

A History of American Indian and Alaska Native Education 1971-1979

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This chapter describes the author's experiences working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Education Program from 1971 to 1979. It is a follow-up to his chapter describing his experiences from 1964 to 1970 published in *Honoring Our Teachers* (Hopkins, 2017). Self-Determination was the underlying theme of all Indian/Native policies, statutes and activities from 1971 to 1980 and efforts were made to get the BIA out of running schools as was done in Alaska and Oklahoma. From 1971 to 1979 the Indian Education Resources Center (IERC) where Hopkins worked was the BIA office that had the most contact with schools and tribes. The 1970s concluded with a reorganization of BIA's Office of Indian Education Programs and the IERC was abolished.

The 1970s were characterized in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools by some very effective and successful bilingual education programs as well as continued application of modern English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy. Administratively, Indian educational self-determination continued to expand under two Federal laws: the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638) passed January 4, 1975 and the Education Amendments (P. L. 95-561) passed November 1, 1978. There seemed to be a belief at the Federal level, especially in Congress, that additional laws and regulations would translate into improved education practice at the school level. However, based on my involvement at the national level of the BIA Education Program, such innovations as bilingual education, ESL methods and the initiation of Indian control of schools had very little to do with Federal legislation. Developments in the 1970s included:

- Indian self-determination expanded
- BIA operated schools declined in number
- Indian school enrollment increased, including in public schools
- Some tribes established departments of education
- The number of BIA schools in Alaska decreased as they were turned over to the state
- BIA education leadership was characterized, mostly, but not always, by non-educators and all without any experience educating Indian/Native at any level – and they changed frequently
- BIA education program policy leadership changed in 1978 from self-determination to closing off-reservation boarding schools
- The number of Indian contracted schools gradually increased

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The narrative section of the 1971 FY (1971-72 school year) *Statistics Concerning Indian Education* (USBIA, 1971) provides an official perception of Indian Education in 1971:

Indian children attend public, Federal, private, and mission schools. In fiscal year 1971 there were 190,174 Indian students, age 5 to 18 years, inclusive, enrolled in these schools in the United States.

Education of Indian children residing in the States of California, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin is the responsibility of the state concerned.

In 1971 more than half (63.3 percent) of all Indian children of school age (5-18) attended public schools. Of those enrolled in school, 68.8 percent attended public schools, 25.7 percent attended Federal schools, and 5.5 percent attended mission and other schools.... The primary objective of Federal schools operated for Indian children living on Indian-owned or restricted trust lands is to prepare them for successful living. In Federal schools children develop basic academic skills, acquire an understanding of the social and economic world which surrounds them, learn improved standards of living, follow practices which assure optimum health, acquire the necessary vocational training to qualify for gainful employment, and obtain sufficient education to enter special schools and institutions of higher learning. The system of schools provided by the Federal Government for Indian children meets program standards required by the States in which they operate, and all but one of the secondary schools are accredited. Plant facilities at the school lacking accreditation have not yet been brought up to required standards.) A full 4-year high school course is offered at 26 schools. Seven other schools offered high school training at less than the 4-year course.

Indian children are entitled to the same opportunities for public school education as are provided for other citizens living within a State. It is encouraging to note that the States have assumed responsibility for the education of 130,885 (63.3 percent) school-age Indian children in the States where the Bureau of Indian Affairs has direct educational responsibility. Over one-third are educated at no cost to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In some States, however, tax-exempt, Indian-owned lands and large numbers of Indian children within a school district may create financial burdens for which local funds are inadequate. As early as 1890, contracts providing for financial assistance to schools attended by Indian children were negotiated with individual districts. It was recognized then, as today, that Indian children become better adjusted to living with all people in a community when they associate with other children in public schools. The Johnson-O'Malley Act, which became law in 1934, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with States for the education of Indians and to permit the use

of Federal school buildings and equipment by local school authorities. Consequently, some States with large Indian populations now have no Federal schools within their boundaries.

Under the terms of Public Law 874, 81st Cong. (64 Stat. 1100), as amended August 13, 1958, administered by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, a new Federal aid resource was made available to eligible school districts educating Indian children. This aid is available to meet partial costs of normal school operation. Additional supplemental aid for the education of Indian children under the Johnson-O'Malley program is limited to districts that do not qualify under the Public Law 874 program and to districts meeting educational problems under extraordinary circumstances, including special services and special programs designed to facilitate the education of Indian children.

In summary, then, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had direct responsibility for 56,786 children enrolled in Federal schools and housed in Federal dormitories, partial financial responsibility for approximately two-thirds of those enrolled in public schools. (USBIA, 1971, pp. 1-3)

It is apparent from these paragraphs that top BIA administrators continued to think in terms of the 1950s Indian Termination Policy. By this I mean that basic education responsibility of the BIA stops when public schools assumed responsibility for the education of Indians. Even though their children could attend local public schools, Indian families knew they could still enroll their children in a BIA school, and many did just that.

It is interesting to compare the 1971 statistics narrative to the 1979 narrative. By 1979 there had many changes in the BIA's top education administration. Earl Barlow was the Director of the BIA Office of Indian Education Programs. The *Statistics Concerning Indian Education* (USBIA, 1979) narrative follows:

Many of the treaties between the United States and Indian tribes provide for the establishment of schools for Indian children. Thus, the goal of the education program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is to offer Indian and Alaskan Native children quality educational opportunities, responsive to their individual tribal needs and unique cultural backgrounds.

Today, the Bureau operates and/or funds a Federal Indian school system consisting of 222 schools which include boarding schools, day schools, dormitories and tribally operated (contract) schools. The Bureau also provides compensatory education and exceptional child programs: finances supplemental programs for Indian public school students, higher education grants to college students and grants to tribally controlled community colleges; and supports adult education and vocational training program.

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, P. L. 93-638, allows tribes to contract for administration of BIA schools

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on the tribe's reservation. The increase in tribally operated schools is a direct result of this Act.

P. L. 95-561, Title XI, the Education Amendments of 1978, further emphasizes a full range of choices for Indian Tribes and parents. Control of Indian education by local Indian tribes is stressed, along with equitable funding and educational standards.

P. L. 95-471 provides grants to tribally controlled community colleges, enabling many Indian students to attend a two year college in their own communities. The Bureau is currently funding 15 of these colleges.

Additionally, eligible Indian college students receive grants from the Bureau to enable them to attend the university or college of their choice. Assistance is based on individual need and is supplemental to assistance available through private sources or other Federal higher education programs. Some tribes have contracted with the BIA to administer the grant program.

As an integral component of the higher education grant program, the Bureau has contractual arrangements which tie American Indian Law Center which administers grant awards to eligible students enrolled in law school; and American Indian Scholarships which administers grants to students enrolled in masters and doctoral programs.

Bureau-funded schools served over 40,000 students in FY 1979, providing elementary and secondary education programs throughout the United States. Special programs were offered to meet the unique needs of these students and to assist them in both educational and personal growth.

In addition, special education programs for exceptional children were available in two hundred and twenty two schools operated and funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Supplemental funds for exceptional and compensatory education were provided to all BIA funded or operated schools from the Department of Education.

The Bureau also provides opportunities for adult Indians to complete high school and gain new skills and knowledge. Eligible Indian adults who have not obtained high school diplomas may complete their education through the high school level, either by regular high school courses, General Education Development (GED) courses, or classes in Adult Basic Education (ABE).

Congress has also provided educational opportunities for Indian and Alaskan Native children where regular educational facilities are not available. Under the terms of P. L. 874, 81st Cong. (64-Stat. 1101), as amended August 13, 1958, Federal aid was made available to eligible school districts educating Indian children. This aid is available to meet partial costs of normal school operation. Additional supplemental aid for the education of Indian and Alaskan Native children under the Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Act of 1934 is limited to districts that do not qualify under the P. L. 874 program. JOM is intended to meet special educational

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needs arising from extra-ordinary circumstances, including services and programs designed to facilitate the education of these children.

In summary, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has direct responsibility for Indian and Alaskan Native children enrolled in Federal schools and housed in Federal dormitories and partial financial responsibility for two-thirds of those enrolled in public schools. (USBIA, 1979, pp. 8-9)

Tables 1 and 2 below provide some statistics that reflect BIA program activities.

