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March 14, 2016

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

The federal government has made a commitment to Native American children and families to provide educational opportunities in a manner that preserves their culture, language, and traditions. Unfortunately, the federal government is failing to meet that commitment. Significant health and safety hazards exist at many Native American education facilities, including the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig High School of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Due to recent efforts in Congress, the federal government is finally taking concrete steps to improve education for Native American students in Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded schools.

Addressing health and safety concerns at BIE funded schools is vitally important to providing Native American students a quality education. Last year, we asked the Committee on Appropriations to provide \$133.2 million for education construction within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). We are pleased the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016* exceeded this request by providing \$138.2 million, which represents an increase of \$63.7 million over the FY 2015 level. In exceeding this request, Congress funded the Facilities Component Replacement Construction program in order to help replace individual buildings that are in poor condition. This significant investment in both the School Component Replacement program and the Replacement School Construction program should allow the targeted utilization of resources to help Native American children receive an education in a safe and healthy environment.

The President's budget proposal for the BIA would maintain this investment in the next fiscal year. In light of the health and safety concerns that exist and this significant commitment of taxpayer resources, please provide the Committee a written plan outlining how the Department intends to efficiently and effectively use these new and requested resources to address the health and safety concerns at BIE funded schools by March 28, 2016. Also, please provide a briefing to Committee staff on this plan once it is submitted.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact James Forester
(james.forester@mail.house.gov) with the House Education and the Workforce Committee at
(202) 225-6558.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE

Chairman

Committee on Education and the Workforce



TODD ROKITA

Chairman

Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education