



April 13, 2020

Bianca Williams
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 3W237
Washington, DC 20202-6110

Dear Ms. Williams:

The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools and the National Indian Impacted Schools Association, representing public schools serving Native communities throughout the country, appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Office of Indian Education's Demonstration Grants for Indian Children Program. Our organizations oppose the addition of a priority that would fund private school education, essentially creating a private school voucher funded with taxpayer dollars within this program.

The proposed change would undermine Tribal sovereignty by diverting funds from Tribal partnerships and creating vouchers that could be used to fund non-Native private entities. Vouchers would undermine the public schools that serve the vast majority of American Indian students to fund the education of a few, select students in alternative settings.

Adding a priority to create a voucher would undermine the goals this program is meant to achieve - improving college and career readiness and creating capacity for Native students through partnerships with Local Educational Agencies, State Educational Agencies, and Tribal entities. By allowing these funds to be diverted to private entities, the services provided by these partnerships would be threatened.

On behalf of Native communities and students, we oppose the proposed change and urge your office to rethink the addition of this priority.

Sincerely,

Brent Gish

Executive Director
National Indian Impacted Schools
Association

Hilary Goldmann

Executive Director
National Association of Federally
Impacted Schools