Description of document:	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Strategic Workforce Plan, 2016
Requested date:	10-October-2020
Release date:	07-January-2021
Posted date:	18-January-2021
Source of document:	FOIA Request Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (ASIA) MS-4146 1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20240 Fax: (202) 208-6597 Email: foia@bia.gov

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

January 7, 2021

IN REPLY REFER TO:
DOI-ASIA-2021-000170

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs FOIA office received your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, dated October 10, 2020 and assigned it control number **DOI-ASIA-2021-000170**. Please cite this number in any future communications with our office regarding your request.

We are writing to respond to your request on behalf of the Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM).

In your request you stated "*A copy of the BIA Strategic Workforce Plan. If there is more than one such plan, I request a copy of the most recent strategic workforce plan.*"

On December 03, 2020 a no records response was sent to you. You have replied to our letter on December 04, 2020, and in your request, you stated the following "*I did some further research. On July 30, 2015, the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs signed a contract (Contract number INA15PC00111) with Kauffman & Associates, Spokane, Washington, in the amount of $889,265 to perform work between July 30, 2015 and July 31, 2016, to develop a STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLAN - INCORPORATES TECHNICALPROPOSAL OF KAUFFMAN&ASSOCIATES DATED 6/29/15. The awarding office was the Central Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education. The NAICS code was 541611.*"

We have enclosed one file consisting of 35 pages, which is being released to you in its entirety.

This concludes our office's response to this request.

The 2007 FOIA amendments created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

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If you have any questions about our response to your request, you may contact Heather Garcia by phone at (202) 208-3135, by email at foia@bia.gov, or by mail at 1849 C Street N.W. MS-4660-MIB, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Sincerely,

JUSTIN DAVIS
Digitally signed by JUSTIN DAVIS
Date: 2021.01.07 14:26:04 -05'00'

Justin Davis
FOIA Officer
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs

Final Strategic Workforce Plan Report

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction & Background

Indian Affairs (IA) is the oldest bureau in the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), and currently serves American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). Indian Affairs faces the challenge of providing administration and management services for trust lands and mineral estates and supporting quality education for tens of thousands of AI/AN students in a constantly shifting and changing landscape. Pursuant to the mission of IA and its subgroups: the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA), BIA, and BIE, a Strategic Workforce Plan was envisioned to ensure best practices in organizational management, leadership, structure and communications are employed to better serve Indian Country. Kauffman & Associates, Inc., (KAI) was contracted by IA to conduct this assessment with IA and its sub-agencies to strengthen best practices and identify and provide recommendations for improved practices where needed, through an organizational evaluation and Strategic Workforce Plan.[1] The aim of this Strategic Workforce Plan is to assist IA in its effort to uphold its obligations in the support of the economic and educational well-being of each tribal community.

Strategic Workforce Plan Objectives

The objectives for the organizational evaluation and strategic workforce planning included:

- Review of the IA organizational structure
- Evaluation of current leadership positions, roles, and effectiveness
- Internal and external formal information communication processes and practices, at all levels
- BIE school achievement scores
- BIE teacher training and development
- Recommendations on how to improve leadership at all levels
- Training program for leadership to support recommendations

Indian Affairs requested that the strategic workforce plan provide a comprehensive evaluation and subsequent recommendations to achieve the following objectives:

- Align IA's human capital program with its current and emerging mission and programmatic goals

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[1] Bureau of Indian Affairs Solicitation No: A15PS00426

- Develop long-term strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining staff to achieve programmatic goals
- Determine the critical skills and competencies needed to achieve current and future programmatic results
- Develop strategies that are tailored to address gaps in the number, deployment, and alignment of human capital approaches for enabling and sustaining the contributions of all critical skills and competencies
- Build the capability needed to address administrative, educational, and other requirements important to support workforce planning strategies
- Monitor and evaluate the agency's progress toward its human capital goals and the contribution that human capital results have made toward achieving programmatic results

Approach to Organizational Evaluation and Strategic Workforce Plan Design

To complete this organizational evaluation and workforce plan in the most efficient and effective manner, the work was divided into five main tasks:

