

# SERVING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES



*We celebrate the rich cultural traditions and proud ancestry of American Indians and Alaska Natives, and we recognize the vital contributions these groups have made to the strength and diversity of our society.*

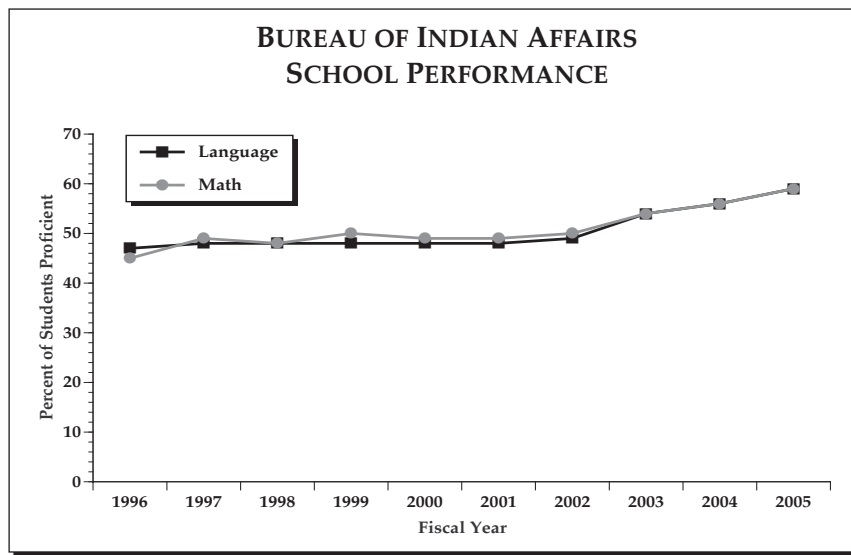
*President George W. Bush, November 1, 2002*

## INDIAN EDUCATION

One of the BIA strategic goals is to provide quality educational opportunities from early childhood through adulthood, instilling a desire for life-long learning to keep pace with an ever-changing world. Education is the cornerstone of a viable and prosperous future for tribal governments and Native Americans. Almost 48,000 students in 23 States attend the 183 elementary and secondary schools that form the BIA school system. The BIA directly operates one-third of these schools. The other two-thirds are operated under contracts or grants to Tribes or other tribal organizations. In addition to primary and secondary education, the BIA budget also supports higher education in Indian country.

The 2005 elementary and secondary school operations request is \$522.4 million. This funding will maintain the President's commitment to improve student achievement at BIA schools. In January 2002, the President signed into law the No Child

Left Behind Act of 2001, a landmark education bill that will help strengthen BIA-funded schools through several components, such as a provision that extends funding eligibility for Department of Education reading programs to the BIA school system. The BIA is working in partnership with tribal representatives to fully implement the No Child Left Behind Act, with the goals of increased accountability and student achievement.



The request includes an increase of \$500,000 to expand the highly successful FOCUS program to five additional schools. The program provides targeted assistance to schools to help them raise their level of instruction and improve student achievement,

through means such as upgrading the education skills of teachers. The FOCUS program has demonstrated results with four of five past participants, with one school raising its academic scores by over 20 percent.

Funding for tribal colleges and universities totals \$43.4 million in the 2005 budget. The request in-

cludes an increase to support two tribally controlled colleges—Tohono O’odham Community College in Arizona and Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College in Michigan—that have recently met statutory requirements for BIA support.

The budget also requests \$250,000 for a student loan repayment program, within special higher education scholarships, specifically targeted to students who agree to a term of employment with BIA. This program will improve BIA’s ability to recruit highly qualified new employees.

### BUILDING SAFER SCHOOLS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

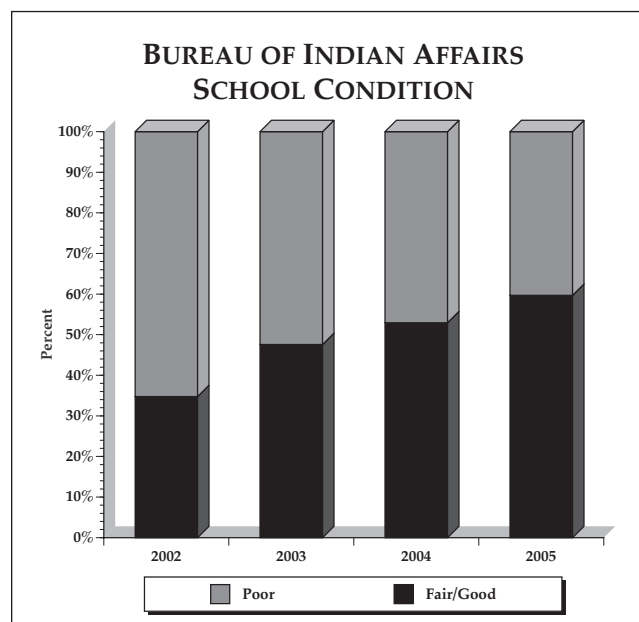
During the 2000 presidential campaign, President Bush promised to provide safe and structurally sound schools for Indian students. Many schools have serious deficiencies that could pose serious threats to the students’ health and safety and which adversely impact their school environment and hinder learning. Deficiencies include leaking roofs, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate heating, cooling, and ventilation. Dilapidated dormitories, small and poorly ventilated portable classrooms, and a lack of modern facilities, such as computer and science labs and libraries, make it difficult for Indian children to get the quality education that they need to succeed in today’s economy.