Table 1 – School Census Figures

Data Category	School Year 1970-71	School Year 1976-77
Total Number Enumerated	205,574	219,212
BIA Schools Ages 5-18	47,878	45,542
BIA Schools Over 18	2,862	1,458
Public Schools, Ages 5-18	126,859	149,326
Public Schools Over 18	2,189	2,596
Other Schools Ages 5-18	10,850	10,913
Other Schools Over 18	6,089	15,007
Total in All Schools Ages 5-18	185,587	205,781
Total in All Schools Over 18	11,140	19,061
Total Not in Any School Ages 5-18	12,052	7,891
Unknown 5-18	7,935	5,540

Table 2 – Types and Numbers of Schools

School Type	School Year 1970-71	School Year 1976-77
Grand Total	215	179
Total Boarding Schools	77	69
Total Day Schools	138	110
Regular Day Schools	135	107
Trailer Schools	1	
Hospital Schools	2	

Bureau of Indian Affairs Educational Activities: 1970-1979

Self-Determination was the underlying theme of all Indian/Native policies, statutes and activities from 1971 to 1980. I have mentioned above the passage of Public Laws 93-638 and 95-561. These statutes reflected Indian/Native desires as well as those of Congress. A related development within the BIA was the revision of regulations and administrative procedures regarding "Indian Preference." For decades the BIA had interpreted the law as applying only to initial hires. The new revisions extended it to all personnel actions.

From 1971 to 1979 the Indian Education Resources Center (IERC) was the BIA office that had the most contact with schools and tribes. It initiated printed-published documents reflecting all aspects of the BIA Education Program and was administered by Dr. William J. Benham, a Creek Indian with in-depth experience at all levels of operation of the Education Program (Benham, 1971).

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It is important that the IERC had a different caliber of professional educators, especially when compared to Washington Office staff from 1952 to 1970. The mostly unstated policy of IERC staff was to reflect a high level of technically professional capability. There were five with earned doctoral degrees and three of these were in leadership positions. Two of them were Indian. The increased professional technical capabilities meant that the BIA Education Program could conduct its own institutional research to address problems and needs. There were several evaluation projects conducted and reported and some national survey type research on Indians in Higher Education: the Alaska Native Needs Assessment (ANNA) and the Off Reservation Boarding School (ORBS) Project. A former math teacher, who became an education specialist, designed and implemented a bureau-wide computerized student membership (count) program, the Student Enrollment System (SES). He developed the computer program, entered data and generated reports. In all activities, the professional quality of the BIA's Education internally conducted research was never questioned. Considering the historically negative perception of BIA, this was a noteworthy accomplishment.

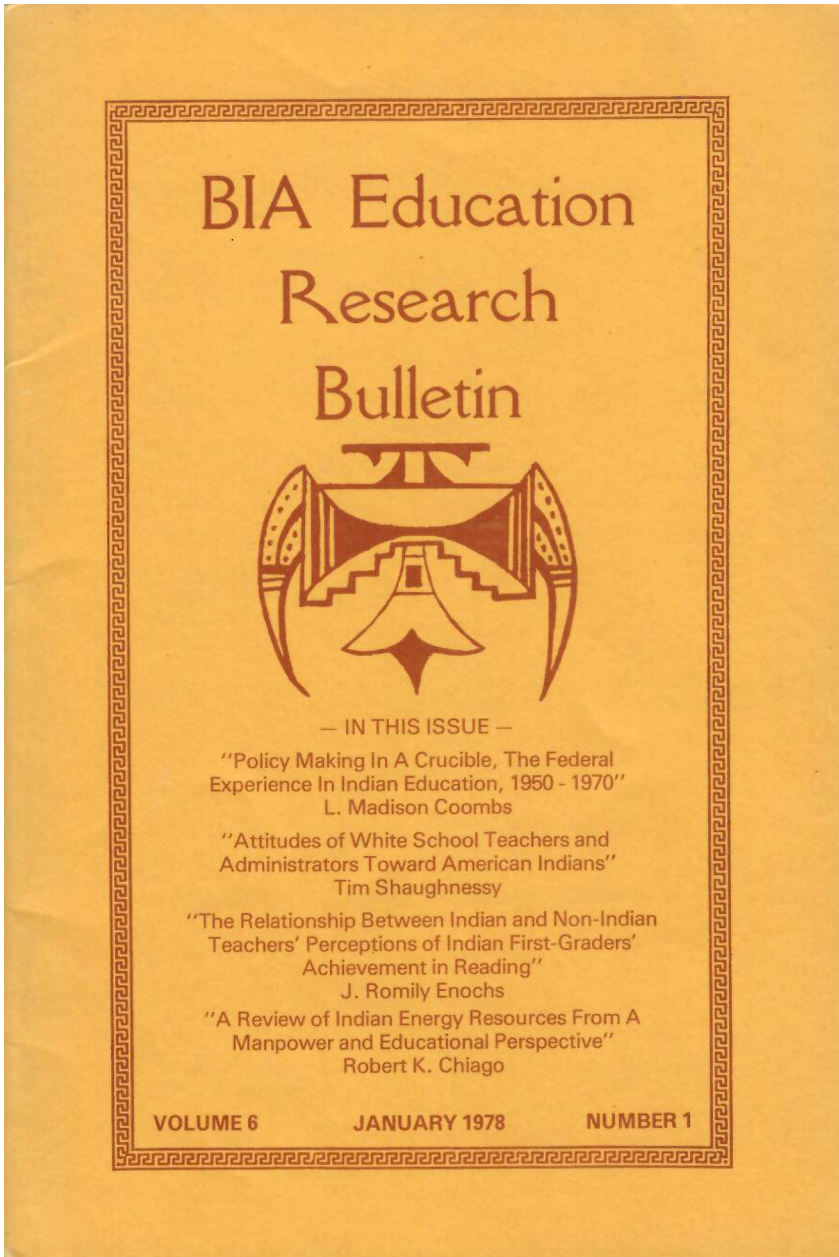
Additionally, with assistant commissioner for Indian education Dr. Carl Marberger's shutting down of former BIA Education Director Willard Beatty's fortnightly newsletter *Indian Education* in 1965 and not replacing it, on-going direction and feedback on education activities ceased. It became a goal of the IERC to initiate three printed and circulated activities. One was the *IERC Bulletin* that was produced and mailed monthly. I was in charge of the task of printing and mailing the *Bulletin*. We purchased an inexpensive addressing machine and entered all the schools, tribes and individuals who wanted to receive the *Bulletin*. There was also the *BIA Education Research Bulletin* (see Figure 1 below) which was published quarterly, and the *Research and Evaluation Report Series*, which made available numerous research and evaluation documents. It is worth noting that when the Secretary of Interior's office closed the IERC in 1979, these communication instruments were also closed and their records were thrown away.

There were also several changes in BIA education leadership during the 1970s. This meant that there was very little continuity except that provided by Dr. Benham and the IERC, which was completely abolished by President Carter's appointments to the Department of Interior. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs told me that he was in direct contact with President Carter when it came to implementing Public Law 95-561. I found this surprising but had no basis for disbelieving the relationship. It was interesting and baffling to those of us with years of experience educating Indian/Natives to observe the implementation of an authoritarian top-down education policy of "closing off-reservation boarding schools." This was especially the case when juxtaposed against the emerging policy of Indian self-determination in education. When the realities of the situation finally emerged, the action of the leadership was to kill the messenger and close down IERC.

Bilingual education was among the continuing programs in the 1970s, wherein instruction in grades K-3 was conducted primarily in an Indian/Native language (Spolsky & Holm, 1971; Spolsky, 1977). The approach of the program

was to first teach in the child's home language and gradually shift to English in the fourth grade. Bilingual education was conducted on several reservations,

Figure 1: Cover of *BIA Education Research Bulletin* that started publication in January 1973.



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most notably on the Navajo. It was also conducted in Alaska, mostly with the Alaska Native dialects. Perhaps the most productive research program on Bilingual Education was the Navajo Reading Study Project at the University of New Mexico. The Navajo language situation is especially important for in 1970 the Navajo language was dominant among school children and youth. Bernard Spolsky (1975) as part of the Navajo Reading Study Project conducted a language survey, reporting:

Replies to the 1970 survey gave us data on over 3,500 six-year-old children, about 80 percent of the Navajo children who had been born in 1964 and over 80 percent of those actually in school. Of these children, 39 percent were reported to have come to school knowing no English at all, a further 40 percent knew a little English but not enough to do first grade work in it, 20 percent were reported equally at home in Navajo and English, 6 percent were speakers of English who knew a little Navajo and 5 percent were reported to be monolingual in English. In brief, our survey showed that over two-thirds of the children would be in serious trouble faced, as nearly all were, with a monolingual English teacher. (p. 348)

To my knowledge, this was the only survey in the 1970s addressing the language situation of any Indian/Native tribe.