- **Task 1: A Comprehensive Evaluation Plan** consisting of an environmental scan, benchmarking activity, and conducting leadership interviews;

- **Task 2: Recommendations on Developing and Implementing an Effective Organization Plan** consisting of a summary of Task 1 Leadership Interviews; and a recommendations report encompassing the areas of organizational strategy, organizational structure, workforce and talent management, and leadership and accountability with a focus on implementation;

- **Task 3: An Evaluation of Leadership** consisting of a leadership survey, leadership survey report, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities) report and workshop materials, and a leadership training needs and curriculum report with associated training materials;

- **Task 4: An Academic Recommendations Plan** involving a review of available academic data, conducting a BIE principal survey and case-study interviews, and reporting on findings and recommendations for replicable best practices; and

- **Task 5: A BIE Executive Advisory Council Plan** in which the KAI team defined the form and make up of a proposed Advisory Council for the BIE Director.

Findings from analyses of data obtained from these tasks form the foundation for the recommendations and subsequent steps for implementation contained within this document. The

resulting strategic workforce plan focuses on improving and enhancing organizational management, leadership, structure, and communications; it also provides existing and newly developed training materials and technical assistance regarding best practices in organizational competencies such as strategic human capital management, inter- and cross-agency communication, performance measurement, and capacity and skill-building for all levels of IA staff. By building these organizational competencies, AS-IA, BIA and BIE can work together to shape the vision of IA, foster an agency-wide culture of long-lasting excellence, and execute the recommendations of the workforce plan successfully.

Key Findings

The needs identified in organizational evaluation are related to improved organizational strategy, organizational effectiveness, talent and workforce management, and leadership and accountability. The review of existing data and data collected through interviews and surveys with AS-IA, BIA, and BIE showed extensive overlap of themes throughout the tasks. These are summarized as follows:

- **Cumbersome administrative processes.** The initial phase of this evaluation uncovered cumbersome administrative processes that cause inefficiencies in budgetary and human resource functions leading to disconnected services, inconsistent policies, and critical delays thus signaling a need for better administrative functions.

- **More emphasis and clarity on IA's mission.** The leadership interviews with Senior Executive Service (SES) staff provided evidence that IA's mission played a critical role for most employees as it was the central focus of their day-to-day work.

- **Low but improving ratings for management, performance, and job satisfaction.** Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) data showed that IA, BIA, and BIE scored lower than the averages across the benchmark organizations in all years of Leadership and Knowledge Management, Results Oriented Performance, and Job Satisfaction. However, improvements in scores were made between 2014 and 2015 in some areas.

- **Need to re-envision agency focus.** Surveys conducted within AS-IA, BIA, and BIE further informed recommendations for the strategic workforce plan. Regarding organizational purpose, responses indicated a need to re-envision the foci of the agencies, taking into account the changing context such as the federal government's growing acknowledgement of tribal self-determination.

- **Need for increased communication, tribal self-determination, agency accountability, and training and skill development.** Responses also signaled a need for greater communication within and between agencies to improve services to tribes as well as to prevent loss of institutional memory due to retirement and turnover. Responses also noted the organizational shift in thinking from direct service provision to supporting tribes in

providing their own services. This organizational shift in roles demands a regularized accountability process to maintain quality service. There was widespread interest in training and skill development opportunities.

- **Positive impact of tribal culture and a focus on improvement among BIE-operated schools.** Incorporating tribal culture into educational improvement efforts offered positive gains, as did regular collaboration between school principals and the community. Further, it was found that BIE-operated schools greatly benefitted from a continuous focus on school improvement such as using data to inform decisions and supporting staff improvement.

