

Association of Community Tribal Schools Inc.

FY 24 Interior Appropriations Testimony

My name is Tom Miller and I am the Board President of the Association of Community Tribal Schools (ACTS) and have served on the Board since 1982. I am an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and served 8 years on our Board of Directors. I also served as the School Administrator at the Hannahville Indian School for 36 years. The Association is submitting this written testimony that provides the ACTS position on the FY 2024 needs of tribal schools. We have consistently submitted testimony since 1985. As we attempt to get back to “normal” after the pandemic years, it is imperative that congress be aware of the needs of the Tribally Controlled Schools. Our schools were extremely vulnerable to the effects of the Covid Pandemic due to isolation, infrastructure, educational structure deficiencies and overall funding issues. The ACTS membership recognizes that the Interior Appropriations Subcommittees of both the House and Senate and will begin to consider the FY 24 funding. We have major issues as we attempt to address parity to the schools of the Department of Defense. **WE WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR FIGHT FOR THE FY 23 Interior Appropriations especially Education Construction.**

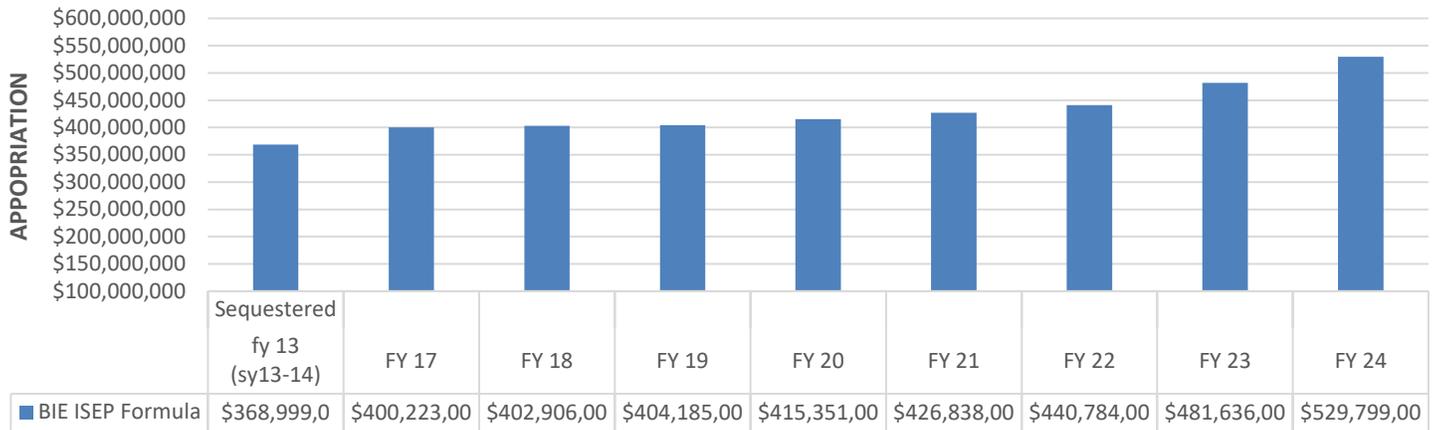
OVERVIEW OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONTRACT TRIBAL SCHOOLS

The tribal school movement started in 1966 with Rough Rock Demonstration School in Arizona. Currently there are over **30,000 students in 130 tribal elementary and secondary schools.** The schools are in the states of **Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, Maine, Florida, North Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Montana, California, Utah, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico.** ACTS represents a significant number of the students in the 130 tribally controlled elementary and secondary schools. ACTS’s mission is to “assist community tribal schools toward their mission of ensuring that when students complete their schools they are prepared for lifelong learning and that

