



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Tribal Leader:

In June 2021, Secretary Deb Haaland (Secretary) launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative (Initiative) at the U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) to highlight the troubled history of Federal Indian boarding school policies and their legacy for Indigenous Peoples. To address the intergenerational impact of Federal Indian boarding schools and to promote spiritual and emotional healing in our communities, we must acknowledge and shed light on the traumas of the past.

In May of 2022, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland released [Volume I](#) of the Investigative Report, as called for as part of the Initiative. Volume I of the report lays the groundwork for the Department's continued advancement of the Initiative, in coordination with sister agencies.

Through generous investments from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation, we have provided a grant to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) to gather first-person survivor narratives. These will help form a [permanent oral history collection](#) and ensure stories and experiences that Federal Indian boarding school survivors share can be learned from and heard by current and future generations.

To build on this work, the Secretary has also directed the National Park Service (NPS), often referred to as our nation's storyteller, to explore opportunities for enhanced interpretation of this history and preservation of related resources. This examination could include potential opportunities through NPS programs and historic Federal Indian boarding school sites, burial sites, and artifacts.

The Department will consult with Indian Tribes to receive feedback on potential NPS activity regarding preservation and interpretation of the Federal Indian boarding school system on the following dates:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Link</b>
Tuesday, April 2, 2024	12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsd-uhjr4sGemMluAOteONTC567cHRt4A">https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsd-uhjr4sGemMluAOteONTC567cHRt4A</a>
Thursday, April 4, 2024	3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET	<a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsd-ghqT0rElrxTIS7DFncjrxkFG7blUc">https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsd-ghqT0rElrxTIS7DFncjrxkFG7blUc</a>

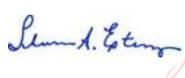
In addition to receiving general input, the Department is seeking specific views to the following questions:

1. How should the history of the Federal Indian boarding school system be acknowledged and publicly shared at sites within existing national park units? Are there other sites critical to preserving the boarding school system history?
2. How can NPS's historic preservation programs support the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative?
3. Should the Department invest support or resources to protect the physical sites of historical Federal Indian boarding schools that are currently located on Federal lands, including burial sites and artifacts, even as Federal agencies fulfill their responsibilities for repatriation or disinterment?
4. Would you like to share any additional suggestions or comments related to the NPS preservation and interpretation of the Federal Indian boarding school system?

The Department welcomes your written comments on the proposed NPS activity related to the historical Federal Indian boarding school system by email to [consultation@bia.gov](mailto:consultation@bia.gov) by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, April 12, 2024.

If you have any questions regarding the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, please contact Mr. Joaquin R. Gallegos, Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, by email at [joaquin.gallegos@indianaffairs.gov](mailto:joaquin.gallegos@indianaffairs.gov).

Sincerely,

 Date: 2024.03.01  
15:44:41 -05'00'

Shannon A. Estenoz  
Assistant Secretary  
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks