hi. My name's Serrell Smokey. I'm the Chairman for the Washoe Tribe of Nevada/California. Yeah, I really appreciate the kind of breakdown of what this is. I'm going to

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be honest. I came in kind of blind and was just trying to get more information on --- yeah, kind of the statements that were already made. You know, what exactly is going to be available? What exactly is going to be allowed? But overall, especially for the Washoe Tribe, we're a smaller tribe, and in Northern Nevada, most of the tribes in the state of Nevada are really small. And when it comes to competitive grants, we don't have the capacity to compete with other tribes.

There's also just the questions with really for myself and coming from us is that, you know, it's -- the award's, you know, going to be possibly up to three million a year, but what --- you know, is there going to be a cap on how many tribes that they're actually -- believe is going to apply for this. Or is that going to be --- or is it going to be budgeted that for all tribes in the nation to receive an x amount because once this comes out, I guarantee every single tribe is going to be pushing for this.

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And when it comes to competition, that's where us, not just the Washoe tribe but in the state of Nevada, we all --- always fall short. We're always going to lose out in competitive grants. The contractual agreement, it sounds a lot better. But I did just have a question, just something to bring up, is, you know, when it --- when you state, contractual agreement, is that going to include more of the tribal input as to give tribes the freedom to use their awarded dollars to, you know, revitalize or whatever they're going to do, you know, for their language in their own way because I noticed sometimes that's what we run into, especially when it comes to grants. It's like, okay, you're allowed to do this, this, and this.

But some tribes don't use this, this, and this in order to, you know, share their language or it's not their way of teaching. And so, there needs to be, as with everything, you know, more freedom for tribes to be allowed to, you know, use the funding for the best way that

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suits them and their culture because every tribe is different. So just, you know, just looking at it, basically at face value, looks like a contractual agreement would be a better way to go over competitive grant. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Next, we have Leslie Harper and -- she there?

MS. HARPER: Hello. Hi. I (Native language spoken.) for this opportunity. I often come here on behalf of the National Coalition, and today I'm acting on behalf of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe here in North Central Minnesota. I appreciate having these conversations and hearing from so many of you folks out there. This is something that we've looked forward to for a long time, so (Native language spoken.) for this opportunity. The Leech Lake Band, you know, uses a lot of different pathways, and we hold our language in high regard. We need it today, and we need in the future, just as all the rest of you.

Since 2011, when we passed a governing

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resolution that names Ojibwe language as the official language of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, our tribe has worked in a lot of different strategies and a lot of different areas to keep working on revitalizing and growing a thriving language. When we look at this opportunity for a resource center to help build up resources to language educators and language revitalization communities, the Leech Lake Band understands all of these different approaches to language learning and teaching, from babies to adults to elderly folks.

We have so many different opportunities between public schools, tribal schools, tribal colleges. Many of our tribal programs use our language. And so, we want to make sure that a language resource center --- a Native American Language Resource Center, that passed in this most recent bill, looks at multiple varied examples of language inclusion and understands the diversity of resource needs.

It's our hope that the Native American

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Language Resource Center will work closely with Native American language community members and experienced language practitioners -- that's language expressly from the Native American Languages Resource Center Act that recently passed --- experienced language practitioners from the affected communities to determine how this FY '22 appropriation and now this fiscal year '23 authorization and appropriation will start a good base to start out Native American Language Resource Centers around the US.

And so many of you have expressed --- I would say whether it is contractual or grant-administered, there's going to be competition. There will competition for contracts. If one or more centers are to be stood up, contractual agreements are going to be competitive as well. And we would feel, actually, at the Leech Lake Band, that a grant competition is a good way to administer the program. It allows it to describe, you know, how will Native language practitioners and leaders identify all of these

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different strategic design and implementation priorities and implementation plans that align with the Native American language populations served.

There's a lot of hoops to jump through, and there's a lot of infrastructure stuff around, you know, federal contracting, which a lot of us know about, but there's --- as much as some people say it's difficult to find grant writers, it is also difficult to compete with people who are in the business of federal contracting with some of the agencies.

We want to ensure that, just as it was -- as it aligns with the Native American Languages Resource Center Act of 2022, that entities can demonstrate they have relevant expertise and experience. That is language strictly from the bill that supports this proposed Native American Language Resource Center.

Collaborative entities that have relevant expertise and experience, including



staff who speak American Indian and Alaska Native languages and the Native Hawaiian language and have worked in language education in the American Indian and Alaska Native languages and the Native Hawaiian language in a preschool, elementary school, secondary school, adult education, or higher education program; that's language straight from the bill that authorizes this.

And so, the Leech Lake Band supports a grant competition. That would also be in line with other foreign language resource centers that operate in Title VI around the US, that this is supposed to bring parity with other world languages and foreign languages and how they're resourced in the US, that it's time for Native American language to be resourced (Native language spoken.) on parity. (Native language spoken.) Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you very much. I appreciate everybody's feedback on this first question, and we're going to move on to our second question. And just remember that if

you're not able to add feedback, you can send it via email after this live session. So question number two, what priority or priorities would strengthen the overall design, delivery, and quality of the planned resource center funded under fiscal year 2022 appropriations?

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, I see one raised hand. Dr. Sherry Johnson is a proxy.

DR. CUMMINS: Nice to have you with us, Dr. Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you. I'm sorry. I didn't get on to answer question number one before it closed. I was still waiting for the proxies to be able to announce there. I am Dr. Sherry Johnson, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribal member, a tribal education director, an appointed tribal consultation representative for all matters education and research for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, a treaty tribe of the Lake Traverse Reservation in Agency Village, South Dakota.

The first question that Sisseton would

like to say is that it prefers a contractual agreement, and they would further like to request the center be located in the Great Plains region, which is the central location in the United States. And then, I will go ahead and continue with question two since I'm already on, and I do apologize --

DR. CUMMINS: That's fine. Yes, that's fine.

DR. JOHNSON: -- for our tribal leaders that are --- I'm upfronting there. So my apologies to our tribal leaders. On question number two, I believe our advisory board should be made up of tribal nominations from various regions that would strengthen the overall design, delivery, and quality of the planned resource center.

There should be specific position descriptions of the qualities and knowledge of the advisory board to enlist the best match to the positions. There should be regular meeting times set. Another strength would be having research-based model examples that have been

proven successful to provide support for the tribes that are struggling with the development of the application. I thank you for your time.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, next, we have Leslie Harper.

DR. CUMMINS: Welcome.

MS. HARPER: (Native language spoken.)  
Are we --- I don't want to jump in front of tribal leaders. I am a proxy, so if there are others who have a comment, I will wait until after that is finished, if that's appropriate. Mr. Garcia has his hand up. I will speak after these folks.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, would you like Dr. -- Joe Garcia to speak. He is a tribal leader.

DR. CUMMINS: Yes. Thank you, Joe.  
Yes, sir.

MR. J. GARCIA: Yeah. This is Councilman Joe, again, from Ohkay Owingeh. Again, the question is if we had a good idea of

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what the program actually looks like, the function of the office, we would have a better answer. But I think it's important to understand from the office's perspective what programs are already in place in the country.

So really, you'll have to do some homework in getting your data together about all the language-related issues that the tribes face throughout the country. And so, I presume that those --- that data is available. I know it's available. It's just a matter of you've got to review and assess what areas might be most efficient and most optimized, I guess, for the resource center to be involved in because you will have limited funding. And so, the optimized use of those funding --- of that funding for the services to be provided, you really, really have to be guided by what do the tribes need, how much will they cost, and what are the resources, then, that need to be put in place for the center to be even effective. And you've got to hit the ground running.

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You can't spend another year or two years trying to develop the resource center. So having that data handy will be a good approach. So thank you for allowing the time.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you very much for your comments, and we'll move back to Leslie.

MR. IN THE WOODS: Yeah, this Bryce In The Woods. I'm on a phone. I can't raise my hand. I'd like to make a comment.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay, Bryce.

MR. IN THE WOODS: I'm an elected official with the Cheyenne River Sioux. And I think this resource center, ideally -- it's all on our people's shoulders to save our language. We're at a point of extinction, I guess, you could say. And a resource center, ideally, would be a fluent speaker with a good interpreter. Are you going to invest in that because that's the main resource right now is fluent speakers on a class in America. And with all the historical wrongdoings to eradicate everything that was ours, even our language, it seems like we need a

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bigger investment. From Code Talkers in the wars, our language was used, a lot of information there.

But the tribes have to invest in their fluent speakers and maybe a real sharp person that can interpret. And that would be the start there, for each tribe, to invest in our -- main resource right now would be the fluent speakers that we have on --- in America. And maybe the tribes can look at what would that take, you know, if you're doing 576 tribes. And then, you have that investment in those fluent speakers.

To me that would be an ideal resource center where you can hear our language (Native language spoken.). For our languages that we have, we're going to have difficulty. But I think if you look at traditional governance and traditional law, tribes might have to mandate laws to speak the language, like the Navajo had. I don't think they rescinded that action, but you had to speak Navajo to get on tribal government. Those might be the actions that tribes have to

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take in order to save our language. Otherwise, there's only a few of us that speak our language on tribal government. That's why it's critical that we have a resource center.

There should be a --- I'm emphasizing that because we should have a fluent speaker and an interpreter where they could get the bang for the buck there. That's --- I hope to see that. United States owes us a lot for what they've done, you know, but we've done a lot for this country because it's ours. (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. We will move on to Leslie right now, question number two. Go ahead, Leslie.

MS. HARPER: (Native language spoken.) Looking at question number two, what priorities would strengthen the design, delivery, and quality of this? So when we prepared these responses, when we worked with tribal administrators and leadership, the question was phrased under fiscal year 2022 appropriations.

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However, we will --- we did consider that since the time you announced this consultation, the actual Native American Languages Resource Act of 2022, the law passed. So S989 that authorized a center or multiply centers and a larger appropriation has been passed. So we're going to answer this in a few different ways. We're going to answer the question you asked about the FY 2022 appropriations of \$500,000. That was in national activities.

But we're also going to expand on using this time and this space as a baseline to begin the planning and get the implementation, to get that going because we've waited a long time to have equity and parity with other world languages. These are the original languages of our country, and we are excited to see support through a resource center that can help support all of the Native American languages that are, you know, out there and talked about in the Native American Languages Act.

So the planned Native American

Language Resource Center should definitely align with the priorities of the Native American Languages Act of 1990, the NALA. That's exactly what it says in the law that just passed and authorized and, you know, appropriates funds for this. So the specific fiscal year 2022 appropriation alone might not be large enough to actually implement a really robust language center or multiple centers, but this important preliminary work of the FY '22 appropriation should be directed specifically to provide the substantial base direction that aligns with implementation of the further Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2022 that Congress recently passed.

Specific, targeted outreach and consultation with Native American language and world language stakeholders who have practical knowledge and experience gained as Native American language-medium school or program teachers will be necessary to direct the best use.

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Considering that the purpose of the Native American Languages Resource Act of 2022, which just passed and authorized this program, is, quote, to further align the resources provided by the Department of Education with the policies set forth in the Native American Languages Act through establishment of a program within the Department of Education to support one or more Native American Language Resource Centers, the Department should consider priorities that align with NALA priorities to support Native American language-medium education, teacher prep, ongoing in-service training for such sites, expanding support to Native American language-medium sites, to create and implement programs of education.

Such programs of education include teacher preparation in the most suitable to the local Native American language community. It would include pedagogical decision-making on a local basis and how to design that -- that's what a resource center could provide --- support to

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create and implement assessments in the language of instruction, expanding models of accreditation that support Native American language-medium education sites. Those are some of the priorities.

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, our language immersion program in our tribal BIE school faced numerous obstacles during implementation. Since 2004, our tribe has run a language immersion elementary program. Though our own language immersion site is an act of self-determination by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to provide an alternative pathway to cultural-relevant education, the school sites and our community members have continually faced immense institutional pressures and obstacles to conducting our local tribal self-determined education site that operates in our Ojibwe language, the official language of our tribe.