The \$881.3 million provided in the President’s first three budgets is beginning to make a dramatic improvement in the quality of Indian schools, provid-

ing an increasing number of students with a school environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to educational achievement. With funding provided through 2004, the facilities condition index scale for BIA schools will reach 0.124, a significant reduction from 0.266 in 2001. A score of 0.100 is the threshold for fair/good condition. The funding request for 2005 will reduce the overall score for the BIA portfolio to 0.113, with 60 percent of schools having an FCI of 0.100 or less.



The 2005 budget for education construction continues the President’s initiative, with a request for \$68.5 million to replace buildings at the remaining five schools on the 2003 priority-ranking list for education facilities construction. This funding will provide replacement schools and dormitories for Bread Springs Day School, Ojo Encino Day School, and Beclabito Day School in New Mexico, Leupp Boarding School in Arizona, and Chemawa Indian School Dormitory in Oregon.



The budget also includes \$9.9 million for the tribal school construction demonstration program, which provides incentives for Tribes to match the Federal government funds to build replacement schools. Project selection criteria and eligibility for the demonstration program will be developed and announced in 2004.

The education facilities improvement and repair program is funded at \$137.5 million. The 2005 request will fund deferred and annual maintenance needs, and major and minor repair projects to address critical health and safety concerns, non-compliance with code standards, and program deficiencies at existing education facilities. Funding for annual maintenance has been increased by \$21.0 million to prevent growth in the deferred maintenance backlog.

Overall school construction reflects a decrease of \$65.9 million below the 2004 level. The funding level has been reduced in order to allow the program to focus on building the schools already funded for construction. From 2001 to 2004, funding was appropriated for 25 replacement schools. Of these 25 schools, 21 are in the planning and design process or under construction. Four of these schools have been completed and are operating. Another three are expected to be completed in 2004.



The BIA is making a concerted effort to improve the management of its construction programs. The BIA is in the process of reviewing the size of several schools funded for construction. The BIA has developed interim guidelines on enrollment projections and will begin negotiated rulemaking on enrollment projections, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act, later this year. In addition, since Tribes contract for the majority of funding for construction, the 2005 budget proposes to require Tribes to begin construction of schools within 18 months of funds being available for construction. If construction has not started, BIA may assume responsibility for the project.

### **INDIAN SELF-DETERMINATION**

The 2005 budget supports self-governance and self-determination by encouraging more Tribes to contract for services currently operated by BIA. The budget includes \$1.0 million for the Indian self-determination fund to provide 100 percent of indirect costs to first-time and expanded contracts. In addition, the budget includes funding for six newly acknowledged Tribes to help them establish day-to-day tribal government operations and support tribal contracting of programs.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

High unemployment rates on reservations are one of the greatest challenges facing Indian Country. The 2005 budget includes an increase of \$1.0 million to help Tribes develop uniform business codes. A codified standard would ensure equitable business treatment for commercial operations in Indian country. This increase supports Indian economic development and the BIA performance goal to reduce unemployment on Indian reservations.

### **RESOLVING LAND AND WATER CLAIMS**

The budget includes \$34.8 million for payment of authorized Indian land and water claim settlements in Oklahoma, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, and New York. These settlements resolve long-standing claims to water and lands by Indian Tribes. They are the result of negotiations between the Tribes, the Federal government, and other interested parties. While the specific provisions of each settlement differ, most contain multi-year funding commitments. Once an agreement has been reached, the Tribes depend on appropriated funds to implement the agreements, often beginning new water development projects or other economic development initiatives with those funds. Failure to provide funding for a settlement agreement can result in increased costs over time and the payment of interest penalties by the Federal government.

The 2005 request for settlements reflects a net decrease of \$25.1 million from the 2004 funding level primarily because the Federal commitment was completed in 2004 for the Santo Domingo and Ute Indian settlements. The BIA budget request includes funding for two new settlements: \$14.0 million for Zuni Pueblo water claims and \$1.8 million for Seneca Nation land claims at Cuba Lake in New York. The total settlement of \$19.3 million for the Zuni water claims settlement will be paid over two years. The settlement for Cuba Lake land claims by the Seneca Nation is a one-time payment. The budget includes \$10.0 million for the second of four payments for the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw settlement in Oklahoma. The budget also includes \$8.0 million for the Colorado Ute/Animas La Plata settlement.

Funding of \$52.0 million for construction activities associated with the Colorado Ute settlement is included in the BOR budget. The budget proposes to fund the Quinault settlement in the FWS rather than in BIA.