Anita Pfeiffer (Pfeiffer, et al., 2006) contributed a paper related to her retirement celebration at the University of New Mexico. She reported data from a language survey instrument she had adapted from her work at Diné College that found:

parents speak to their children in English, about 18.5 percent of the time; in Navajo about 18.2 percent of the time and in both Navajo and English 68.5 percent of the time. Combining Navajo, and English and Navajo, it can be said that the Navajo language is present to some extent 86.7 percent of the time in the lives of Navajo children and youth on the Navajo Nation. We think this finding is important because we learned that a few school administrators are making the claim that the Navajo language was no longer used by their students and was not to be considered a factor in the education program. Based on our data, this claim is grossly inaccurate.

It is interesting that the Navajo language remains a viable language even in the 21st century. It is transiting to English, but not as rapidly as some think. We learned that some administrators and teachers were quick to say that all the children come to school speaking only English. On the other hand, none said that Navajo children come to school speaking English they learned from their ESL parents and many are bilingual, English and Navajo speakers. Further, no administra-

tors or teachers said they were developing a program based on the language of the children. In the 1960s and 1970s bilingual education was appropriate and effective because of the dominance of the Navajo language. Now, with the shift to English which was known to be happening even in 1971, bilingual education has mostly been dropped, however in 2019 some efforts were being made to revive tribal languages in immersion schools (see e.g., Reyhner & Johnson, 2015; Reyhner, 2010, 2017).

Another important study at the beginning of the 1970s was the Bass (1971) evaluation designed by Madison Coombs who was carrying on the basic concern for school effectiveness, federal *vs* public that was initiated by Willard Beatty in 1944.³ Coombs, the research and evaluation BIA Education staff person, continued with Beatty's progressive education concern for comparing federal and public schools regarding the education of Indian/Native through the 1960's. This he did even though the BIA education leaders following Hildegard Thompson cared not at all for this comparison.

The BIA Education Program established the "Program Review" evaluation approach rather than using only standardized tests. Test scores were included along with other factors. While there were no evaluations based on standardized tests, alone, there were many evaluation activities. In order to make the evaluation reports generally available to the public and tribes, I initiated the *BIA Research and Evaluation and Report Series* as described below:

Research and Evaluation Report Series

The Education activity of the BIA has always produced a large and steady number of very useful reports. In recent time, there seems to be an increasingly larger number of high quality reports. Too, throughout the years, there has not been an attempt to organize or arrange the reports in such a manner that they become a useful and systematic body of information. In order to provide a systematic arrangement of high quality reports so that they may be made available to BIA educators, a Research and Evaluation Report Series has been established by the Indian Education Resources Center (IERC), Division of Evaluation and Program Review.

The general objectives of the Series are to:

- (1) Provide a systematic arrangement of education reports.
- (2) Identify those reports considered to be high in quality.
- (3) Make pertinent data available to BIA educators and when possible, to educators outside the BIA.
- (4) Make it possible for professional educators involved in research pertinent to the schooling of Indian children to share their experiences with a greater audience.
- (5) Assist in the overall evaluation process of the BIA Education activity.

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Development of regulations on student discipline started about 1972, and “Student Rights and Due Process Procedures” were established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 25, Part 42. At that time, a well meaning OIEP staff member thought too many of the school teachers and administrators were abusers, in an unfair way, of the students. The staff member, who probably had a relative, friend or personal bad school experience, thought the students needed more legal protection. She wrote a draft of proposed regulations and they got as far as the Solicitors Office. When the draft was circulated to schools, there was a very loud protest. The protest generally said the proposed regulations were impossible to administer without turning over the school to the students, with instructional staff playing minor role in the school program.

I was assigned to deal with the problem. I first conducted a survey of schools in order to establish something of a status situation. I wrote a report based on the survey and took it to the young lawyer who was rather insistent that the proposed regulations go forward. I showed him my research results and asked to see his on which the proposed regulations were to be based. Of course, he had nothing of the sort. He reluctantly turned the regulation development over to me. I convened a committee of school and area professionals including a lawyer from the Solicitor’s Office in Albuquerque. The Committee worked diligently and Dr. Henry Rosenbluth of my staff wrote, with the lawyer looking over his shoulder, the regulations which eventually became Part 42.

In subsequent visits to schools, none had ever heard of the Regulations and were following the programs of the states in which the schools were located. These were good programs in my opinion, but in my view not as liberal as those in CFR 25, Part 42. The regulations also applied to all BIA funded schools.

Two Statewide Needs Assessments

With states assuming increasing responsibility for Indian/Native education, the statewide needs assessments in Alaska and Oklahoma were important. Unfortunately, both had only a small affect on Indian/Native school operations. The *Foreword* of the report of the Alaska Native Needs Assessment (Project ANNA) in Education that I designed and wrote in 1973 provides the background for the project:

Alaska is in a dynamic state of circumstances that has been brought on by the forces of society related to the development of America’s last frontier. Not the least of these forces is Alaska’s largest stable segment of the population—its Native Peoples. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the discovery of vast oil resources have brought into focus several basic issues regarding Native education. Administrators of the Bureau of Indian Affairs are frequently at the center of the circumstances surrounding the decision-making process related to assisting Native People to solve some of the problems and establish viable directions in their affairs. In this respect, the education and training of Native People is extremely important. Realizing this,

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Mr. Morris Thompson,¹ currently Commissioner of Indian Affairs and formerly Area Director for the Juneau Area Office, in the winter of the School Year 1972-73, asked that a needs assessment for administrative purposes be conducted in Alaska Native education. In his letter requesting the needs assessment, Thompson stated: "In recent times, and particularly during the past year, the general question of the ultimate role of BIA Education in Alaska has been raised. The concern usually centers around the questions of: How much longer will BIA Education operate schools? What form, if any, will BIA Education have within and following the next five years?"

With this general charge, the Alaska Native Needs Assessment in Education (Project ANNA) was undertaken in 1973. Though it was not as broad as planned, it did encompass a comprehensive approach to basic issues in Native education and served an important role in the decision-making process. It was felt that the data from the project would be used in a number of different problem areas. One of activities of ANNA was a survey of Alaska Native Students. Since this remains perhaps the only student survey of Alaska Native students ever, it is worthwhile to include important parts of it. Students were surveyed because, based on my village school experiences from 1953 to 1956, it was apparent that the students played a significant role regarding the decision where they would attend high school. In my view, parents were less important to this education decision than were the students. This concern reflected the belief that in Alaskan Native communities, students and their desires are a very potent factor in the decision related to which option (boarding school, boarding home program, state, dormitory) to select for high school purposes.

In order to conduct the survey, a questionnaire was developed and sent to schools throughout the state. The questionnaire instructions were such that the teacher or principal of the school distributed the instruments along with a self-addressed envelope. Students in grades 8 through 12 were asked to complete the questionnaire and mail it to the Indian Education Resources Center of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Albuquerque, New Mexico. One thousand two hundred and twenty three response were received with 23% coming from Mt. Edgecumbe and 41% from village schools. The responses were summarized as follows:

Alaskan Native high school students, and those who would enter high school during the School Year 1973-74, prefer to have several options open to them. They would like to keep the boarding schools, the boarding home program, and village schools all as viable options. There was considerable support for the village school, which is an emerging institution in Alaska.

They have plans for life that reflect the present pattern of Alaskan Native students. Many want to attend college or pursue some form of training past high school. Yet, there is a strong desire to return to their home villages to work and to live. They do not generally have a coun-

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selling services available in village schools and many who attend larger schools do not use those counseling services available. They receive parental encouragement generally, yet, there is a significant number (about 15 percent) who do not receive parental encouragement to attend school.

They expressed a preference for the two-world goal, to be prepared to live in or out-side-of the village. A large percentage spoke their Native languages in the homes.

Perhaps the most important finding of the survey is what is termed a "Mobility Factor." This refers to the movement from one high school program to another. When the students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 were selected out for analysis, it was discovered that 42 percent of them had changed high schools....

Further, it would appear that the reasons for changing were not associated with the curriculum of the school from which they changed. Reasons for changing were related to matters such as "Personal Problems," "Wanted to be Closer to Home," or "Lonesome".

While ANNA could have been used to help inform decision makers, there was an inexorable movement toward a single school system after Alaska became a state in 1959. While the BIA started in the early 1950s to turn schools over to the Territory, the turnover of schools gained momentum leading to the passage of 25 USC §292b (USCA 25 §292b) in 1983 that ended BIA funding of schools in Alaska in 1985.

Oklahoma Indian Education Needs Assessment²

In 1975 Congress expressed concern about the need for BIA boarding schools in the state of Oklahoma. In the House Committee on Appropriations Report they mandated an "Indian Education Needs Assessment." Since I was head of the division of Evaluation, Research and Curriculum Development, the assignment became my responsibility. After reviewing the situation I requested and was granted funds for an external contract to develop the needs assessment. At that time I had just finished ANNA and was confident that we could develop a good "Request for Proposals (RFP)." We did develop it and advertised it as limited to bidders from Oklahoma with state education knowledge and experience. Eventually we selected Oklahoma State University to conduct the research and produce a report. The BIA for FY1975 operated three dormitories in Oklahoma in which 509 Indian students could board and attend public schools: There were six boarding schools with 1,900 students enrolled. It was this Federal expenditure that Congress questioned.

The 1970 Census reported 30,261 Indians; the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program reported 13,707 Indian students; school district Indian enrollments reported 61,087 students and the Title IV, Part A Indian Education Act administered by then U.S. Department of Education reported 86,688 Indian Students. When Indians were defined according to BIA "Certificate of Indian Blood" legal

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documents the count was much smaller from those using “Self-Described Indian” approach. Little wonder that the Congress seemed confused by their legislative actions. Financing of Indian education could be done by:

- Interior Department funds for BIA programs and schools
- Johnson O’ Malley Program
- Comprehensive Training and Employment Act of 1973 (CETA)
- Title IV, Indian Education Act, Parts B and C
- Titles I & 7, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- Public Law 874, Impact Aid
- Public Law 91-230, Title II, Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Oklahoma Vocational-Technical Education Program

The Oklahoma Indian Education Needs Assessment (OIENA) objectives were:

1. to identify the educational needs of Indian students as they exist in Oklahoma;
2. to identify and describe educational programs open to Indian children in public, private, and BIA schools at the pre-school, primary, intermediate, and secondary levels of instruction and the programs of higher education and vocational-technical education. These descriptions were to include fiscal and demographic data for the school year 1974-75 (Federal Fiscal Year 1975);
3. to identify and describe educational programs available to Oklahoma Indian children and the extent to which they participate and/or to what extent these programs are being made available to public schools for Indian students. Descriptions were to include fiscal and demographic data for the school year 1974-75 (Federal Fiscal Year 1975); and
4. to present conclusions and recommendations relative to current and projected educational needs of Oklahoma Indian children so that the extent of federal, state, and private responsibility for their education can be determined. (Oklahoma, 1976, pp. 1-2)

This five volume project report reflected in a comprehensive manner the four objectives. The “Conclusions and Recommendations” section of the “Summary” volume presented 19 conclusions and 11 recommendations. A few of the conclusions, listed below, address some of the basic concerns of the 1970s:

1. Increased scholarship funding and technical assistance in appropriately utilizing that money is needed by Indian students entering the higher education system of Oklahoma. Indian students qualify not only for BIA scholarship opportunities, but also opportunities such as Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW) and Indian students should be made aware of both of these programs. This is the primary respon-

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sibility of higher education institutions in the state through Admissions and Financial Aid Officers.

7. There is a tremendous need for all actors (parents, education, Boards of Education, etc.) involved in the local Indian education process to be more aware and understand: (1) their own roles, rights, and responsibilities under the law, (2) the roles, rights and responsibilities of others, and (3) the proper interrelationship among those roles, rights, and responsibilities.

9. The professional Indian educational staff members in Oklahoma public schools represent less than 1 percent of the total professional staff in the state, while the Indian student body ranges from 3 percent (one-quarter blood or more) to over 10 percent depending on which data or enumeration base is reported. Thus, there is a critical need for pre-service and in-service education of educational professional staff at all levels in the area of Indian education. A priority need within this category includes the training for counselors and para-professional aides, particularly in the education, culture and background of the Indian student.

13. There is a need for multi-cultural awareness education in the public schools of the state.

15. With regard to other areas of funding (e.g., Title IV, Parts B and C, Indian Education Act), Indian groups practically have complete control over the funding activities not operated through either Bureau or public schools, and are carrying out a variety of programs not provided by the schools. The biggest problem observed in this process is the lack of skilled administrative and management persons to direct such programs. Thus, there is a critical need for skill training in the areas of planning, administration, management, and evaluation for Indian officials who are conducting these programs.

16. Bureau schools of Oklahoma provide educational programs for a select clientele of Indian students. It may also be observed that the enrollments in Bureau schools continue to decline from year to year although this trend has stabilized over the last two years. It has been, and continues to be, the operating philosophy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to direct the Indian students to public schools in the belief that the individual student remaining at home and in contact with his family is the most appropriate way of life for the Indian student. The Indian leadership in Oklahoma, however, adheres to a strong belief that the Federal government is obligated by treaty to maintain the Bureau school operation.

17. With the proliferation of programs for Indian education, there is an increasing need for significantly more meaningful evaluations of these programs. Parents, administrators, and representatives of funding agencies often disagree on the criteria used in evaluation because of

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differing goals and interests. (Oklahoma, 1976, pp. 46-48)
While these were 1975 conclusions, I suggest that they remain relevant to some extent today. Selected recommendations included:

1. There must be an increase in assistance and funding of Higher Education pursuits for individual Indian students.

5. A massive awareness campaign is needed in the public schools of Oklahoma with regard to Indian education programs, availability of funding, and rights and responsibilities of citizens pursuant to that funding.

6. The development of statewide teacher training institutes of Indian education awareness, and culture at both the pre-service and in-service levels are recommended. The institutes should be developed under the umbrella of an Advisory Council with equal representation among representatives of the Indian community, the public school professional staffs, the teacher training staff of institutions of Higher Education, and professional personnel of the State Department of Education. It is recommended that federal money from the existing sources (Title IV, JOM, etc.) be the foundation funds to support these teacher institutes. These federal funds should be matched with state dollars at an appropriate ratio.

7. In light of the low percentage of Indian professional staff members, Indian persons and those interested in Indian education should be actively recruited and given highest priority for training in the institutes outlined above.

9. Evaluations of Indian education programs must include significant input from the Indian community which is being served. These programs must be designed in a manner so that promising students receive training appropriate to their individual needs.

10. It is hereby recommended that a complete and comprehensive impact evaluation of the Bureau school educational operation be conducted. This impact study should include such topics for review as management systems, staffing, clientele served, programs offered, follow-up of graduates and withdrawals, and a host of other appropriate considerations. (Oklahoma, 1976, pp. 49-50)

The OIENA conducted surveys with questionnaires which reflected perceptions of the following groups: BIA Advisory School Boards, Title IV Parent Advisory Committees, JOM Committees, Indian Teacher Aides & Indian Counselors, Tribal Leaders, Grassroots Indians, Public School Administrators, Public School Teachers, Indian Students, and BIA Administrators and Staff

While the *Summary*, Volume I, did not contain a report and total responses of all the groups, it did do so in Volume II, *Perceptions*. The following two tables provide a summary. It was interesting that the public school teachers ranked as

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#2 the item “No separate programs for Indians.” Could this have been racial prejudice?

Table 3: Ten most frequently cited educational needs for Indian students and adequacy with which needs are being met as identified by all groups concerned.

