

**Written Testimony of Ervin Chavez, School Board President &  
Faye BlueEyes, Assistant Executive Director**  
**DZILTH-NA-O-DITH-HLE COMMUNITY GRANT SCHOOL (DCGS)**  
**Before the**  
**United States House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**  
**Regarding the FY 2017 Indian Affairs Budget**

March 18, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community School (DCGS) on the Navajo Reservation in Bloomfield, New Mexico. Our school, which has been in continuous service since 1968, operates a K-8 educational program and a dormitory program for students in grades 1-12, serving around 250 students in both programs. DCGS is a tribally controlled grant school is located approximately 170 miles northwest of Albuquerque. DCGS is primarily funded through appropriations received from the BIE, and pass-through funding from the Department of Education.

Our all-Navajo Board operates the DCGS through a Grant issued by the BIE under the Tribally Controlled Schools Act. The DCGS goal is to make a difference in the educational progress of our students and we believe that all of our students are capable of achieving academic success. In fact, despite the challenges I will describe, we are meeting or exceeding our peer-schools in the BIE and NM systems, and sometimes eclipsing national scores. I have included a chart on Page 4 showing the results of the new test in New Mexico. Yet, we struggle with underfunding of practically every one of our educational and related programs that impacts our ability to fully meet our school goals and our ability to successfully operate our programs under the Indian Self-Determination policy—think of what we could do without the worries we face. Funding increases are desperately needed and are having a significant impact. Thank You.

Our recommendations can be summarized as follows:

- Protect school funding from the proposed federal bureaucratic expansion.
- Increase ISEP funding to \$431 million in FY 2017.
- Fund Student Transportation at \$73 million, and BIA Road Maintenance at \$40 million.
- Continue to fully fund Tribal Grant Support Costs.
- Provide \$85 million for facilities operation and \$76 million for facilities maintenance (full funding).
- Embark on a comprehensive 60-year plan for school replacement and upkeep.

### **1. Protecting School Funding and Programs from Federal Expansion**

You have heard over the last year from us and other schools about our concerns with the BIE's "Blueprint for Reform." We do not doubt the Administration's commitment to high quality

education for Indian students. The Administration's focus, along with the strong commitment of this Subcommittee signal that we have entered a new era for Indian education. However, coming from the local reservation community, we have a different perspective on what will be the best strategies to use to reach the goals of improvement. We continue to have concerns about centralization of authority at the BIE headquarters, instead of leaving that power at the local level as Congress intended and required by enacting the Tribally Controlled Schools Act. We ask that this Committee and your colleagues continue to engage Tribal Schools with concerns over the BIE reorganization and exercise appropriate oversight as it had done this last year.

## **2. Increase Funding for Indian School Equalization Programs**

The most critical stream of funding for community grant schools like ours is increased funding in the Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP). The ISEP funds are those that schools use for the day to day operation, whether that is paying teachers and staff, purchasing curriculum and supplies, or running student programs. In years past, our ISEP funds were put under pressure by unfunded needs elsewhere in our schools, which could be paying utilities or repairing one of our school buses. This year, we are grateful to see the Administration has requested \$400.2 million for ISEP funding, an increase of \$6.5 million to the program. However, the need in our schools is much greater. **The National Congress of American Indians has recommended that Congress appropriate \$431 million for ISEP funding, which we think should be this Subcommittee's baseline for funding this budget year.** ISEP is our schools' lifeblood, and we are still struggling to make up for losses in past years.

## **3. Increase funding for Student Transportation**

One of our school's largest challenges is getting our children to school and back home. Maintenance costs for our vehicles are higher than normal for several reasons, including the fact that they travel more miles per day than the average school bus, those miles are often very rough, and the cost of maintaining our buses includes long transport time to garages or parts stores. This is not to mention the cost of fuel to cover those extra miles!

The Administration has requested \$57.2 million for Student Transportation, a \$4 million increase, but that is simply not enough given the challenges of our roads and equipment. **We request at least \$73 million for student transportation in the BIE system.** We also request that this Subcommittee fund BIA Road Maintenance at a sustainable level. **We echo NCAI's recommendation that the Subcommittee appropriate at least \$40 million for road maintenance in FY 2017.** Such funding will enable us to maintain our six school buses, and will protect other funds that would otherwise be used for this purpose.

## **4. We support the Administration's proposal to continue full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs.**

Tribal Grant Support Costs (TGSC) (formerly known as Administrative Cost Grants) are the BIE analogue to Contract Support Costs, and are necessary for schools like DCGS to operate our schools. Not only do the TGSC funds pay for the administration of the school, but also fund all indirect costs like payroll, accounting, insurance, background checks and other legal, reporting, and recordkeeping requirements. TGSC also enables schools to comply with the increasingly burdensome reporting requirements imposed by BIE or to comply with grant funding.