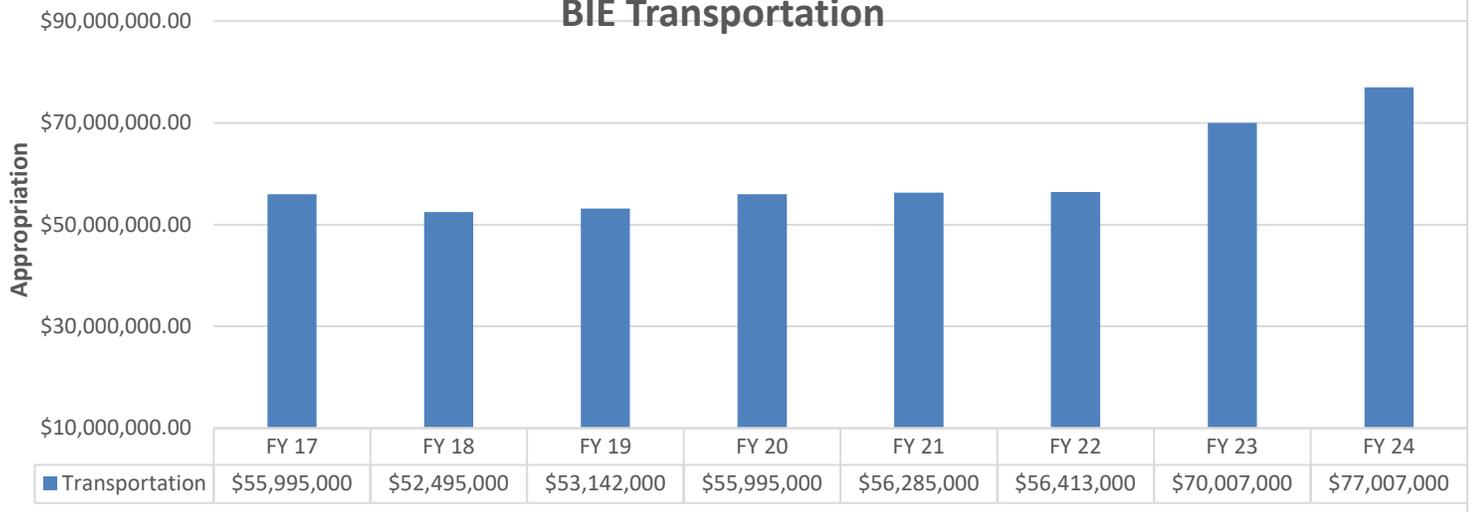
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these students will strengthen and perpetuate traditional tribal societies.” **Charts illustrate history of appropriations:**