Key Recommendations

Broad consistent themes emerged from the organizational evaluation and led to short- and long-term recommendations, including the need to clarify IA's organizational strategy, to raise the significance of talent management and workforce planning as a priority moving forward, and to increase the accountability of leadership. Recommended strategies to meet these goals include:

- **Establish IA as a learning organization operating under a holistic mission with holistic values** dedicated to the continual education, development, and capacity-building of its employees to improve IA's ability to serve Indian Country and share best practices:
  - Create a holistic mission for IA behind which all of its subagencies align. A single, holistic mission will allow leadership throughout the agency to speak clearly and consistently about the IA's mission, vision, and purpose.
  - Connect individual subagency and regional office purpose statements to IA's mission to clarify roles and responsibilities while uniting staff under a single IA banner.
  - Actively encourage and engage in the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and technical assistance with colleagues, direct reports, and tribal partners.
  - In to BIE-operated schools, establish minimum time requirements for principals to serve as educational leaders in the classroom supporting teachers' efforts.
  - Establish holistic values for IA that reflect the agency's role as an advocate for self-determination and tribal sovereignty. Formally codify these values into IA's mission and vision.

- **Improve cross-collaboration and lateral relationship-building** with other agencies to improve IA's organizational and operational effectiveness while allowing for a more comprehensive and, ultimately, more effective approach to addressing issues and challenges:
  - Establish diverse, cross-functional innovation workgroups that engage emerging leaders from across IA to identify and address key organizational challenges.

- o Use workgroups to identify talent and high performers for leadership roles and opportunities at IA.
- o Utilize agency and subagency leaders to drive teams to build lateral ties, expand internal networks, and foster cross-organizational relationship-building.
- o Continually develop relationships with networks and other organizations to improve communication and service to Indian Country.
- o In to BIE-operated schools, encourage school administrators to engage with the community via regular school organizational and parent support meetings.
- o Actively reach out to staff from other offices, agencies, and tribal partners to discuss improvements and address organizational challenges.

- **Update the talent acquisition and management process between teams and across agencies** that will allow IA to identify, hire, and manage staff in a timely manner, preventing lags in service provision and helping ensure the agency's ability to provide continuous, quality service to Indian Country.
  - o Form a collaborative partnership with human resources to develop a cross-agency talent management operating model that seeks to identify, hire, and train the best qualified individuals for open positions within the agency.
  - o Develop separate management strategies to develop the leadership and service capacity of shorter- and longer-term employees within IA while securing program quality and service to Indian Country.
  - o Establish a process improvement workgroup dedicated to improving agency hiring outcomes and addressing organizational vacancies.
  - o Identify areas of improvement within the vacancy-to-hire process to address inefficiencies.
  - o Implement workforce planning and management tools designed to optimize staff efficiency and management. Ensure staff, including human resources staff, have appropriate training in the use of and access to these tools.
  - o Expand recruitment activities and processes to include greater collaboration with tribal and organizational partners, such as tribal colleges and universities, internship programs, and technical training institutions.
  - o Make more frequent and effective use of available human capital as a resource. Specifically, develop, employ, and train locally available staff and explore local staff support resources (e.g., paraprofessionals as a classroom resource for BIE-operated schools).

- **Provide professional development opportunities to staff** to improve IA's capacity to effectively serve tribal communities and to develop and improve its leadership internally, ultimately improving the operation and function of the agency as a whole.
  - o Establish IA as a learning organization and establish continuous professional development as an organizational imperative.
  - o Prioritize training, skill-building, and continuing education for agency staff and dedicate an appropriate portion of the budget to allow staff to pursue training opportunities.
  - o Create and implement a central IA talent development curriculum and establish partnerships with DOI University and other organizations to pursue options for physical and digital training capabilities
  - o Create a dedicated chief training officer position within the agency (specifically, within DAS-M) or appoint a staff person to serve in this role to manage and coordinate training and educational activities.
  - o In BIE-operated schools, include community members in the design and implementation of school professional development opportunities (e.g., homework training, technology, coping strategies, etc.).
  - o Establish a central training program and curriculum for IA leadership and integrate competencies and behaviors for supervisors and leaders in line with IA's values and cultural demands into the curriculum.

- **Regularly track and evaluate progress toward agency goals and objectives** to assess the IA's progress towards its goals and objectives, to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement, and to identify and adjust as necessary to meet any identified challenges or make better use of any identified assets
  - o Assign oversight of organization-wide communications and knowledge management to a chief information and knowledge management officer (or assign the responsibility to an existing position within the agency). This roll will oversee internal agency communications and support agency leadership in best practices for verbal and digital communications.
  - o Utilize standardized individual development plans and incorporate them into the performance management process. Formalize base-level competencies for IA and work with leadership to name operational competencies for distinct agencies and levels.
  - o Coordinate with the Office of Public Affairs, as necessary.
  - o Establish a Talent Management Operating Model to holistically monitor IA talent management.