Policies of the --- of NALA, which allow for teacher certification exemption and for conducting assessments in the language of

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instruction, have been overlooked by other policies, or they have been overridden by other policies within the ESEA that prioritized English language instruction and practices over our official language of our tribe.

While English priorities might be appropriate in English-medium settings and many of our students, probably the majority of our Leech Lake Band students attend English-medium settings, it's not appropriate for the pathway of Ojibwe-medium childcare and education settings that the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe supports. The tribe suggests that one of many strategic priorities for a Native American Language Resource Center should be for the Department to align the rights of NALA with all other Department and even other agency titles and programs to ensure that the right to conduct education and other public programming in our language is truly supported.

Other strategic priorities for a language resource center or centers --- we're

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going to see that this is a really complex and a multi --- multiple varied, you know, strategies are going to be needed or have to --- it will be wise to have multiple centers that can --- that different centers can take on different aspects of Native American language resources.

The Department will do well to engage with experienced language teachers and administrators to determine how they can align policies for teacher credentials that are locally or tribally endorsed, tribal or global indigenous accreditation models. There's a great need to create, gather, and provide access to curriculum resources. We must create educators who can speak and understand our languages.

This puts enormous pressure on our local communities to do multiple things with very limited resources. We have to create new adult speakers of our languages. We have to create new children speakers of our languages. We need to help new speakers understand aspects of curriculum creation. Then, these folks need to

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know how to deliver curriculum. Additionally, these learned folks must also know how to assess and how to evaluate the curriculum delivered.

You can see by these multiple actions there's a lot to build in order to teach our language. A Native American Language Resource Center or multiple centers can focus on different strategies to support the maintenance and growth of our languages. And it can be helpful to have online access to some resources, but if we don't have speakers of our language to teach the resources, then, you know, they're not highly useful yet.

So really understanding all of the pieces and parts that we call resources for a Native American Language Resource Center, there are many, many ways we can come about this. Teacher development, there are differences in pedagogical approaches, whether a Native American language is taught in the medium of the Native language or whether it's taught in the medium of English. And a Native American Language Resource

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Center or multiple centers must be designed with the understanding that multiple varied strategies and priorities are necessary, and multiple varied strategies and priorities will be accessed in different ways.

We want to ensure that language-medium sites are engaged to make up for the misalignment and misapplied punitive policies of the last several decades to ensure that the Native American Language Resource Center aligns with policy principles set out in NALA. (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Next, we'll move on to Faith, and then, we will, after her feedback and comments, we'll move to question number three. Faith.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: Thank you. In Rosebud, we have an immersion school. And so, consulting with the immersion school, this is the response that we formulated: a library of assessments that support language growth, not necessarily someone watching over us but a tool

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to help us grow, would be helpful; a library of curriculums and best practices from other successful immersion schools. If one tribe has an important tool, it would be nice for us to have access to that to make it our own as well and be able to utilize that, including any guidebooks that any tribes might already be using or, you know, that we might formulate and be able to put out to help other tribes as well.

And data that supports language immersion history and the identity of the students that these immersion schools serve would be really helpful to show what an impact a Lakota student, for example, is having by being able to learn in their language. That would be helpful.

And then, also, lastly, a resource list of people that we could call, you know, just a list that we could call for tips on any of these items and tips on language immersion and just kind of being able to form that community-help center. Thank you for your time.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Thanks,

everybody, for your comments. Let's move on to question three. How can the Department better honor your communities' cultures and languages through the work of the resource center? So how can the Department of Education better honor your communities' cultures and languages through the work of the resource center? Dr. Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON: Again, Dr. Johnson, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate. The respect from the tribe's wishes --- respect the tribe's wishes on open sharing of resources. There should be a matrix of permissions to share. Some ceremonial songs and cultural practices should not be shared outside the tribe without permission. The tribe should be able to set up a matrix for each of their resources.

So basically, reaching out, again, to the tribes as they're submitting up these resources that can help all is what permissions and how they can --- what can be shared and contact people back to who does that because certain cultural songs really have a lot of

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language learning, but that permission needs to be held sacred by the tribe. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you for sharing that. Next, we'll move on to Peter Garcia.

MR. P. GARCIA: Thank you. Again, I'm from Ohkay Owingeh, one of the tribes from New Mexico. And our language is Tewa, T-E-W-A. I guess the most important part of this question is that -- sovereignty is the most important part of it. Sovereignty plays a lot for our community, how we govern our country, how we speak our language. So language is important to every indigenous tribe. And I think our cultural sensitivity to the needs of different communities is the origin of our being.

And so, the Department needs to understand what our condition, our cultural, our knowledge of sacred things that we have in place, sacred objects that we believe in, the songs, the sacredness of our place we live in, those have to be understood in order for the Department and each individual tribe to, I guess, accomplish

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what we're trying to put in place. So those are some of the most important parts. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: That was really insightful and useful. Thank you. Leslie Harper.

MS. HARPER: (Native language spoken.) Those are extremely important considerations that we must look at. And, you know, none of this is, you know, this is a language resource center that would be offered up, you know, generally to languages.

No one will, indeed, no one would be compelled to offer anything. But when we look at what are the resource needs of, you know, language medium programs, language immersion programs, what are the resources needs that are out there and that we're looking for, you know.

Is it financial? Is it physical? Is it land? Is it, you know, human resources? So, what could a, you know, center through the Department of Education support? And how can that honor, you know, all of the communities,

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cultures, and languages through the work?

That is a pretty, it is a really tough one, right, because there are 570 plus tribes. But also within NALA we have a description of Native American languages. That includes tribal languages here. That includes native Hawaiian languages. And that includes Alaska Native languages, and the languages of our territories.

So really looking at how does this serve the needs of all of these people? So, if we start to look at, you know, how can we support some of these broader ideas? How could a center or multiple centers support these ideas and honor hundreds of distinct communities, cultures and languages?