BIE ISEP Formula

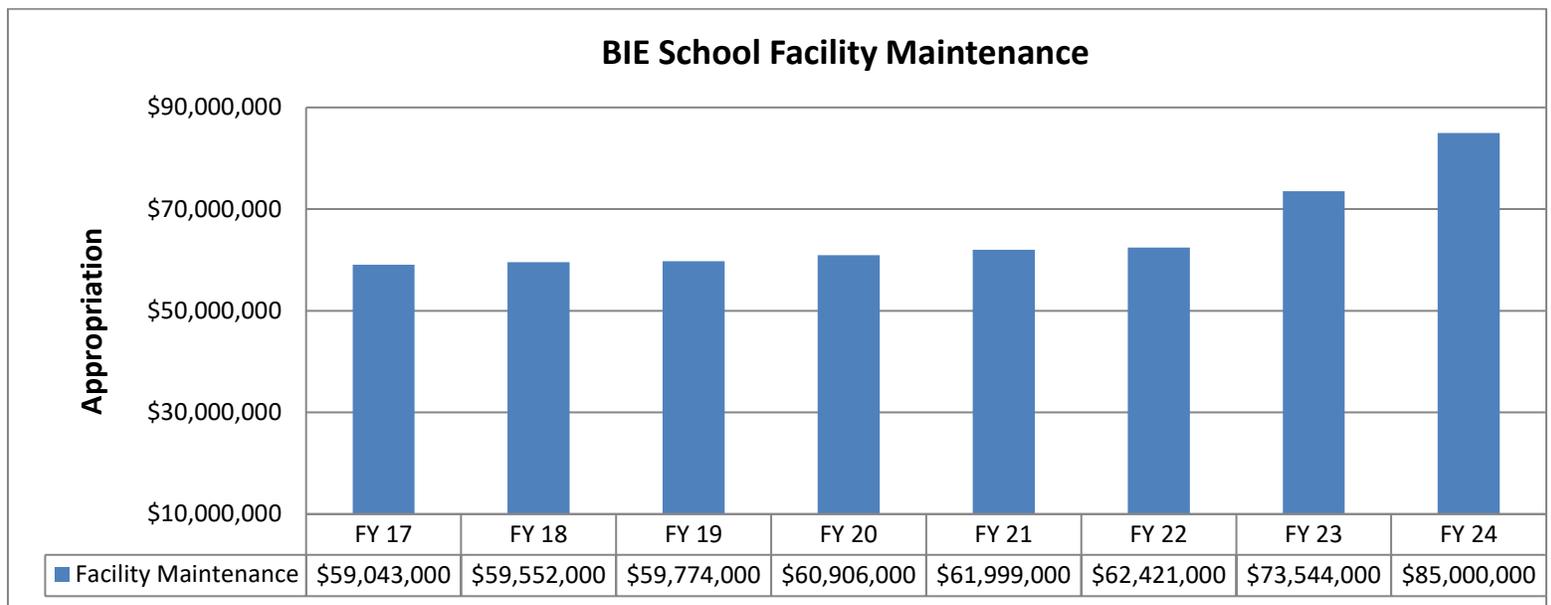
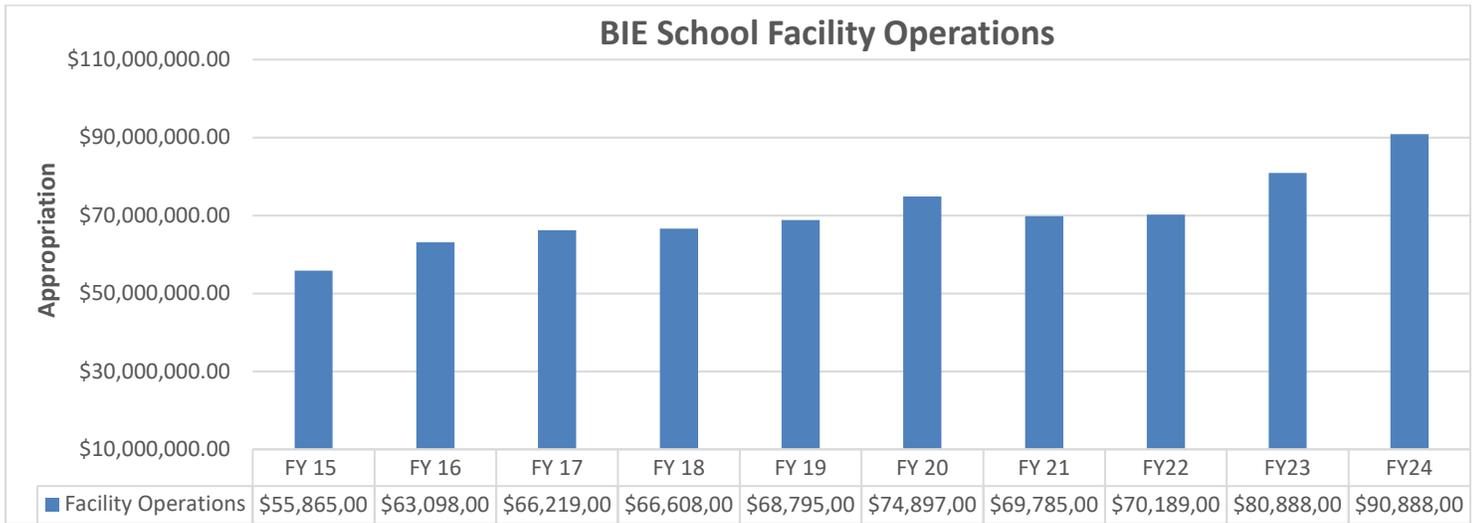