- o Increase program evaluation using culturally appropriate methods, such as the Indigenous Evaluation Framework, particularly in BIE-operated schools.
- o In BIE-operated schools, set aside dedicated time for teacher collaboration to develop formative assessments and to build a deep understanding of the formative assessment process.
- o Utilize available data sources to improve agency and BIE-operated school performance, such as achievement data or competency evaluations, to guide decision-making among leadership.

- **Improve access to and the use of technology** that will allow IA to better collect and manage data necessary to track its progress toward its goals and objectives, allow staff an opportunity to make data-informed decisions, and improve work flow efficiency through more effective meetings and communication between IA staff and leadership.
    - o Engage the chief information and knowledge management officer to work with senior leaders and regional directors to support in-person meetings, where possible, and improve the use of video, webcast, and teleconference technology.
    - o Explore investment in an Enterprise Data Warehouse system to serve as a central repository of integrated data from existing source systems to inform management and improve service to Indian Country.
    - o Create the capability to track and manage documentation, such as leases, contracts, personnel hires, funding disbursements, and acquisitions.
    - o In BIE-operated schools, increase the number of core classes (e.g., language arts, reading, the arts, science and mathematics) required of middle and high school students, as well as the number and types of assistive learning technology (e.g., laptops, Promethean boards) to which schools have access.
    - o Identify and leverage new and existing tools and training to support managers and leadership in the use of data-driven management techniques to shift from rapid response to proactive risk management.

- **Decentralize agency services where possible and appropriate** to increased tribal autonomy, particularly among tribally operated schools, over resources and services. To demonstrate its support of tribal sovereignty, IA should decentralize services were possible and collaborate with tribal partners to encourage tribal ownership over and operation of resources and services.
    - o Enhance IA's capability to provide technical assistance and reduce technology down time through the strategic placement of resource centers that house the expertise needed to respond more quickly and efficiently to local needs.

- o Among BIE-operated schools, allow local school leadership greater autonomy over the type and use of resources (e.g., staff and funding) to improve student performance.
- o Allow BIE-operated schools to adapt curricula, school improvement plans, and school visioning plans that honor and incorporate local cultural values.
- o Also encourage BIE-operated schools to adopt processes that support increased teachers and student participation in decision-making activities regarding school policies and procedures.
- o Foster agency and BIE-operated school relationships with the local tribal community. Encourage outreach and open communication to help engender positive lateral relationships and community support for BIE-operated school and agency initiatives.

- **Implement policies and procedures specifically aimed at improving teacher and student performance across BIE-operated schools** by aligning state standards, curriculum, and classroom instruction and to increasing transparency and collaboration with the local community.
  - o Perform gap analysis between teaching resources and the Common Core standards.
  - o Identify, provide access to and training in the use of tightly aligned multimedia curriculum that represents best instructional practices.
  - o Encourage collaboration between teachers and across grades to align lessons to standards.
  - o Create opportunities for students to take an active role in the design of school policies and procedures, such as having a voice in establishing the school's disciplinary sanctions or participating in school board or other school or parent organization meetings.
  - o Change processes in schools to support teacher participation in the decision-making process.
  - o Regularly and purposefully engage with the local community and encourage its input on important school decisions.

- **Establish and make use of an effective Executive Advisory Council for BIE** comprised of diverse membership as the agency transitions into its new role as a resource and technical assistance provider to tribally operated schools.
  - o Clearly define the council's purpose and membership, including the intimate involvement of the BIE director and BIE staff to fine-tune these components as needed.
  - o Ensure diversity among council membersexperhip, beyond elected tribal officials. Include tribal education department leaders, members of the technological industry,

and members of groups with ties to wider issues in Indian education (such as the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, the National Indian Education Association, independent Indian education experts, the National Council of American Indians, and the Department of Education).

o   Adhere to the rules and requirements established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, including regulations regarding transparency, council objectives and activities, and council termination.