Educational Program Need		Extent to Which Needs Are Being Met					Mean	S.D.
		1 Extremely Poor	2 Poor	3 Fair But More Needs To Be Done	4 Satisf. Is Being Done	5 Too Much Is Being Done		
Rank	Item	Frequency						
1	(6) The school should have trained counselors that Indian students can talk to about personal and social problems	588	.....X.....				2.47	1.03
2	(30) There should be a follow-up program for drop-outs to help them continue their education ..	469	.....X.....				2.02	.91
3	(2) Testing and guidance for choosing a career should be given to Indian students in school	438	.....X.....				2.57	.96
3	(8) Teachers and other personnel who work with Indian students should be trained to deal with the special needs of these students	438	.....X.....				2.29	.90
5	(9) The school should provide special classes in reading and writing for Indian students with English language problems	423	.....X.....				2.40	.94
6	(22) The school should provide books and supplies for Indian students who cannot supply their own	392	.....X.....				2.95	1.00
7	(26) Tutors should be provided for students who need help with their classes	373	.....X.....				2.37	.96
8	(24) Indian students should be taught about their legal rights and their relationship to the federal government	370	.....X.....				2.12	.95
9	(43) Money appropriated under Indian education programs should be used only for Indian students	351	.....X.....				2.73	1.01
10	(11) The school should provide training to Indian students in skills that could be useful to the community as a whole (for example, farming or business skills)	339	.....X.....				2.50	.95

Table 4: Ranking of additional educational goals and needs for Indian students as identified by all groups combined according to frequency.

Total Number of Written Comments Made by All Groups Combined = 1287				
Rank	Item	Category	Frequency	% of total
1	(3)	Guidance & Counseling and/or Special Programs for Indian Students.	430	33.41
2	(6)	Better Understanding of Special Educational Needs of Indian Students.	216	16.78
3	(7)	More Bilingual or Bicultural Programs.	142	11.03
4	(9)	Better Communication.	118	9.17
5	(11)	No Separate Programs for Indians.	78	6.06
6	(2)	Funds.	71	5.52
7	(5)	More School Personnel that are Indian.	68	5.28
8	(4)	More Adult and Vo-Tech Programs for Indians.	61	4.74
9	(1)	Facilities.	44	3.42
10	(10)	More Scholarships for Indian Students.	41	3.19
11	(8)	More Pre-School Programs.	18	1.40

Intergovernmental Personnel Act

In 1977 Dr. William Demmert was Director of the BIA Office of Indian Education Programs. In discussions with him it was decided that the policy of Indian

Self-Determination in Education would be enhanced with some contemporary research on the BIA's activities in turning over schools to tribes. Dr. Demmert and I agreed that the research could be conducted best under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) with my appointment to a university, in this case the University of New Mexico (UNM). An IPA agreement was consummated on March 21, 1977 and I was assigned to UNM to conduct the research.

Dr. Bernard Spolsky, Dean of the UNM Graduate School, was instrumental within UNM in agreeing to the IPA. Dean Darling of the College of Education and especially Assistant Dean, Paul Resta, were especially helpful. Meeting and working with Dr. Resta was the beginning of a rewarding professional relationship that has lasted to this day. My first task was to develop a design of the research to carry out. This I did in a paper titled, "Assessing the Transition of Indian School Control from Federal to Tribal" (Hopkins, 1977).

A Brief History of Indian Control of Schools

It has been said that there is nothing new under the sun in the schooling of American Indians. Education historians who investigate the schooling of American Indians can always find some earlier experiment or movement that relates to current educational innovations and policies. The same is true of the policy of Indian Self-Determination and the tribal control of schools. For an example, the Choctaws were one of the first tribes to establish and operate their own schools and this was done between 1826 and 1845 (Fox, 1943). This, like so many of the nineteenth century changes in the five civilized tribes, became part of the sad history of American Indian Affairs. The Choctaw Academy became embroiled in national and local politics to the extent that it developed into a heated issue and died (Foreman, 1937). There have been many other good ideas and innovations in schooling Indians that have met a similar fate.

It appears that many of the innovations were ahead of their time and those who controlled Indian education and the schools had little or no community involvement or interest. Education matters were decided unilaterally according to official government and/or church policy. In this respect, though local control of Indian schools was a fact with the Choctaws in the early half of the nineteenth century, it did not become common practice with other tribes. Therefore, when Self-Determination emerged in the 1970s with full support of the Indians, the Federal Congress and the President looked upon it as new and innovative.

In essence, the current policy of Self-Determination in Indian Education has its roots in about twenty years of searching for ways of improving the schooling of Indian children. It is important to point out that since about 1950 there have been several investigations of the effectiveness of schools as related to American Indian children.³ Most scholars reviewing the recent years have characterized the 1960s as indeed a time of searching. Like many movements whose time has come, Indian control of schools actually started taking place prior to a formal policy statement and the passage of laws in support of it. Two significant moves were made by the BIA during 1966-68. First, Indian advisory school boards were established for 200 of the 212 schools and dormitories operated by the BIA

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(Tyler, 1973, p. 232). One Area Office went so far as to develop administrative guidelines for advisory school boards and the BIA had a school board manual developed to provide program guidance.⁵

Second, the BIA started contracting for Indians to assume control of schools and operate them. The first school contracted was Rough Rock Community School in Arizona, a Navajo school (McCarty, 2002). It started as an experiment in community dynamics funded jointly by the BIA and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Soon thereafter, other schools (Ramah and Blackwater) followed and became tribally controlled. It was almost a natural consequence after President Richard M. Nixon issued his Special Message to the Congress on Indians and made Self Determination an official policy of his Administration. President Nixon's message stated:

This (Self-Determination), then, must be the goal of any new national policy toward the Indian people: to strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community. We must assure the Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being separated involuntarily from the tribal group. And we must make it clear that Indians can become independent of Federal control without being cut off from Federal concern and Federal support.

... Consistent with our policy that the Indian community should have the right to take over the control and operation of federally funded programs, we believe every Indian community wishing to do so should be able to control its own Indian schools. This control would be exercised by school boards selected by Indians and functioning much like other school boards throughout the nation.... (Nixon, 1970)

With the policy officially stated, it became the responsibility of the Department of Interior and its Bureau of Indian Affairs to implement it. The BIA continued to contract for school operations until the spring of 1974 when a more formalized and standard approach was taken.

Concho School Research

In the fall of 1977, after I was established at the University of New Mexico, Dan Sahmaunt, Assistant Area Director for Education of the Anadarko Area Office in Western Oklahoma, called concerning Concho Boarding School. There was "Talk", political talk, of closing the school. Dan, knowing the school and its clients, thought the school served a legitimate purpose not provided by the Oklahoma public schools. Having recently experienced the Oklahoma Indian Education Needs Assessment Project, I was aware of the scope of services provided Indian children. Basically, there were no public school services available for children from disruptive and/or dysfunctional homes. Dan thought that Concho provided a positive educational experience from children from these types of homes. Yet, he had no research to support his opinion. He asked that I conduct a research project on Concho Boarding School.

I thought the university based “Indian Control of Schools” project an excellent choice to conduct the research on Concho. In fact, it was mentioned in the “Talk” as an excellent school for transition to Indian control. In making the decision on transiting to Indian control, all parties involved could use an up-to-date research type description of the school program. The research was made into a contract with the University of New Mexico. But, first, a discussion of Indian Boarding Schools.

Most Concho children were orphans or from dysfunctional families. The following excerpt is from that report:⁶

Much has been said recently about the adequacy of achievement tests as evaluation instruments for culturally different students such as those who attend Concho. Achievement tests are simply unfair to the Indian student, yet the overpowering influence of American education compels the Indian educator to use them. Then, another dimension is added to their unfairness when an entire school is evaluated on the basis of a single achievement test. Achievement tests are helpful evaluative instruments for the cognitive part of the school program and represent a single variable. There are many, many other variables in a school program, especially in a boarding school, that must be utilized in a sound evaluation design. A good look at the Concho students indicates that perhaps their most basic needs emanate from family circumstances which no doubt have a total impact on the achievement of the child in school. It is important to point out that family circumstances are not created by Concho. On the other hand, Concho must work to strengthen the child who comes from these serious family situations.

The point to be made is that there are many influences outside of Concho over which it has little control that contribute to the problems of the children before they arrive at the school. As will be pointed out in the part of the report on curriculum, Concho does provide individualized instruction at the achievement level of the child. The school is making a sincere effort to deal constructively with the child and, therefore, achievement tests are only a minor part of a total evaluative design that must be used for boarding schools. Achievement tests aren’t too important to the total school program and effectiveness.

Time did not allow for administering additional tests to the children, which would have provided information regarding the “Quality of School Life” and the self-concept. The information provided, however, is sufficient to gain a good impression of student characteristics.

FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES OF CONCHO CHILDREN

Recent research has indicated that children from broken homes experience more difficulty in school than those who live with both of their natural parents (Conyers, 1977). Children from broken homes had

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a greater percentage of truancy, suspensions, expulsions, dropouts, and made lower achievement test scores. The children of Concho fit the research in that they tend to make lower achievement test scores as they progress in school and many of them are enrolled in Concho because of the problems of truancy and other related situations.

