

From BIA to Attend College—

16,000 Indian Students Get Grants

Some 16,000 Indian students are receiving grants from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to enable them to attend college this year. Ten years ago the number was a little over 1,700. This is indicative of the progress that has been made in Indian education.

Most Indian students at the elementary and secondary level (about 70 per cent) now attend public schools, but the BIA also

provides education programs for Indians.

In addition to the higher education assistance program mentioned above, the BIA operates a Federal Indian school system, offers adult basic education and vocational training programs and assists public schools with funds for special needs of Indian students.

The Federal Indian school system includes 194 schools enrolling almost 50,000 students. Most of these schools are in rather isolated areas and 77 of them are boarding schools. Another 53 are day schools in small Alaskan villages.

The BIA also operates 19 dormitory facilities for more than 3,000 Indian students who attend public schools distant from their homes.

The Federal schools meet all state educational standards and offer many special programs, such as Indian history and culture or

bilingual education in the primary grades, to be responsive to Indian student needs.

In accordance with the Administration's policy of Indian self-determination, 13 schools are now operated by Indian communities with funding provided by the Federal Government under contracts with the BIA.

This option to control and direct their own schools has been available to Indian communities for several years, but the implementation of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, enacted January 4, 1975, is expected to make the option much more feasible.