That is a tough one, right. And I can imagine that you're sitting there at the Department saying, how does this work? But really honoring the input of native language medium programs and the communities served.

Really, really listen and respond to the input of the language communities defined in

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NALA, in the Native American Languages Act. The population, the legal terminology is already there. The population to be served is already defined.

That is all of the tribal languages here. That is Native Hawaiian languages. That is Alaska Native languages. So we have to look at languages as this, you know.

The Native American languages are the original languages of this country, of the U.S., right. So, honoring all of that would be really sincere and meaningful efforts to again align the rights articulated in NALA.

And understand, yes, put a lot of time into, you know, ongoing consultation and ongoing specific engagement with language practitioners, language teachers, everyone that we know as Native American language teachers.

Really putting specific engagement into that. And understand all of these distinct needs that, where programs are taught in the medium of a native language.

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Native American language medium sites operate at all age levels in a community across the U.S., early childhood, you know, childcare, elementary, secondary, higher education. So, we really do need the Departments and Agencies to coordinate the support, and figure out a necessary research agenda that, you know.

So, this goes with your priorities question from earlier. The same, what is a necessary research agenda that would better coordinate policy alignment.

Listen, that report from this bill, Senate Report number 117-46. I think that one came out in 2021. It was informed. That Senate Report was informed by numerous calls for testimony, numerous listening sessions with Native American language practitioners.

And a quote from that Senate Report says, since 1993 there have been provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that built from NALA, from the Native American Languages Act.

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For example, the definition of Native Americans and Native American languages, the definition of English language learning in the ESEA is based on Section 8 of NALA.

Additionally, Sections 3127 and 3124 that provide for the use of Native American languages as the medium of education assessment and other protections, those haven't been fully implemented by the U.S. Department of Ed and other federal and state educational entities.

So, the establishment of a Native American language resource center can provide assistance to a lot of those educational entities in meeting the requirements and intent of those legal provisions.

So really honoring the intent of the

--

MS. HOPKINS: I apologize, Ms. Harper.

MS. HARPER: Yes.


MS. HOPKINS: We have two minutes left for this question. And we have two additional hands raised at the moment.

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MS. HARPER: Okay.

MS. HOPKINS:  Chairwoman Andrews-Mailtais is a tribal leader, followed by Faith Begay-Dominique as a proxy.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay.

MS. ANDREWS-MALTAIS: Thank you very much. And thank you, Faith. Good to see you. I think that how the Department can better honor the communities, and cultures, and languages really through some listening and understanding.

I was monitoring the chat box. And many of our languages are out of usage, or have been trying to be recaptured, revitalized, and retaught. For prohibitions, legal prohibitions of being able to utilize our language for centuries.

Being able to have the resource center listen to the tribes based upon the regions and maybe the linguistic regions, but on the regions in order to be able to determine how they can best help or assist the tribes in the reclamation of our languages, particularly in the northeast

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where we have some, however not a lot.

And then you have other tribes and nations that are so very privileged to still have live speakers that can communicate that.

So, considering how we're all at varying stages of our usage, that having the resource center really do that outreach to, and maybe not necessarily the individual tribes.

Because again, it's an overwhelming amount of outreach that's necessary. But even on a regional basis to try to understand where we're at with regard to our language, and the teaching of our language, and/or the revitalization of our languages.

And then start to build a delivery system that works for the tribes and/or resource library where people would be able to find the information. Thank you. And, good to see you, Faith.

DR. CUMMINS: Yes, thank you. Faith, you're next. And then we will move on to Question 4 afterwards.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: Thank you. So great to see you too, Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais. Okay. So in response to Question 3, a way to better honor communities, cultures and languages.

If the center will be employing fluent speakers, or providing funding to tribes for having fluent speakers involved in any way, we would like to see that the fluent speakers aren't just paid minimum wage, but they're being paid a professional wage.

And that is honoring the speaker for their knowledge and to stay in the culture. And honoring what they bring to the table. So, that is treating them as the experts that they are, and paying them a professional wage that really honors, you know, the centuries of history that they hold and the language that they hold, and how important their role is in all of this.

Next we'd like to see if the center, you know, if they're either going to provide funding for this or if they would administer it themselves professional development for fluent

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speakers and teachers in emergent schools.

So, if the center could provide facilitators to help fluent speakers and certified teachers collaborate on teaching the language, and teaching in the language. So, you know, teaching math, teaching history, but teaching in the language, you know.

That would be very helpful to bridge those two sides of it, the certified teacher and then the fluent speaker in fusing those two sides together, and including that professional development for the fluent speakers. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay. Thank you. And moving on to Question 4. And what suggestions do you have to improve the presence of online resources for grantees who administer Native American Language Programs?

MS. HOPKINS: And as a reminder, we are taking comments from tribal leaders and proxies first, followed by the general public.

DR. CUMMINS: There is a lot of good comments in the chat I have heard. And so, we

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are keeping those. And they will, we will implement that back into our guidance as well.

MS. HOPKINS: Dr. Cummins, we have Mr. Peter Garcia.

DR. CUMMINS: Peter.

MR. P. GARCIA: Thank you. Can you hear me?

DR. CUMMINS: Yes, I can hear you.

MR. P. GARCIA: I think that in order to have improvement for online resources to some of the grantees who administer our languages would be to help in professional development, which is sometimes hard for our older language teachers.

It's harder for them to understand how the online system, Zoom and virtual meetings work. So, it would be helpful to help them make, help them understand how we do these things is one thing.

And also, I think that technical support for some of the tribes in getting and making sure that computers and online devices are

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also taught to our education, Indian Education Department.

And also for assisting in helping them how to write grants, which is important. Because I think that even though we get a lot of little grants here and there, it helps support our tribal language and education department.

Especially like here at Ohkay Owingeh or Tewa, classes that we have, some of them that we have is in our libraries. So, we get a lot of the little grants under IMLS, which helps to facilitate that -- and those are important. And I think that the continued support from each different organization have always been helpful.