....Almost 80% of the Concho children come from broken homes. A breakdown of this 80% indicates that 72% live with one of their natural parents and 7% live with a guardian. The student body of Concho, on this one fact alone, is an extraordinary group reflecting extraordinary educational needs.

...there are several children from the same families attending Concho. Notes were made on the application forms that parents thought it better to send a brother or sister to boarding school so the children would be close to someone whom they knew well. The feeling was expressed that this would be emotionally stronger for the children. 56% of the children in Concho have other siblings in attendance. The efficacy of this practice was agreed to by dormitory staff personnel. Though not reflected in research and evaluation literature, this is a traditional practice of Indian families throughout the U.S., and Concho is an excellent sample of it in practice.

...there are almost five other siblings for each child attending Concho. This means that the children of Concho come from families much larger than the average, nationally.

...When related to the family size data, it is obvious that most of the Concho children come from large, poor (poverty) families usually characterized by broken marriages or other circumstances of broken homes.

All of the children enrolled in Concho have severe or extraordinary problems of one type or another. In the majority of instances, their problems emanate from the conditions of their homes. The children enter Concho for educational, economic or social reasons. In each instance, the parents, guardians, or social worker believe that the needs of the children cannot be met by the child remaining at home and attending the public schools.

As expressed by the parents or guardians, an educational reason usually meant that the child was truant or that the public schools were not meeting the needs by providing special remedial instruction. As an example, an economic reason was reflected by the existence of extreme poverty in the home. Many parents expressed the position that they could not provide adequate food for the children or that the parents were unemployed and believed that the child would receive better care at Concho. A social reason meant that there were extraordinary problems in the home, such as alcoholism.

It was generally supposed that the Concho students would reflect a larger percentage of family alcoholism and court cases than was actually found to be the case. It is possible that embarrassed parents would rather

list their problems as illness or “need for a structured environment.” Even so, family alcoholism and court cases did not seem to be reflected in a large number of the children.

It is important to note that there were no more than five or six children attending Concho who did not reflect problems emanating from poverty and other social problems of the family.

Somewhat surprising was the expression by parents that they wanted their children to attend Concho because of racial prejudice in the public schools. In some instances, this was expressed rather plainly and in others it was phrased, “Want the child to be educated with other Indians.” Though this reason for attending boarding schools in Oklahoma has been recorded at the high school level, this is the first time to report such at the elementary level of instruction.

The Concho research was another activity resulting from the concern about off-reservation boarding schools. The Oklahoma Indian Education Needs Assessment was the first activity, the Concho research the second and next came the “Off Reservation Boarding School (ORBS) Survey.”

The Off-Reservation Boarding School Survey of Student Characteristics

Soon after his election in 1976, President Carter appointed Forrest Gerard as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Carter, working with the Congress, passed a law which, organizationally, took the Bureau of Indian Affairs out from under the Bureau of Land Management and repositioned it on a departmental level. Gerard had previously worked in the Senate on the staff of Senator Jackson from the State of Washington. He appointed Rick Lavis as his Deputy Assistant Secretary. Lavis had also been on the staff of Senator Fannin of Arizona who also retired. Gerard cancelled my IPA appointment effective June 2, 1978, which meant I was at the University from March 21, 1977 to June 2, 1978, a period of about 15 months.

Gerard was also interested in replacing Dr. William Demmert, who was Director of the Office of Indian Education Programs. Mr. Gerard apparently developed an IPA contract for Demmert with the University of Washington. After Demmert left the BIA, Lavis assumed control of the BIA Education Program, and he was committed to closing off-reservation boarding schools (ORBS). Both Gerard and Lavis had no doubt learned during their Senate work of the controversies surrounding ORBS which went something like the following: ORBS aren’t needed and are too expensive to operate; ORBS operate in the midst of public schools; enrollments in ORBS are declining, etc. These beliefs trickled down to Washington level staff from Mr. Gerard and Mr. Lavis. No attempt was made to ask the patrons of ORBS or tribal leaders about what they thought of the need for ORBS.

Lavis convened a committee to study ORBS and bring back to him recommendations concerning them. The committee was comprised of BIA Education administrators with responsibilities for operating the schools. Politically, while

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the schools presented problems to the administrators, they would be the last to publicly state that they needed to be closed. Dan Sahmaunt of the Anadarko Area Office was elected by the committee to be its Chair. Dan, as mentioned above, was the administrator who requested that I do the Concho research while I was on the IPA assignment. He consequently requested that I be assigned as "Technical Support" to the Committee. The meaning of this assignment was that whatever technical information-data the Committee wanted, I was to develop and/or find for them.

Before going to the University of New Mexico in 1973 I had conducted an "Educational Goals" survey of the perceptions of Indian parents who sent their children to BIA schools. The questionnaire had 52 items with a five point response scale: "SA" Strongly Agree; "A" Agree; "U" Undecided; "D" Disagree and "SD Strongly Disagree. Item #48. read, "Close boarding schools which established criteria indicate are no longer needed." The analyses was based an "Agreement" statistic which was the sum of Strongly Agree and Agree. The item with the very least agreement was #48 pertaining to closing boarding schools, even with established criteria. The Goals report was included in Part 1 of the report to the Committee which Mr. Lavis established. Someone should have advised him that closing ORBS could be a political minefield. I should mention that the sample used for the survey was comprised of 577 returned questionnaires with some from every Area Office jurisdiction.

At the first Committee meeting I attended it was apparent that each member possessed in-depth knowledge on the ORBS under their jurisdiction. I listened and took notes on the major problems of the schools. What was obvious to me was the complete absence of any organized information on the current schools, which numbered 15 throughout the BIA education system. It was easy to describe to the Congress the important need of the ORBS when there were not enough schools available to the very large Navajo Reservation or the geographically isolated Alaska Natives. But when this need was eventually met by 1970, what needs were the schools serving still serving?

After listening to the Committee, I suggested that the IERC mount a major project to survey the schools and develop systematic information on the characteristics of the children-youth attending them. The Committee agreed to the research project. This was considered classic "Education Institutional Research." By this I mean that a committee appointed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs requested comprehensive information on Off-Reservation Boarding Schools. As such, there was no systematic data on the schools available to the committee. Each Committee member had described their experiences with the schools which was also a source of frustrations to them. It became the responsibility of myself and the Indian Education Resources Center to meet the information needs of the Committee.

The staff and I of the Evaluation and Research Division developed a data gathering instrument. I piloted the instrument at Ft. Wingate High School just outside Gallup, New Mexico. The student "Folders" were brought to a table and the professional staff remaining at the school completed information on a data

gathering form for each student. Following the Ft. Wingate piloting there were a few changes made in the instrument. Next, the Area Offices and schools were notified of the data gathering project and, since it was a committee established by the Deputy Assistant Secretary, It carried considerable administrative authority for cooperation. The IERC professional staff of all divisions were assigned to travel to the schools and, with the assistance of school staff, complete the data gathering instruments on each student who attended during the 1977-78 school year. Data gathering took place during the months of May and June, 1978.

Data gathering instruments were completed on 7,625 students in 15 of 17 ORBS. The data forms were verified for usefulness by the Evaluation and Research Division. Since the BIA Education Program had no computer services available to it, computer services were purchased from the University of New Mexico. I wrote a summary for Dan Sahmaunt (1979) and published it in the January 1979 issue of *BIA Education Research Bulletin*. Key sections from Dan Sahmaunt's committee report entitled "Survey of Off-Reservation Residential Schools in the Bureau of Indian Affairs"⁷⁷ follow:

Over the years of boarding school existence, they have externally and internally gone through various stages that kept in step with social and economic changes with the mainstream America. Our boarding school program opened its doors in the mid 1880's truly reflecting the agrarian lifestyle of American with few trade skills offered for variation, which, was followed by the concept of building schools closer to the Indian population to address the schools more to the liking of the communities and to keep youngsters closer to the home environment. Off-reservation schools continued to attract high school and post-high age students during the 50's and 60's. We cannot deny that some of the schools are experiencing a decline in enrollment. More and more Indian youngsters are attending public schools. However, for many, the boarding school remains the only option. For many high school age Indian youth, they express preference to boarding rather than to public school. A major problem facing them in public schools, as expressed by many, is eventual failure and having to contend with discrimination from both the majority Anglo students as well as teachers. Scholastic failure stemming from these problems leaves no alternative except to be where a person is accepted, and less embarrassment and ridicule and be able to experience success. One might say that we all must learn to live with social pressure and learn to adjust but on the other hand, we are all humans and we need desperately to succeed in whatever small quantities it may come. Those small successes lead to larger ones, if we feel good about ourselves and feel accepted. These are things that our boarding schools offer. Much more important than that, they provide an environment that is conducive to self acceptance and not self-rejection.