We are grateful to this Subcommittee for fully funding TGSC in FY 2016. This year, the Administration has proposed to fully fund TGSC, including funding for schools transitioning from BIE-operated status to local control and grant funding. In years past schools had only received, at most, two-thirds of the TGSC needed to cover overhead costs. DCGS welcomes this long overdue change, and applauds this Subcommittee's decision to treat schools' support costs the same as contractors with the BIA and the Indian Health Service. **We support the Administration's proposal that TGSC and startup costs be fully funded at \$75.3 million.**

##### **5. Our schools need full funding for Facilities Operation and Maintenance.**

The condition of BIE-funded schools is a national disgrace, and has been the subject of national news attention for years. Some schools in the country are forced to teach their students in converted bus barns or go without hot water. We do the best we can with our facilities at Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle, but constantly struggle with the fact that we do not have enough funding for maintenance of our buildings, utilities, and everyday repairs. The operation of our facilities is an important one, not only for the comfort of our students, but one that affects their health and safety. It is hard to learn and progress if you're too cold, or if you're too hot due to radiator problems. In 2010, the BIA listed our school condition as "poor" with a deferred maintenance backlog of **over \$7.7 million dollars**. Our backlog has only grown since, and our students are the ones who suffer as a result.

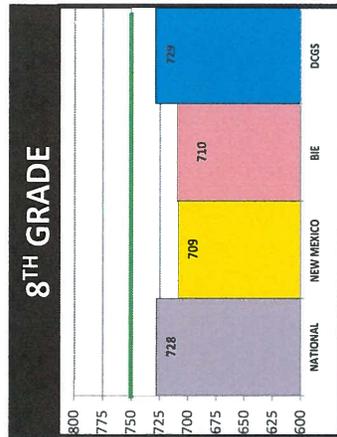
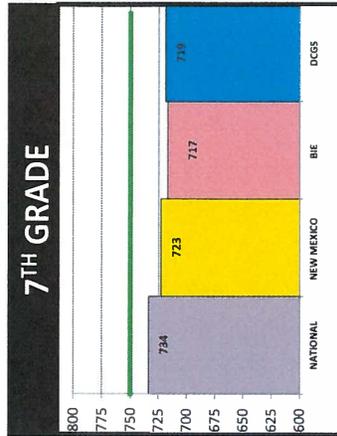
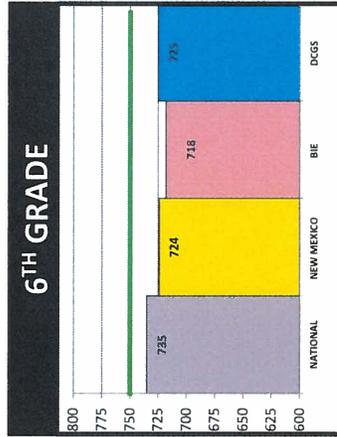
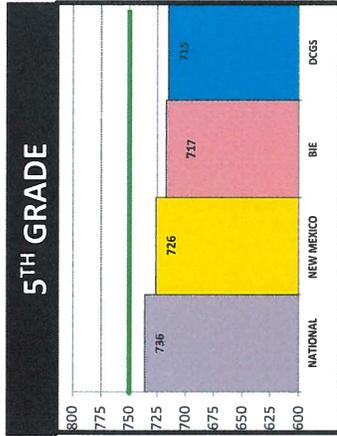
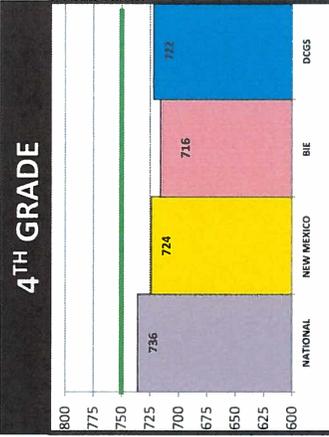
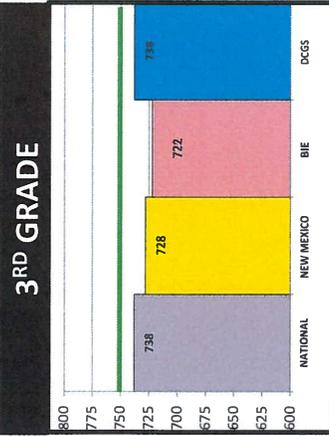
We appreciate that the Administration has finally moved to complete the replacement of schools on a list dated from 2004, but we need to stress that these needs are ongoing. **We support the BIE's request for school construction, but request that funding for facilities operation and maintenance be increased to \$85 million for operations and \$76 million for maintenance.**