BIE Transportation

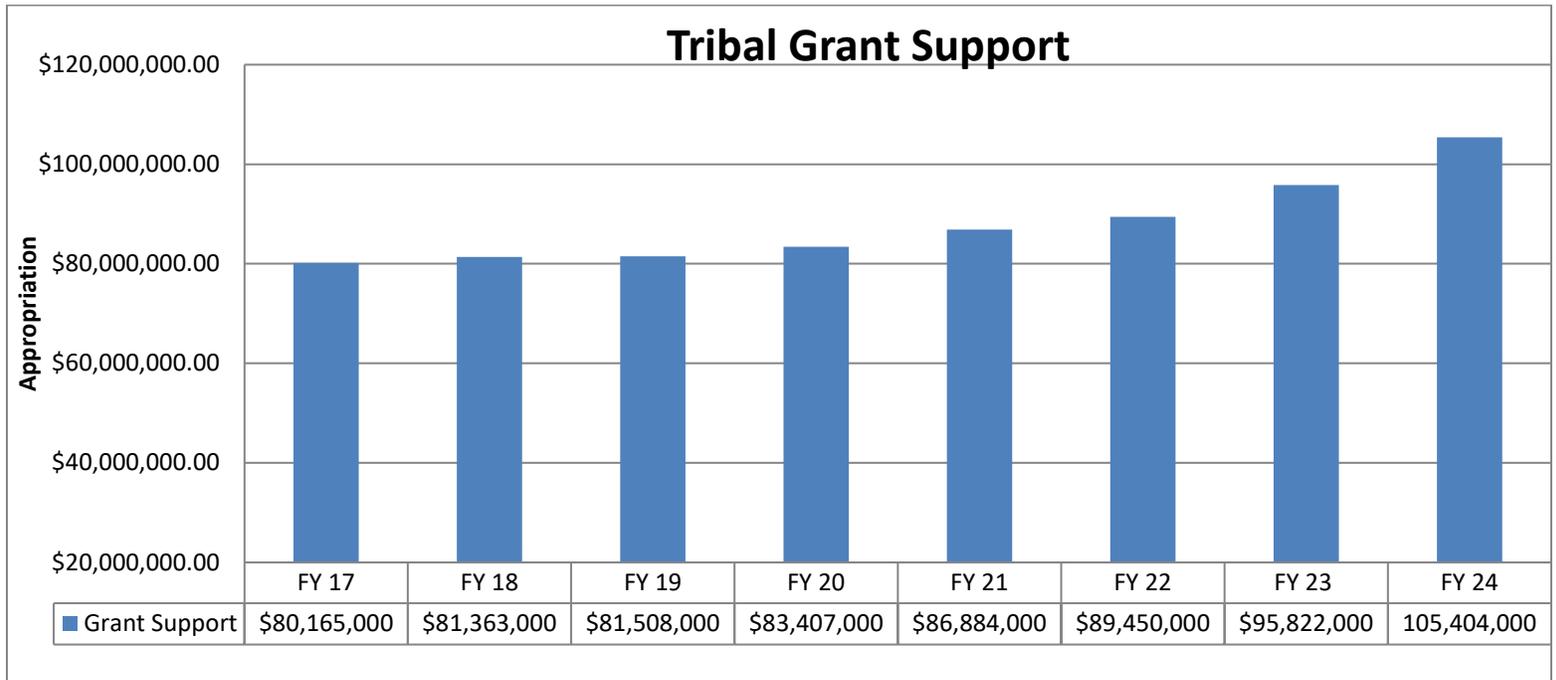


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Requested Action Summarizing the ACTS request for FY 2024

PRPROGRAM	FY 2023	Proposed FY 2024
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs-ISEP	\$481,636,000	\$529,799,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs-Facility Operations	\$ 80,888,000	\$ 92,212,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs-Facility Maintenance	\$ 73,544,000	\$ 85,000,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs-Student Transportation	\$ 70,007,000	\$ 77,014,000
BIE – Tribal Grant Support Cost (1.5%)	<u>\$ 95,822,000</u>	<u>\$105,404,000</u>
	\$801,897,000	\$891,950,000 +\$15,900,000

[The actual need of these accounts, based on the Bureau of Indian Education laws, regulations and Budget Justifications, is well over \$ 60,000,000 but we realize the constraints placed on this committee]

1. Increase Early Child and Family Development (allow expansion, 10 schools) \$ 3,000,000
2. Construction – We would ask the department of Interior with the support from your Subcommittee, to follow the example that the Department of Defense, through the funding of the Defense Authorization and Appropriation Committees have put forth over the past 10 plus years in providing construction funding to public schools located on a military installation to allow school buildings to be renovated, repaired, modernized and in some cases in need of new construction. To date using the dollars appropriated by the DoD Appropriations Subcommittee, the Department of Defense has provided just under \$2 billion dollars with the FY 23 appropriations just passed providing over \$650 million to public schools
3. Education Construction. The BIA reports that there are 83 Tribally Controlled Schools that in need of replacement. There is nearly a \$75,000,000 annual facility deterioration rate, \$ 388 million in deferred maintenance, and also reports a \$ 4.4 billion school replacement need.

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Annual Need

Replacement School Construction (2-3 schools per year)	\$ 165,000,000
Replacement Facility Construction (4-8 facilities per year)	\$ 75,000,000
Employee Housing Repair and Replacement	\$ 20,000,000
Facility Improvement and Repair	\$ 100,000,000

4. Establish an Independent Federal Agency to lead and manage the **Bureau on Indian Education**.
5. Forward funding of all educational funds for the Tribally Controlled Schools in an attempt to stabilize our ability to plan for the future education of our native students.

ACTS