The Realities of Off-Reservation Residential Schools

The Committee felt strongly that the data gathered on the schools was comprehensive and accurate and that it is a sound beginning in telling the story as it has been needed to be told for several years. This story is that off-reservation residential schools are meeting a very difficult educational challenge and are not getting credit for the good work they are doing. They are taking students who do not adjust to public schools, the reservation society, the small town society or the urban society and are providing them with a home-away-from-home and an education. It is a matter of record that the public schools have failed at least 70% of the students enrolled in our residential schools. It is conservatively estimated that the dropout rate of Indian children from schools is 40% and it is more than likely that the national dropout rate is 50% or greater. Even so, the dropout rate from all off-reservation residential schools was 35% and for grades 9-12 it is slightly over 37%, both of which are below the estimated national dropout rate for all Indian children. Off-reservation residential schools feel that they have contributed to the life of an Indian youngster if they can retain him/her long enough for the student to gain some stability and personal strength so they may return to the school of their choice in their home community. It is apparent from the survey data that this does indeed occur very frequently. The general negative stereotypical concept of the off-reservation residential schools begins to fade when the total and real facts of the situation are viewed. We believe that BIA officials responsible for developing the survey data are to be commended as for the first time at least a partial true picture of the situation is beginning to emerge. Contrary to popular opinion, off-reservation residential schools are more effective than public schools when it comes to serving the types of students who enroll in them. Recognition of the positive contributions of the off-reservation residential schools was important to the work of the Committee.

One aspect of the reality of off-reservation residential schools pertains to the number of children eligible to attend them. The committee reviewed this issue using the best information available, which we feel is minimal but usable. It is obvious that when the dropout of Indian children is viewed from a national point of view which includes all types of schools enrolling Indian children, there are many, many more Indian youth out of school than are currently enrolled in any school. These out-of-school youngsters many of whom are products of disrupted home situations are the backbone of the current and expanding needs being served by the off-reservation residential schools. Considering the out-of-school and the very troubled Indian youth, there is no scarcity of eligible students.

Student Characteristics

It is apparent a different kind of student is now entering the residential school. Characteristically, the residential school has served in the past, students from remote and isolated areas who had no other choice but to attend a BIA boarding school. That type of student is giving way to the student who has tried public school and for some reason or another preferred to attend a boarding school.

- 70% of the children in Off-Reservation Residential Schools are dropouts from public schools. Public schools cannot meet the extraordinary educational and social needs of the children.
- It is conservatively estimated that 40% of all Indian children drop out of school before completion of the 12th grade. Dropout increases dramatically at about grade 8 and peaks in the latter part of grade 9 but maintains a high rate during the entire high school time. Dropout rate of Off-Reservation Residential Schools is 35%, grades 1-12, 37%, grades 9-12.
- 63% of the enrollment comes from the reservation and 68% are full bloods. 53% of the children come from disrupted homes. The range of children from disrupted homes is 72% at Intermountain School to a low of 34% at Wingate Elementary. The characteristics of disrupted homes is extremely important to the success of the child at the Off-Reservation Residential Schools.
- 75% of the children come from unstable homes.
- 75% of the children come from homes that are below the poverty level regarding family income. 50% of the children come from a family with an annual income of less than one-half of the poverty level.
- The average family size of a one parent household is 7 and for a two parent household is 8.
- 17% of the parents have no formal education and 33% have an 8th grade or less formal education.
- 10-15% of the children have special behavioral problems that are not being met in the public schools or in the homes.
- 75% of all children are mobile, having changed high schools at least once. Only 10% will spend their entire high school time in the Off-Reservation Residential Schools. 62% will have spent more than one but less than 2 years in the schools. There is a high incidence of moving from one city to another.
- 51% of the children speak the tribal language in their homes. This means that they have special language problems in relation to school learning.
- Student consumption of alcohol is the largest single problem in the schools and it occurs most frequently out of class, on and off campus, and away from teacher supervision. 38% of the children are considered to have no major strengths. (17% are considered to have no involvement in school activities of any type.)

New Policies

In his statement before the House Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agency appropriations on February 7, 1978, Assistant Secretary Forrest Gerard announced new policies that would apply to all schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Two of these revised policies have special importance to off-reservation residential schools. Secretary Gerard stated: "As a result of our analysis, and in order to improve the support effectiveness of our priority system, we have established the following Bureau policies: 1) Indian children may be educated in facilities as close to home as possible and on a day basis. 2) The existing 1953 Bureau policy directing that Indian students attend public schools where space is available will be changed. The Bureau will now support tribal choice in the selection of schools for their children. The BIA school construction list will now reflect Indian Self-Determination."

The next part of the report will take the information provided in the introduction and apply it to the issues of: The contemporary role and function of the schools, Who should attend them, Revised and updated policies.

An Updated Residential School Program

The Committee reviewed a proposed Bureau of Indian Affairs manual release concerning "Types of Schools" and used the parts of it pertaining to off-reservation boarding schools as a general outline for this part of our report. The updated residential school program is based on an assumption that all the children enrolled in off-reservation residential schools are legitimately placed in them. The survey data developed for committee use provides validity of this assumption.

Suggested Manual Language:

Policy. It is the general policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to emphasize the attendance of elementary school-age children on a day-school basis in order to preserve for them, as long as possible, the shelter of a normal home, either with their own parents, or, where the child is separated from his own family, with selected foster parents.

It is desirable for the family to recognize and assume financial and guidance responsibility for its children. Bureau officials should not encourage the enrollment of Indian children in residential schools in instances where day schools are available and the child possesses a home, or can remain a member of a normal home through application of aid to dependent children or other forms of assistance. When all opportunities for a normal home life seem impossible, residential schools may be selected. Indian tribes and families may designate certain schools in which to enroll their children and Indian families may determine the school which their children attend.

Students with special behavior problems: The Bureau has long been concerned with the special behavior student and the committee believes that it has a responsibility in providing assistance to them. The survey revealed the following:

- 319 students were attending off-reservation residential schools because of special behavior problems of one type or another.
- 745 were reported to have the major problem of truancy.
- 53 were enrolled because of student alcoholism.
- 91 committed acts of physical violence toward school staff.
- 167 committed acts of physical violence toward students.
- 73 were reported as court cases.
- 735 have had formal trouble with law enforcement officials.
- 226 had a formal relationship with law officials (the courts) while enrolled in the schools.
- 46 students were sent to off-reservation schools rather than to correctional institution.
- 23 students went directly from the off-reservation residential schools to correctional institutions.
- 234 students had been arrested at least once.
- 42 students were arrested when they were 12 years of age or younger, 100 were arrested when 14 years of age or younger, and 2 students were arrested at age of 8.
- 136 students were arrested between 1977 and 1973, indicating a history of involvement with law authorities prior to enrolling in the schools.

The ORBS data on boarding schools reflected how the schools were, mostly, attempting to meet the extraordinary needs of Indian children and youth which could not be met by the public schools. Primarily, children-youth from disrupted and/or dysfunctional homes, the same as was found at Concho. Yet, the closing of ORBS seems to be related to costs, not the educational and/or social needs of Indian children-youth.

Just before the Committee met for the last time at which the technical report was to be discussed and recommendations made to Mr. Lavis, he announced he would visit Oklahoma and explain why he was closing some of the Indian boarding schools. He did not look at the committee report, which was available to him, but went forth with the unilateral decision to close ORBS. Obviously, he met a buzz saw of displeasure of Indian leaders and reversed his decision when he visited the schools and gained additional information about them as reported in the *Daily Oklahoman*.

