

'Indian Education Program' Defined

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Do you know what the Indian Education program is? Many parents know their children have something called "Indian Education" in school. They may get a paper in the mail that asks them

to sign and send back if they want their children to participate in the Indian Education program. But many parents do not really know what that program is, what it does, or why it exists.

The Indian Education program operates with Federal money under the Indian Education Act. Officially named

"Educational Amendments of 1972, Public Law 92-318, this Act provides for the development and operation of projects to meet the special educational needs of Native children.

The Indian Education Act was a result of the so-called Kennedy-Mondale report which grew out of the 1969 hearings of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. This report was very critical of the status of Indian Education, terming it "a national tragedy - a national challenge". It charged that the educational system has "neither prepared Indian children for productivity in the general society, nor perpetuated the Indian Culture and values."

Based upon this, the IEA operates under regulations published in the Federal Register, July 24, 1974. These regulations provide for participation by parents of the children to be served, independent and objective eval-

uation of the project, and extensive criteria for determination of which applications will be removed.

In Alaska, the IEA programs got off to a poor start because of a tardy release of Federal funds (May, 1973). A number of Alaskan organizations eligible to apply for funding under this act either did not receive information at all, or did not have time to develop proposals. Those who did submit proposals did not have time to do extensive local parental planning as required by the regulations. This resulted in few IEA programs in Alaska during the 1973-74 school year.

More programs, including the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District's program come from the U. S. Office of Education (Department of Health, Education and Welfare), and have been somewhat less in amount than those traditionally provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for JOM programs.