And also I think that some of the things that are in libraries, museums throughout the nation that are from the different tribes is, could get support from this reach out program that we're trying to do is, we can use it for our own educational purposes. So, those are three things I think that are important. So, thank you.

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DR. CUMMINS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, we have Sherry Johnson, Dr. Sherry Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you. The Sisseton Whapeton Oyate believe that clearing help needs to be available for our language resources from tape, videos, recordings, texts, and more.

For grantees a what works website needs to be developed. Written worksheet templates, story boards, and other language resources should be available to reinforce second language learning. Assessments, protocols, and other templates to measure progress need to be available to all grantees.

Research protocols and data on native languages need to be included and accessible. All work grant products should be shared. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, I now recognize, we have Faith Begay-Dominique.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay.

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MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: So, on this question I'd just like to also highlight the importance of the infrastructure in Indian Country for wifi and internet connectivity.

And, you know, it would be nice if there was a way for tribes to get some hot spots for areas that aren't connected to internet, and don't have those lines laid yet.

Or thinking about, you know, how do we create more infrastructure so our tribal members can access these programs online. So, just kind of highlighting that, as well as, you know, there, here in Indian Country that, you know, we still need some work so we can access those resources. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, we have Leslie Harper.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay, Leslie.

MS. HARPER: (Native language spoken.)  
I was reading through the chat too. And Brooke Gonzalez and Christine Sims on here have had really good suggestions, and really good --

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Like, we don't want to be duplicating what other agencies are already doing. We don't want to reinvent the wheel. We want a language resource center to really look at the gaps that exist.

So, language teachers have been telling departments for many years like what's missing, right. And we have been able to demonstrate and show, you know, that under like the Native American Languages Act our rights are not being upheld in these, in some of these educational and childcare spaces.

But for the online presence we definitely want to see, you know, we want to hear from people, what are the gaps? We know that ACF through their ANA project has collections of materials of what grantees are willing to share.

But think about all the people who don't get grants from that agency, right. Because that's highly competitive and underfunded. So, there's a lot of resources out there.

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Think of different state level, different regional, different tribal consortia that may have developed some collaborative materials. But yes, having a really focused spot would be helpful.

And like I said in an earlier comment, that is like really one winning strategy. That is one strand of multiple strands that a language resource center or multiple language resource centers should address.

We would have a lot of different access levels in our own tribe here at the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, from English medium programs that incorporate a few vocabulary words, to health and wellness programs that want to incorporate names of their programs, to our immersion school.

There are going to be many multiple levels. So, I think that is a good strand, a good strategy to examine. But we need to also look at all of the other resource needs as well. And say, you know, this would be one priority of

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many. (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Let's move on to Question 5. So on Question 5 we want to know what entities, organizations, or communities do you feel are exemplar models around language resources, that need to be noted, elevated, and followed by the resource center?

And we don't have to answer every question. But if you have some suggestions for us here, that would be great. If there's any programs or entities, organizations that we want to put a spotlight on. Faith.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: Yes. I would definitely like to highlight the work that we do at Sicanjgu Co in Rosebud. And would love to invite you all from the Department to come and visit the work that we're doing.

We have an almost complete immersion program where we have Rosebud childcare, you know, has an immersion component there for the little ones.

Then we go into the immersion school

that we have in, for elementary students. And every year we're building the next grade on to continue to add to that. And hope to see it go all the way up through high school. Right now we're at the elementary stage.

And then we also have the Lakolya Waoniya program, which is a workforce development program where we're paying, I believe it's seven participants. I might be mistaken on that exact number. But we're paying a select few participants in this program to learn Lakota full time, as their full time job.

A lot of time when adults are learning the language that can be a barrier to their learning, you know, having another job, their children, you know, all their other responsibilities.

And this was a way to put the language at the forefront, and really use this as a workforce development program in the way that we see, you know, somebody studying to be a doctor, or working carpentry or, you know, a different

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type of trade, or have no work. Also elevating Lakota language learning in the same way.

So, we really have a complete ecosystem from young child up through adults of Lakota learning that we would love for you all to come visit, and look at our model, and see how we're doing things at the Sicanjgu Co.

In addition, the Rosebud's tribe has some other good programs. There's St. Francis Indian School and Todd County. Both have Lakota language components to their schools.

The RST Treaty Council is doing some great work. Sinte Gleska University just opened up their Lakota language, Lakota Studies Department as well.

So, in Rosebud we really have a robust program in Lakota language immersion and learning. And we'd just like to note the programming that we have going on there. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Joe. Joe, I believe if you could unmute yourself, Joe

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Garcia.

MR. J. GARCIA: Yes. Joe Garcia, Head Councilman of Ohkay Owingeh. (Native language spoken.) Many thank you to all of you for being online.

And I just responded and said that I'm from Ohkay Owingeh, Head Councilman Joe Garcia.

And I'm going to answer Number 5 and Number 6 at the same time, and probably Number 7.

But the entities and organizations, there are a slew of them out there in Indian Country. And as my comment from one of the initial questions about the Department or the organization has to look upon itself.

I don't know who the (audio interference) are going to be, and who the leaders are of that division. But you have to look at and do assessments and data gathering on what is available.

So, you asked about Number 5. They're going to find all of these entities that are doing a whole lot of work despite not having a

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resource center.

So, what they've done to elevate themselves to the level that they are is an important guideline. And how they did it. And I think it's important to realize that it didn't happen all of a sudden.

They were many, many years trying to get to that point. And that includes Ohkay Owingeh. It's taken us all this time. And lucky for Ohkay Owingeh we still have a lot of fluent speakers, including myself and my brother.

But many other communities don't have that. And so, what, there are some weaknesses, even though there are strengths, and to an extent, and I will bring this to your attention.

Because many language people are using something called grammar into their language system, which in our language, Ohkay Owingeh is not a written language. So, we've learned to write it by phonetics.

But when new teachers try to incorporate grammar, such as used in English when

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you're learning English, the nouns, the verbs, the pronouns, the adverbs, the adjectives, and the structure of a sentence, those don't apply in our language.

And I sense that they do not apply in other languages as well. And so, that's a failure in itself that you're trying to promote something that is not meant to be.

The best way to learn it is through the speaker, in the oral sense. That's how we've learned it. And I think that there are resources on how people and how tribes have gotten around all of the barriers that had been put in place.

And they've gotten around it in, be it as the -- but taking knowledge and using that knowledge is going to make a little bit of work for somebody to research.

But as the previous speaker said, there are all these organizations that are doing a number of important and successful things. But how do you know about it? And how does the Division or the Department know about it?

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So, if you need to know that it makes more sense that somebody should be in charge of collecting data and assessing the current programs that exist in Indian Country.

And, you know, out of the 574 federally recognized tribes, I'm having a hard time remembering what the number of languages that are spoken, what that number looks like. But it's got to be a whole lot smaller than it was 100 years ago.

And so, we've got to be sure that we don't fall into the same trap about, you know, killing the Indian and save the man. It's the same thing with the languages. You say, you kill the language then the Indian part is gone.

So, we don't want them be in that boat and know we're far from that. And so the sign that a lot of people are still speaking the language, it's a good sign that we are here to stay. And so, we're going to keep on moving.

But sometimes the bureaucratic process gets in the way. And I think that's been the,

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sort of the hard barriers to overcome when you talk about resources for Indian County, is the providers do not understand the Indian world.

They got their work cut for you, I'll tell you. And I've seen it. And even in the midst of legislation and all the good intent we're still seeing these barriers and dilemmas.

But be that as it may, I applaud all the people that have been working on it, on not just language but, you know, the sovereignty of our nation, our languages, our land and sacred site, protection of our livelihood, water rights, land rights, and all the things that we've been fighting for.

We made an impact. And we continue to make impacts. But education, the U.S. Department of Education has a role to do to fulfill in this country.

And the fact that there is a Indian Education Office is a good sign. It's been there for some time. But some, you know, it's had its ups and downs.

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But I think it's important to realize that having knowledge of what already exists, what has worked, what is still surviving, what is still thriving out in the real world, that's proof that things are working.

And so if we use those resources and that knowledge, keeping the note that sovereign nations own that data, and you have to work with them to be able to use the same things that they're using.

Because they've proven that it works. And so, kudos to all of my brothers and sisters in Indian Country for making things happen on our own behalf. And so, let's continue to do that.

But as I say, the answers are there for Number 5 and Number 6. And I think Number 7 is the same thing that Native American Language Resource Center, Indigenous Language Resource Center is probably more appropriate.

But be that as it may, thank you for the time. And I have to leave to go to another event. But thank you very much for allowing me

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to speak. (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Yes. Thank you. Next we have Brooke Gonzales.

MS. GONZALEZ: (Native language spoken.) Brooke Gonzalez. And I'm burning up the chat area. But I just wanted to again mention that there are organizations and tribes that are exemplary, including the tribe that I represent, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

I mentioned in the chat that we have, we're in the process of continuing to develop our Rosetta Stone Ojibwe language program. And I think that process there is a lot that can be learned through the process.

Rosetta Stone may not be an option for all tribes. But there was a process in deciding what to do and how to do it that I think could be useful for other groups that may want to do similar types, those more online or application based learning.

And of course, we have the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, who are one of our mentor

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sites, and one of our, you know, I think peers in our Government wide approach to language revitalization.

And I'm very much, as I said, biased. I mentioned in my credentials that I'm a PhD candidate at the University of Hawaii, Hilo (Native language spoken), College of Hawaiian Language, which is a very important resource for indigenous language revitalization.

And the organization that Leslie is also a part of, which is the National Coalition of Native American Languages, Language Schools and Programs.

And that organization was created because we are made up of a group of indigenous language medium immersion schools throughout the United States that came together so that we could address some of the issues that we are facing at more of the national level that were impeding our capacity to grow our programs within public and bureau school systems.

So, I think those are really, you

know, Dr. Simms, who's another one of my mentors and an expert in this field that should be consulted. That's really important to look at the other organizations and tribal entities that are working on.

You know, we've gained a lot of knowledge that maybe smaller groups of like language families do not have time, or they don't have the resources to go back and make the same mistakes that we have made over the course of, we're at the 40 year mark now collectively with our work.

So, I think some of those should be also consulted to talk about ways they could offer some foundational information to the many different tribes represented here, to give them ideas.

And maybe, you know, as they consider how to approach language revitalization, some ways that they could go, and how they could do it in making a really good set of comprehensive plans for their nation to advance language

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proficiency. (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Next we have Dr. Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON: So, when we were considering this question the two that popped into my head immediately were the New Zealand and the Hawaiian. It seems like they have the strongest and most supportive models to language revitalization.

And, but when you look at all the people in the comments, and the side chats, and the things that are coming, there's a lot of exemplary things going on, and right here on our home grant, homeland.

And it will be good to have those exemplary programs as some kind of clearinghouse to really show that. But a truly exemplary program really would have a balance of school, academic education and native language. And so, I want to make sure that that's mentioned. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: If we don't get to

everybody, just a reminder that we do have an email, [tribalconsultation@ed.gov](mailto:tribalconsultation@ed.gov). And we have a few more guiding questions we want to get through. And next we have Leslie Harper. And then we're going to move into our 6th question.

MS. HARPER: (Native language spoken.) Really appreciate hearing everybody on this call and, you know, expanding this. And I'm going to echo what Brooke Gonzalez said earlier about looking at the programs that have been in operation for some time.

Spaces such as the Waadookodaading Ojibwe Language Institute, we got a lot of inspiration from our cousins over in Wisconsin, when our tribe went to start our language immersion school.

I will echo the College of Hawaiian Language at Hilo, Hawaii, has been, and also the Aha Punana Leo in Hawaii have been exemplary leaders in our language reclamation efforts.

For many they're leading some research ideas, and directions, and directives. And have

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always opened their arms and opened their lands to those of us from over here to reach out and find out more about how to do this language revitalization, and how to develop it, how to implement it.

