

Official: Include Indian schools for abuse aid

Edward Parisian, president of the National Indian Education Association, recently sent a letter to President Bush concerning the omission of Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, tribally administered schools and tribally owned schools in his education and substance abuse initiatives.

Parisian praised the president for his interest in providing more support to education programs designed to foster and reward educational excellence and to prevent substance abuse.

He pointed out that administrators and teachers in BIA and tribal schools are trying, with inadequate resources, to run just the types of programs which the president has singled out for increased funding.

"We must have assurances and corrective actions from the administration," Parisian said, "which demonstrates that they did not intend to leave Indian schools out of their education and substance abuse initiatives."

He said that Indians are perhaps the most vulnerable group in our society to alcoholism, dropping out of school and a seemingly never-ending cycle of poverty.

"I do not believe that President Bush, with his call for a 'kinder and gentler society' intended to overlook students in BIA and tribal schools and colleges," Parisian said.