Indian Boarding Schools⁸

Indian boarding schools have over time been perceived as negative types of a school. This negative image was cast in the nineteenth century when

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Richard Henry Pratt (1964) established Carlisle Indian School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1879-80. The last year of Pratt's superintendency, 1903, found Carlisle with an enrollment of 1,200. Robert Utley, who wrote an Introduction to Pratt's autobiography has this to say about Pratt's approach to Indian education:

Through the reservation system, with the nearly unlimited control and coercion it afforded, they sought to carry out a rigorous program of civilization that would prepare the Indians for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. To Pratt this means to the common end was folly. To him the reservation was anathema: it preserved the old way of life by barring the Indians from free circulation in the outside world. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was anathema: its entrenched bureaucracy was dedicated mainly to self-perpetuation and thus to the status quo. The Bureau or American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution was anathema: its anthropologists glorified aboriginal values and ridiculed the possibility of swift culture change. And even the educational system, including his own Carlisle School, was misdirected effort: it insulated the pupils from American life and kept them from the public schools where they properly belonged. (p. xv)

The curriculum at Carlisle was half academic, a minimum type, and half vocational. The senior year found the students being placed with non-Indian families, usually on a Pennsylvania farm. It was a constant lamentation of Carlisle supporters to learn that it was common for graduates upon return home to re-enter Indian lifeways. An education based on civilizing (assimilating) the Indians via the boarding school was not all that successful. When I joined the staff of the Mt. Edgecumbe High School, a BIA boarding school, in 1958 I learned that a big curriculum change was being implemented. The change was away from half day academic and half day vocational, with the students to choose academic over vocational in the eleventh and twelfth grades. Vocational education as a requirement was dropped. The basic approach to curriculum that Pratt established in 1879 had an enduring life in BIA boarding schools.

James McLachlan (1970) provides an excellent historical perspective of boarding schools throughout the world. The ones that developed in the U.S. borrowed from England and Europe and eventually became schools for the wealthy and elite – and for boys. While the main type of boarding school became one for the elite boys, he mentions the emergence of industrialization and urban expansion in the 1930s – and what was happening to the children. Again, the boys. The urban environment was not a wholesome one for the children and what to do about it:

One solution to the problem presented by the children of the urban poor was characteristic of the age – place them in a special institution, separate them from the subculture of urban delinquency. So, in 1824,

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the House of Refuge for Children was founded in New York City; in 1826 a group of citizens organized a House of Refuge in Philadelphia; and in 1828 Boston established a House of Reform for Juvenile Offenders. . . (p. 123)

Sound familiar? Pratt, born in 1840, was not too far removed from these boarding schools for the urban poor. Certainly, the church sponsors of Indian missions would have been aware of them and could possibly have provided financial support for them.

In retrospect, Indian boarding schools fit, roughly, into the following eras:

- 1880–1934 Assimilation-change Indian culture
- 1935–1950 Close and establish day schools
- 1951–1970 Provide schools Indian/Native children who have no school facilities to attend locally, primarily Navajos and Alaska Natives
- 1970–Present Provide schools for many children from no family or dysfunctional families

Institutional Research on the BIA Education Program

In retrospect, though always informal, I approached my various assignments from 1964 to 1980 in a quasi-research style. None of the directors/administrators I worked for emphasized using a research approach nor did they ever mention “Institutional Research.” It was my professional decision to use a quasi-research approach. Further, none of the officials who used my reports ever complained of my approach.

The creation of the Division of Evaluation Research and Development (DERD) inaugurated a more formal program of “Institutional Research.” “Institutional Research,” in this case, meant developing and making public information on the BIA’s Education Program available to decision-makers. The responsibility for this research program was assigned to my division. Ironically, none of the Directors of the Office of Indian Education Programs or the Commissioner-Assistant Secretary offices and/or individuals ever initiated such an internal research program. The idea for internal research emanated from Dr. Benham and myself.

The professional staff capabilities of the Division of Evaluation Research and Development were strong enough to conduct quality research activities and all the reports and data were made public in the “Evaluation and Research Report Series.” Based on a review of the Reports that survived, they are characterized by a careful delineation of research procedures, including background literature review; objectives; instrument development or adoption; data gathering, processing of instruments, statistical procedures and conclusions. Based on my experience, when Government officials wanted to be critical, it was seldom with the research data produced by IERC-DERD, but usually on political issues. In this respect, the institutional research which addressed an issue was usually buried deeply in

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an office rather than made public. For example, the Secretary of Interior's Office made no mention of the ORBS Survey. I was told that the ORBS Committee Report was not forwarded to the Congress. On the other hand, it was published in the *BIA Education Research Bulletin*. I would have to say that publishing of the Report did not endear IERC-DERD to the Assistant Secretaries Office.

As soon as the IERC was established, the operational principle of "Making Indian-Native Education Information Available to the Public (especially Indian Tribes)" was initiated. The "Research and Evaluation Report Series" was created and numerous reports on Indian/Native education became available to the public. The same for the "Curriculum Bulletin" documents. And, as mentioned earlier, the *BIA Education Research Bulletin* was initiated, published and mailed to schools, tribes and the public. It is unfortunate that the Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) made no effort to preserve or continue any of these publications following the 1979 reorganization of the office.

Leaving the BIA

The Secretary of Interior's reorganization of OIEP in 1979 led to the abolishment of IERC and there were no continuing positions. This meant that, being a non-Indian, all positions in the new structure would be filled according to Indian preference, veterans, first, and all Indians, second, and non-Indians with Career status third, etc. Fortunately, the University of New Mexico needed a project director to conduct a Carnegie Corporation funded national survey research to determine Higher Education Programs for American Indians and Hispanics (Justiz et.al. 1980). I left the BIA on July 9, 1979 and joined the University of New Mexico staff on July 10.

My career in the BIA Education Program was varied, starting with teaching in an Alaskan Arctic day school and ending as a Division Chief at the Washington Office level of the Program. During these 25 years I met and worked with numerous American Indians and Alaska Natives who were teachers and/or administrators. In one way or another they all taught me something about cultural differences and how very important they are to successful education.

In retrospect, it seems that all too often the Interior Department appointed too many non-Indians who were simply ignorant of cultural differences. In some cases these ignorant people were also uncaring about the lives of Indian-Native children and youth. These were sad times in my career, especially when I had to work immediately under them. But, on the whole, these ignorant types were few in number and never stayed around long enough to have an impact on the BIA's Education Program.

Notes

¹ Morris Thompson was one of Mt. Edgecumbe High School's brightest graduates. He had a distinguished career, including that of being Commissioner of Indian Affairs, only to have his life taken in a plane crash of Alaska Airlines off the coast of California.

- ² An electronic version of the Oklahoma Indian Education Needs Assessment, Volume 1, Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations, may be found on-line at <https://sites.google.com/site/nativeamericaneducationdocs/home> (Click on the “American Indian” option).
- ³ For evaluation of effectiveness from 1948 to 1958 see Shailer Peterson, *How Well are Indian Children Educated* (1948), Kenneth Anderson, et al. *The Educational Achievement of Indian Children* (1953), and L. Madison Combs, *The Indian Child Goes to School: A Study of Interracial Differences*, (1958) (All were published by the Haskell Institute Press, Lawrence, Kansas, U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs).
- ⁴ For major reports reflecting the 1960s see U. S. Senate Report No. 91-501, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960) and Estelle Fuchs and Robert Havighurst, *To Live on This Earth: American Indian Education* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972). For a summary of the 1960s see S. Lyman Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 227-234.
- ⁵ U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Juneau Area Office Field Manual. Also see U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs *BIA school board handbook: A guide for community involvement in educational programs* (Albuquerque: Indian Education Resources Center, 1974). It was developed in 1968.
- ⁶ The Concho report will be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/nativeamericaneducationdocs/home>
- ⁷ The text of this article developed from a survey conducted by the Division of Evaluation, Research, and Development, Central Office, Albuquerque, N.M. (BIA), at the request of Mr. Daniel Sahmaunt, Chairman of a committee designated to gather data concerning off-reservation residential schools during the summer of 1978. Members of that committee are listed at the end of this article.
- ⁸ The classic study of Indian boarding schools in the United States is David Wallace Adams’ *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (University Press of Kansas, 1995). Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder’s *American Indian Education: A History*, 2nd ed. (University of Oklahoma Press, 2017) includes information on schools before 1875 and after 1928. The Spring 2018 issue of the *Journal of American Indian Education* (vol. 57, no. 1) focused on boarding schools and included Jon Reyhner’s article entitled “American Indian Boarding Schools: What Went Wrong? What Is Going Right?”

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