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GENERAL MEMORANDUM 25-016

Departments of Education and Interior Announce Interagency Agreement to Cooperate on Indian Education Program Administration

On November 18, 2025, the Department of Education (ED or Department) announced six interagency agreements through which ED will partner with other federal agencies to administer various education programs. The [press release](#) accompanying the announcement, titled “U.S. Department of Education Announces Six New Agency Partnerships to Break Up Federal Bureaucracy,” indicates that this is part of the Trump Administration’s broader effort to eliminate the Department of Education, as outlined in [Executive Order 14242](#).

In a recent [opinion editorial \(op-ed\) piece](#), Secretary of Education Linda McMahon advocated for reduced federal oversight in education, pointing to the recent government shutdown as evidence that states can operate core education services without the federal education bureaucracy. While eliminating the Department would require an act of Congress, and many critical education functions are legally required to be housed within the ED, these interagency agreements provide an alternative approach to reducing ED’s administrative role as the Department works towards full elimination with Congress.

Overall, ED has signed agreements with the Departments of Labor (DOL), Interior (DOI), Health and Human Services (HHS), and State. The most significant of these is the Indian Education Partnership between ED and DOI. According to the [fact sheet](#) released by ED, the goal is to “integrate ED’s Indian Education programs with DOI’s expertise and relationships with Tribes.” It explains that DOI will assume an administrative role over the following programs, with ED retaining a management and oversight role:

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education	• Indian Education Grants to Local Education Agencies • Special Programs for Indian Children - Indian Education Professional Development Grant Program (PD) • Special Programs for Indian Children - Demonstration Grants (DEMO) • State Tribal Education Partnership Program (STEP) • Native American and Alaska Native Language Program (NALED) • Native American Language Resource Center Program (NALRC) • Alaska Native Education Program (ANEP) • Native Hawaiian Education Program (NHEP) and the Native Hawaiian Education Council • Native American and Alaska Native Children in School (NAM) Program
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Office of Postsecondary Education	• Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities¹ • Indian Education-related Research and Development Infrastructure Grant Program²
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education	• Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions Program
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services	• American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program • Continued support for IDEA Part D funding for Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities

The fact sheet also clarifies that DOI will take over the responsibility of closing grant programs for Native Alaskan and Native Hawaiian serving colleges as part of the Trump Administration's efforts to "[wind] down several grant programs that allocate resources based upon the racial or ethnic composition of an institution's student body." Funding for Tribal Colleges and Universities is not affected by this grant program wind-down effort.

While DOI will assume many of the day-to-day operations of these programs, ED will retain oversight authorities and other statutory functions, such as policymaking and budget formulation. It is unclear at this early stage after the announcement how the two agencies will work together to administer the affected programs. DOI and ED state that they do not anticipate any adverse impacts or disruptions to Tribal Nations, states, and other grantees of affected programs. The Departments also note that Tribal Nations can continue to work with program staff at both ED and DOI, and the White House has indicated funding levels for these programs will be unaffected by the agreement.

Other agreements included in the announcement include DOL undertaking the administration of many federal K-12, postsecondary, and workforce development programs, while HHS will assume a program to improve on-campus child care for college students who are parents. Finally, HHS and State will each take on some internationally-focused programs. The Office of Civil Rights, the Office of Special Education, and the Office of Federal Student Aid are not affected by the interagency agreements.

Please let us know if you have questions. Inquiries may be directed to:

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¹ As authorized under Title III, Part A of the Higher Education Act, Section 316, and Part F of the Higher Education Act, Section 371

² As authorized under Title VII, Part B of the Higher Education Act.