They've really been leaders. I just got to say, I got to remind us that in the Native American Languages Act our Native American languages definitely include tribal languages and Native Hawaiian and Alaskan Native languages.

But it feels like sometimes that's getting left out. I'm not even sure how the comments from the Native Hawaiian community are being collected on here.

Because the wording on that tribal consultation notice was a little confusing. So, we want to make sure that we're not splitting ourselves out.

We have relied upon our Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and other regional collectives of language revitalizers, have relied on our Hawaiian relatives and their work from pre-school

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through post secondary education as inspiration and as help in development.

I would say AILDI, the American Indian Language Development Institute in the Southwest again, you know, there's been incredible work coming out of that area as well with development of programs, development of individual teachers.

We should not reinvent anything. But definitely those are some of the folks that should be consulted. If there are any tribal colleges that have immersion schools, you know, that have a really good grasp of what it takes to create new speakers of our languages, those folks should be involved, and be guiding the development of these centers.

So, if we can bring this stuff together and look at it collaboratively. And also, we have a national network of language medium schools and programs all across the U.S. that can be contacted and help out. So (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. And just to

remind everybody, the purpose of this consultation is to get feedback and guidance from our American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian colleague. And we welcome all of that feedback.

And let's move into Question 6. To, and this was mentioned earlier, and I appreciate that. But to avoid duplication of efforts and better coordinate among existing resources, how should the resource center coordinate resources across the country?

And a lot of you have spoken to that. And we want more input on that. Keep speaking to it.

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, I do not see hands on tribal leaders or proxies at this time.

DR. CUMMINS: We can now hear from Howard Paden. Thank you, Howard.

MR. PADEN: Yes. Thank you, Dr. Cummins. I'm glad to be here. I'm the Executive Director of the Department of Cherokee Language, Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

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DR. CUMMINS: I'm glad you're here.

MR. PADEN: I'm glad to be here. So, with the resources, when it comes to collaborate and coordinate resources across the country, I think it's important to give resources where resources will be uniquely utilized in a manner that will help the language revitalization.

I think a lot of times when we start looking at resources as this we want to either do a dried up approach where we don't give anything to the tribes, or we want to just do a shovel approach where it is given to everybody that raises their hand.

And I want to caution us from doing that. Because it's beyond just some sort of a program that works with enrichment. Our tribe, we call it canned language, just like Ms. Gonzalez had mentioned.

Don't do some of the things that we've done wrong. Cherokee Nation had worked and used where we was teaching colors, animals, and numbers for a number of decades, and didn't build

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a speaker.

And so, when we start giving resources to the tribes I think it's imperative that we put that towards tribes that's building actual second language speakers. That it's not just a feel good, or a, you may say, building a tombstone for language. That these languages does need the resources.

They do need the Federal Government that has done great unrepairable harm to the different languages to come in and help stop this hemorrhage among our languages.

But what we don't want to do is make appearance that we're doing something to save language when we're actually not.

And so I think it's imperative that we get behind language programs and departments that will, that actually build speakers, and not just --

It's not about feel good. And it's not about this is something that looks good for our tribe to do. But it has nothing to do with

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actual language revitalization, where we are building speakers. And we should really, really shy from putting too many resources in them type of programs. (Native language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. This is really a great crowd of people. Such expertise within all of you. And I was thinking to myself, I wish I had this network when I first started out.

But I'm glad you all were able to meet each other in the chat. And you're making connections. And if we have anybody else for Question 6 we can go there. Otherwise we'll move on to Question 7. Dr. Sherry Johnson raised her hand.

DR. JOHNSON: So, I believe that to avoid that duplication of efforts, again, that searchable database of resources that includes where resources are located.

We need to have not necessarily all the resources there, but these contact people and the, where we could get help, and who has what

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programs going. That kind of resources would help everybody.

You know, we also need the language and documentation. And in the recordings they should be retained as spoken. But conversational language of each generation needs to be recorded and retained for that future.

And so, we also have both types of a resource database that we do need to have. Because the side comments and the side things that are going on are very informative. Just that sharing out and setting up with the language people. So, they can help each other. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: We have Leslie Harper, and after Leslie's comments we are going to move into Question 7.

MS. HARPER: (Native language spoken.) I've said it before. It will be really important. We don't want to be, you know, looked at as duplicating efforts, right.

You know, because, I mean, even

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Congress that makes these laws and, you know, prints the money for these things to happen, you know, doesn't, you know, they'll be like, don't duplicate efforts.

So really, I mean, just ensuring that we are really, the Department really is engaging frequently ongoing with native language practitioners ensuring that the Department is also looking at their own alignment with other programs, and looking at their own alignment in policy, and what's happening.

So, you know, just making sure that this stays on, and that this is really, really focused on ongoing communication and contact with language practitioners. (Native Language spoken.)

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you. Moving on to Question 7. Should the Department name their resource center the Native American Language Resource Center or Indigenous Language Resource Center?

MS. WILSON: Dr. Cummins, I've



recognized two hands raised, Peter Garcia and Leslie Harper.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay. Peter Garcia.

MR. P. GARCIA: Thank you. I think that just like my brother had said, Joe, it should be named Indigenous Language Resource Center, which I think that it has I guess more meaning to the tribal entities, and all the different tribes.

Because throughout the nation we, all we talk about indigenous tribes and indigenous languages. So, it would make more sense for Ohkay Owingeh for it to be named Indigenous Language Resource Center. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Leslie.

MS. HARPER: (Native Language spoken.) This is an important piece to me. The Leech Lake Band and me personally say that the resource center should be named the Native American Language Resource Center.

It makes sense for the Department to use the name Native American Language Resource

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Center because it is built on the Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2022.

That's the bill that just passed that authorized these Native American Language Resource Centers to be implemented. So, why is that important? Because it ties back the Native American Resource Center Act.

The whole reason this bill came up is to help support the policy pieces of the Native American Languages Act of 1990, NALA. We keep referring to that.