Through these sustained collaborative efforts, the challenges that IA, BIA, and BIE will confront can be successfully negotiated to provide the highest level of service to Indian communities while managing assets and realizing their full economic and educational potential.

Introduction and Background

Founded in 1824, Indian Affairs (IA) is the oldest bureau in the United States Department of the Interior. The IA currently provides services to approximately 1.9 million American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). IA provides a variety of services to Indian Country through the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). BIA provides administration and management for millions of acres of land and mineral estates held in trust by the U.S. government for AI/ANs. BIE provides education services and supports tribes in their provision of education to tens of thousands of Indian students. To continue doing this important work to the best of its ability, IA felt it was necessary to "develop a strategic workforce plan to maintain and improve its workforce and ensure that it has the right people with the right skills, doing the right jobs in the right place at the right time."[2] This concept led to the 2014 solicitation for a contractor to work with BIA and BIE to create a strategic workforce plan.[3]

Kauffman & Associates, Inc., (KAI) was chosen to develop a comprehensive strategic workforce plan for IA that would focus on the needs of AS-IA, BIA, and BIE and provide recommendations to help strengthen the IA workforce. KAI partnered with two subcontractors in this work: Accenture Federal Services (AFS) and Bowman Performance Consulting (BPC). AFS brings experience and a deep infrastructure to support the assessment of complex federal agencies and leadership training. BPC brings a deep-rooted expertise in conducting evaluation in Indian Country. The KAI team worked closely with IA to gather information and provide recommendations on how to support and improve their workforce functions.

Workforce Plan Objectives

The objectives for the strategic workforce plan laid out in the solicitation included:

- Review of the IA organizational structure;
- Evaluation of current leadership positions, roles, and effectiveness;
- Internal and external formal information communication processes and practices at all levels;
- BIE school achievement scores;
- BIE teacher training and development;
- Recommendations on how to improve leadership at all levels; and

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[2] Bureau of Indian Affairs Solicitation No. A15PS00426 – C2
[3] Bureau of Indian Affairs Solicitation No. A15PS00426

- A training program for leadership to support recommendations.

IA requested that the strategic workforce plan provide a comprehensive evaluation and subsequent recommendations to achieve the following objectives:

- Align IA's human capital program with its current and emerging mission and programmatic goals;
- Develop long-term strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining staff to achieve programmatic goals;
- Determine the critical skills and competencies needed to achieve current and future programmatic results;
- Develop strategies that are tailored to address gaps in the number, deployment, and alignment of human capital approaches for enabling and sustaining the contributions of all critical skills and competencies;
- Build the capability needed to address administrative, educational, and other requirements important to support workforce planning strategies; and
- Monitor and evaluate the agency's progress toward its human capital goals and the contribution that human capital results have made toward achieving programmatic results.

Overview of Task Activities

The KAI team approached the work through five main tasks:

- **Task 1** focused on completing a needs assessment of IA, BIA, and BIE; benchmarking the organizations; and conducting interviews with senior staff.
- **Task 2** relayed the findings from the Task 1 interviews and provided a series of recommendations for IA, BIA, and BIE around how to approach developing and supporting effective workforce strategies.
- The Task 2 report and subsequent review with IA, BIA, and BIE officials led to the **Task 3** activities of a leadership-level survey to triangulate the data collected to date; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis for the organizations; and a training program to support leadership.
- **Task 4** was a review of BIE schools' curriculum alignment with reading and math standards and the scope and sequence of instruction using existing assessment data, a survey with BIE school principals, and one-on-one interviews with a subset of BIE school principals at successful BIE schools, as determined by assessment data.
- The focus of **Task 5** was to create a model for a BIE Executive Advisory Council to provide support to the BIE director through suggestions for membership and makeup and to draft an Advisory Council charter.

More detailed descriptions of each of the tasks, including overviews of task findings, are provided below.

Task 1: Comprehensive Evaluation Plan

The KAI team was asked to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the IA workforce on multiple personnel levels. The evaluation was designed to determine where the organization was effective and where improvements might be needed.

