



Facts on the BIE Reform

ASSOCIATE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ADD) REALIGNMENT

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan convened an American Indian Education Study Group to diagnose the systemic challenges facing the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and to propose a comprehensive plan for reform to ensure all students attending BIE-funded schools receive a world-class education. After conducting listening sessions and tribal consultations, a framework for transforming the BIE into an “innovative organization that serves as a capacity-builder and service-provider to tribal nations with BIE-funded schools” has been provided by the agency.

As part of the reform plan, the BIE is proposing to realign staff and reporting relationships within the BIE to improve services to schools and tribes. According to the BIE, the realignment will:

1. Shift the management focus to the field;
2. Clarify roles and responsibilities;
3. Acknowledge the different requirements of Bureau operated schools and tribally controlled schools to better meet their needs; and
4. Establish clear reporting and accountability structures for academic operations and administrative operational functions.

PROPOSED ASSOCIATE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ADD) REALIGNMENT

The central component of the reform plan will realign the direct school services to match the management needs of the schools. The field structure will be aligned according to the types of schools serviced – tribally controlled or bureau operated – rather than solely on a geographical basis (current structure is: ADD East; ADD West; ADD Navajo).

The majority of BIE schools, 70 percent, are operated by tribal nations or locally controlled school boards but the BIE organizational structure has never evolved to meet this reality. The proposal reorganizes the field structure around the different types of services required by tribally controlled schools and bureau operated schools to do a better job of meeting the needs of the two differing school structures.

With the current structure, the ELOs must meet the needs of all schools in their area, regardless of whether or not they are bureau operated or tribally controlled. The management structure of the schools makes a big difference in the types of services required from BIE staff.

The major roles and responsibilities regarding the *tribally controlled schools* include:

- Academics – The school board and administrators establish the academic direction for the school.
- Finance – The school board and administrators have oversight of budgets for school expenditures.
- School Governance – The school board has direct oversight over the school and administration.
- Human Resources – The school board makes selections. The BIE staff performs the classification, advertising, background clearances, and final selection that adhere to federal guidelines.
- Facilities – The tribe or school can opt to oversee their operations and maintenance.
- The ELO/ERC provides technical assistance to schools including academic services, conducts financial internal control audits and develops corrective action plans, oversees and monitors aspects of the contract relationship for the school and monitors federal requirements, provides necessary oversight and assistance regarding Department of Education requirements, provides HR services such as background clearance review and processing of hiring actions.

The major roles and responsibilities regarding *bureau operated schools* include:

- Academics – The BIE provides support and direction for curriculum, instruction, and assessments.
- Finance – The BIE oversees and evaluates school expenditures.
- School Governance – The school board serves in an advisory capacity making recommendations to the schools staff and BIE.
- Human Resources – The BIE provides the position descriptions to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)'s HR department to classify, advertise, conduct background clearances, and certify applicants. Currently, the BIA is responsible for the selection of the staff with input from the schools.
- Facilities – The BIE oversees some of the operations and maintenance.
- The BIE provides direct services associated with operating a school, oversight and internal controls, and provides technical assistance needed with regard to Department of Education requirements.

Because the needs of a bureau operated school are so different than the needs of a tribally controlled school, the BIE proposes to realign its functions to better meet these divergent needs. The proposed reorganization will improve service to grant schools, bureau operated schools, and tribal communities, and clarify lines of accountability within the organization. The proposed field structure establishes Associate Deputy Director positions for bureau operated, tribally controlled, and Navajo schools each responsible for the management of ERCs which provide direct service.

The proposed field structure is described below:

- Associate Deputy Director Tribally Controlled Schools
 - Main office located in Minneapolis, Minnesota
 - Will oversee 95 schools
 - Projected to work with 53 tribes in 21 States
 - 1 Education Resource Center – or ERC – will be designated per every 13 schools – for a total of 7 ERCs under this division (See NIEA's fact sheet on ERCs)
 - 1 full time employee per school
 - 1 school solutions team working with cluster of schools
 - 7 school solutions team will be housed under each ERC
- Associate Deputy Director Bureau Operated Schools
 - Main office located in Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - Will oversee 23 schools
 - Projected to work with 17 tribes in 8 States
 - 1 Education Resource Center – or ERC – will be designated per every 7 schools – for a total of 3 ERCs under this division (See NIEA's fact sheet on ERCs)
 - 1 full time employee per school
 - 3 school solutions teams will be housed under each ERC
- Associate Deputy Director Navajo Schools
 - Main office located in Window Rock, Arizona
 - Will oversee 65 schools (there are 66 schools on or near the Navajo reservation – but one school has opted to fall under ADD Tribally Controlled)
 - Will work with only the Navajo Nation
 - 1 Education Resource Center – or ERC – will be designated per every 13 schools – for a total of 5 ERCs under this division (See NIEA's fact sheet on ERCs)
 - 1 full time employee per 3 schools
 - 3 school solutions teams will be housed under each ERC

NIEA is providing this series of Fact Sheets on the BIE reform to help inform and educate our members. For additional information or questions, please contact Dimple Patel, National Indian Education Association Federal Policy Associate, at dpatel@niea.org.