We are very grateful for the substantial increase that this Subcommittee provided for Education Construction in FY 2016, allowing the 2004 school replacement list to finally be completed. We are pleased to note that the completion of the 2004 list means that a new round of replacements will begin. In 2015, we were overjoyed to make it on to the top ten list and present before the school replacement panel; however, we are still waiting to hear whether we will be one of the five schools chosen. Providing consistent funding for this budget category each fiscal year means that our aging schools can be replaced in an orderly, scheduled fashion. To this end, **we call on the Subcommittee to embark on a 60-year schools replacement plan coupled with adequate funding to maintain buildings throughout their life.** Recent testimony from the Governmental Accountability Office reported that even new construction is starting to fail because of inappropriate maintenance or poor construction oversight. Our schools want to protect the federal investment in our students' education, and we ask the Subcommittee to empower local communities to do so by removing bureaucratic hurdles inherent in the BIE facilities system. As school boards, we are the best decision makers.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please contact me at 505-960-6681 if you have any questions.

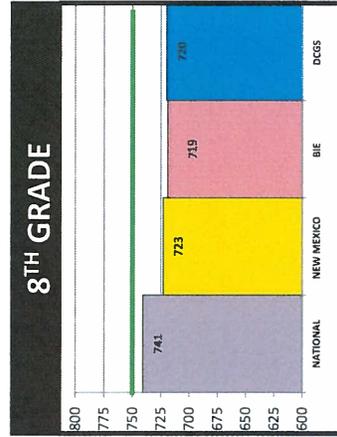
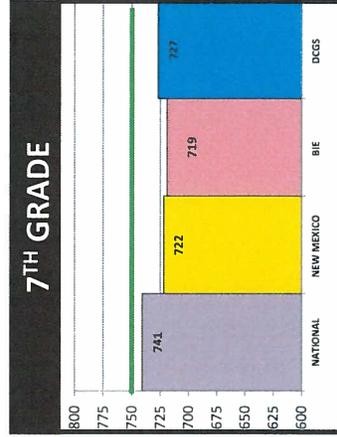
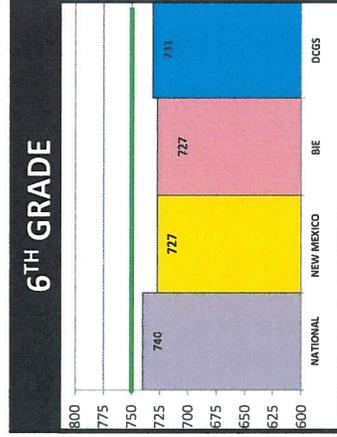
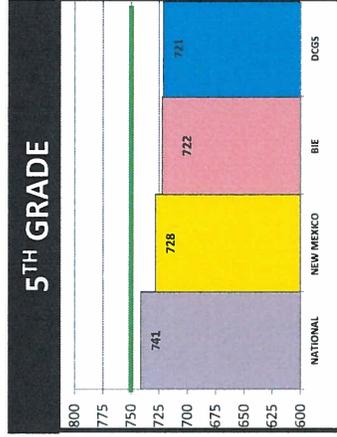
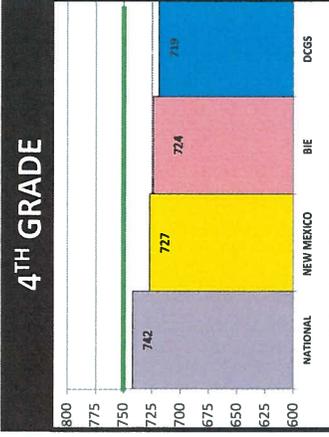
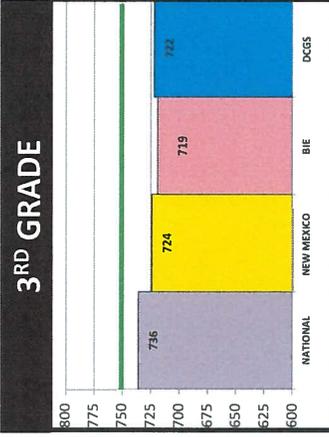
# PARCC 2015 RESULTS

MATHEMATICS



# PARCC 2015 RESULTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



Source: NIM PED PARCC Assessment

SY 2014-2015

Source: NIM PED PARCC Assessment

SY 2014-2015