Needs assessment

The initial phase of evaluation was to be conducted through a needs assessment, benchmarking process, and interviews with organizational leadership to identify areas of focus for Task 2. With that in mind, the KAI team conducted a literature review of reporting done on IA, BIA, and BIE to create a needs assessment that covered work already done and identified remaining challenges and complexities the organizations still faced. The documents reviewed included Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, commissioned Bronner report, and others.

The needs assessment pointed to the fact that IA, BIA, and BIE faced challenges in streamlining their administrative processes, thus creating hurdles around budgetary and human resource functions and creating a system where disconnected services, inconsistent policies, and critical delays were possible. The reports reviewed pointed out that the organizations needed to create plans and processes to envision and establish better administrative functions to meet the needs of Native communities around the country. It was also clear that the organizations were working toward addressing these issues

Benchmarking

The KAI team created a benchmarking document that took a two-pronged approach to benchmarking IA, BIA, and BIE through a review and comparison of their missions, visions, and values, and by using the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) to compare the organizations to other agencies. IA, BIA, and BIE are unique in their scope of work and the population with whom they work, so a range of other government agencies were chosen for comparison to capture some of the different kinds of services covered. IA, BIA, and BIE's scope of work is staggering in its breadth and depth. These organizations provide financial assistance, building and roads maintenance, natural resources management, and education and job training. While there are some government agencies that provide some of these services, none do so in the same trust relationships that IA, BIA, and BIE have with AI/ANs. With this in mind, the KAI team chose federal government agencies that provided some of the same services covered by IA, BIA, and BIE:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA),
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD),

- Department of State (State),
- Veterans Affairs (VA), and
- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) .[4]

The team reviewed each organization's mission, vision, and values as they serve as visible building blocks for an organization and are used to inspire employees and inform them of the purpose of their work. The research done through subsequent tasks for this contract proved that the mission played a critical role for most employees at IA, BIA, and BIE, as it was the central focus of their day-to-day work. With this in mind, the KAI ream recommends that IA, BIA, and BIE consider emphasizing their missions and making their visions and values statements more prominent on their homepages to make the information more readily accessible.

The second portion of the KAI team's analysis was to review the FEVS data from the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF) portion of the survey. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has noted that the HCAAF can help agencies create higher-performing organizations where employees are aware of their roles and are performing in line with the agency mission. In particular, the HCAAF is meant to capture how agencies are performing in the following areas:

- Leadership and Knowledge Management,
- Results-Oriented Performance Culture,
- Talent Management, and
- Job Satisfaction.

IA, BIA, and BIE scored lower than the averages across the benchmark organizations in all years of Leadership and Knowledge Management, Results-Oriented Performance, and Job Satisfaction. However, all three agencies saw rising results between 2014 and 2015 in the areas of Leadership and Knowledge Management, Results-Oriented Performance Culture, Talent Management, and Job Satisfaction, suggesting a potential trend toward improvement. (See Appendix A for the Needs assessment and Benchmarking Reports.)

Leadership interviews

The KAI team conducted semi-structured interviews with senior executive level staff to better understand how senior staff saw the current state of organizational affairs around the areas of

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[4] It is important to note that the KAI team did look at the Department of Defense's Education Activity organization as a potential benchmarking organization, but could not access the FEVS results at that level, and using the Department of Defense overall seemed too divergent from IA, BIA, and BIE's work.

leadership and accountability, reorganization activities, workforce and talent management, training and development practices, and culture and communications. The team interviewed senior executive service (SES) staff across AS-IA, BIA, and BIE, as well as the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management (DAS-M), a subgroup within AS-IA. The KAI team conducted 34 interviews in person when possible and over the phone when not. The KAI team analyzed the interviews for insight into how senior staff saw their agencies' strengths and weaknesses. The findings from the interviews were used to create an initial recommendations report to be shared with the IA, BIA, and BIE leadership. After a review of the recommendations, the findings were used to create a survey to further test the findings to triangulate the data. The summary of the interviews done with leadership resulted in the following themes:

- IA's Organizational Purpose,
- IA Leadership,
- IA Staff Training and Development,
- IA Talent Management,
- IA's Organizational Communications, and
- IA's Organizational Accountability.