But that was a really incredible piece of Congressional Act that was passed in 1990 that says, Congress has the responsibility to act with tribes to support and promote Native American languages.

That is a law that passed in 1990. Many folks contributed to that. Many tribal members, many Native Hawaiian, many Alaska Natives, many folks contributed to getting that law passed.

It's called the Native American

Languages Act. It was passed in 1990. And it includes the legal definition and legally defines the populations to be served.

The Congressional intent of the Native American Resource Center Act of 2022 is to, I quote, further align the resources provided by the Department of Ed with the policies set forth in the Native American Languages Act of 1990 to establish the program for the language resource centers.

So, that's the bill language. It doesn't make sense, nor would it be efficient, it would not be useful for the Department to try to create a new legal term. Or for the U.S. Ed Department to try to create a new population to which the act would apply.

We already have a law. We already have a term in place, Native American. It encompasses and, you know, that definition. The term Native American means an Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Native American Pacific Islander has the same meaning given to such term under the

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Indian Education Act, you know, Section 4009.

Native American, Pacific Islander is determined in there. The terms Indian Tribe and Tribal Organization have a definition in there under ISDEA. The term Native American Language, which is a legal term, means the historical traditional languages spoken by Native Americans.

So, we already have a term. We already have a specific population at whom this is directed. It ties back to another law that is already in existence. It just makes sense for it to stay as the Native American Language Resource Center.

DR. CUMMINS: Thank you.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: If they start inventing new terms that might throw a whole wrench into everything, you know, into these centers even getting out there.

DR. CUMMINS: Okay. Thank you very much. Faith.

MS. BEGAY-DOMINIQUE: Thank you. You know, it's really hard to speak on behalf of a

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whole, you know, all native people, or even all of Rosebud or, you know, something like that.

But what we've kind of come up with in our talks is that we prefer Indigenous Language Resource Center, as opposed to Native American Language Resource Center.

Because Native American, you know, we looked at it in, that could be anybody that was born in the United States or was born in American. Whereas indigenous, you know, would more so refer to the first people of this land.

And, you know, a lot of times we would like, prefer to be called by our actual nations. So, you know, like to be called Lakotas or, you know, something like that. Or we actually are Dine, you know, something.

But, you know, if we have to go for an overarching, Indigenous Language Resource Center seems to work the best for us of those two options.

And, you know, I've always heard that Bureau of Indian Affairs, or Bureau of Indian

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Education will always be named that because it's written in law.

But, you know, an effort that might be worthwhile in the future is to look at some type of legislation to change those names from Indian, you know, since we aren't from India.

And we can always write in there, you know, where it was formally written Indian, now write indigenous or, you know, whatever the consensus comes up of the term that's most appropriate.

But I think there always is room to adapt language and change it to something more appropriate for the people that it represents. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Dr. Johnson.

DR. JOHNSON: Native American Language Resource Centers. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: Chairwoman Andrews.

MS. ANDREWS-MALTAIS: I have to agree with the, the term Native American is new. The American Indian is a misnomer. But our rights

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and sovereignty are codified in law with that term. And we're identified, as incorrect and as offensive as it is, in the Constitution as such.

So rather than Native American, because where we come from people that are born in this country, their first generation of children are very proud of that fact.

And they always liken themselves to, they are Native American just like me, or just like we are. So, I'd rather go with Indigenous Language or American Indian Language Resource Center. Thank you.

DR. CUMMINS: So, I don't think there's any more hands. And could be wrong. But seeing no hands I just want to thank everybody for joining us today. I really appreciate it.

We've recorded this session. And written public comments will only be collected through the TribalConsultation@ed.gov. It was incorrectly written previously in the chat box. but it's TribalConsultation@ed.gov.

Although we will keep the comments and

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information written in the chat box, this was very informative, very hope filled, and let's take on this new year.

And I know you've been fighting in this fight for quite a while. And let's embrace this opportunity right now with the Biden Harris Administration.

We do have key leaders, key people in places that do want to support Native Language Revitalization, because they do know the, well, we know that Native Language Revitalization is healing. It's healing. And it's restoring. And let's continue those efforts.

And to provide a few closing comments I'm going to call upon Julian Guerrero.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you so much, Dr. Cummins. I appreciate that. Sorry for the echo there, folks. I want to just say again, and reiterate my appreciation for everyone's input, tribal leaders first and foremost, designated proxies and the work you do, as well as members of the public.

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In my closing comments I, my simple ask to you all is to continue to give us input. We welcome it always. And we're here asking for your continued help in implementing this program. Help us get this right. Help the Department get this right.

We have a critical opportunity to advance efforts to push back against the overwhelming risk of losing native languages, which are our most precious assets.

As the Director of OIE I don't even speak my own native language, Comanche, proficiently. And simply put, that is crisis if the director himself doesn't proficiently know his own language.

Yet this opportunity in this resource center is profound. We have an enormous duty to remain and let native languages remain, and restore their vibrancy.

And in this session and the previous engagement session that we had done before this, and in future sessions that we'll have around

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this work, we want to always promote the functionality, utility of this resource, of these dollars to support educators, evaluators, community advocates, tribal leaders, language planners, administrator, all of the above.

And as we continue to do this work, again, we always welcome your input going forth. I did want to applaud another consultation that will be upcoming for us in the near future.

For those of you who are interested in attending we have a tribal consultation coming up on January 24th of this year. And that consultation topic will be the fiscal year 2024 comprehensive grant competition

Again, the time for that consultation will be from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern. The Department will conduct consultations on the developments by 2024 input for the grant competition.

The purpose of the consult will be to receive meaningful input from American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities to

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ensure that tribal leader views are addressed.

The consultation will advance our commitment to upholding the federal trust responsibility as described in Executive Order 13175.

You can find the consultation notice by the following link that I will place in the chat here for you all, for that January 24th consultation.

Again, thank you so much. (Native language spoken.) Now I'll hand it to Dr. Cummins. No? Dr. Cummins is good. I'm good. Thank you everyone for joining us today for the consultation.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 4:50 p.m.)

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