The findings from the IA, BIA, and BIE leadership interviews were included in Task 2: Recommendations for Developing and Implementing an Effective Organization report.

Task 2: Recommendations for Developing and Implementing an Effective Organization Plan

Task 2 was a two-part process of reporting out the findings from the Task 1 SES interviews and providing recommendations based on analysis of the data collected. Both the findings and the recommendations are outlined below. (See Appendix B for the complete Recommendations and Interviews Summary Reports.)

Interview summary

The high-level results of the KAI team's findings from the SES interviews fell into six categories, as outlined below.

1. Organizational Purpose

General findings from the leadership interviews had to do with staff commitment to the mission and purpose of their organizations and a need to re-envision the focus of the purpose as the context in which the agencies function changes—for instance in the face of greater tribal self-determination.

2. Leadership

Around issues of leadership, interviewees reported a need for greater communication within and between agencies to ensure better service to tribes. This need is especially salient in light of the turnover in leadership positions, as senior leaders have retired, resulting in the loss of institutional memory. Greater communication can help ensure knowledge dissemination. This same issue of turnover was discussed in training and development where there was a sense that training and development are done very well at lower GS levels, but there is a need to better support staff as they rise through the ranks and take on more and more responsibilities.

3. Training and Development

Interviewees conveyed widespread interest in having training and skill development opportunities available to them in areas such as:

- Conflict resolution,
- Problem-solving and collaboration,
- Team management techniques,
- Effective communication (written, verbal, and individual feedback),
- Budget and financial management,
- Performance management,
- Legal training, and
- Cultural competency.

In areas where agencies had seen a shift from service provision to oversight, there was an interest in having training support for capacity-building in oversight and management. The KAI team's review of existing trainings yielded a number of resources available through the DOI University and other programs intended to help strengthen staff capabilities.

4. Talent Management

The KAI team defines *talent management* as consisting of talent acquisition, talent selection, and position forecasting and management. Talent management was a theme that often surfaced in interviews. Interviewees expressed that the needs of their departments are changing as their roles with tribes change from direct provision of services to supporting tribes in providing their own services. Supporting tribal self-governance requires a different set of skills than program implementation; and this is where agencies see a need for greater training. In addition to the shifting focus of some departments, other issues that agencies face are lengthy hiring processes and a need for better, targeted recruiting, particularly as this relates to Indian preference in hiring.

5. Communication

Communication was an oft-recurring theme in the leadership interviews. Communication was noted as a crucial component of serving stakeholders, and was noted as being important within agencies and across bureaus. There were examples of where communication was being done very well between bureaus, particularly within the central office, and examples of some departments' exemplary communication between the central and regional offices; but, there were also stories of how communication could be improved at all levels. Several promising practices might be replicable for a more robust communication strategy throughout IA, BIA, and BIE.

6. Accountability

The increased focus on self-determination for tribes meant that accountability was an increasingly complicated endeavor as the stakeholder roles shift. Accountability took the form of communication within and between departments and tribes, as well as with tracking systems. Senior staff reflected on the formal and informal mechanisms for accountability currently in place and expressed a need for regularized processes to maintain quality service provision, especially in light of the turnover many departments have experienced due to a glut of retirements.

Recommendations report

The following recommendations were generated by the analysis of the SES staff interviews on areas of success and areas in need of improvement. The interviews collected feedback on key areas, such as leadership and accountability, organizational structure and roles, workforce and talent management, and culture and communications. The findings from the interviews provided insight into current strengths and weaknesses of IA, BIA, and BIE. Drawing on the findings from SES interviews, as well as data collected from the FEVS[5], FedScope[6] through OPM, and DAS-M; the KAI team drafted a set of recommendations across four key areas:

- Organization Strategy,
- Organization Structure,
- Workforce and Talent Management, and
- Leadership and Accountability.

Though the findings are quite detailed, broad themes that emerged highlighted the need to clarify IA's organizational strategy, to raise the significance of talent management and workforce planning as a priority moving forward, and to increase the accountability of leadership. In addressing these

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[5] http://www.fedview.opm.gov/
[6] https://www.fedscope.opm.gov/

areas, IA can foster a more effective and efficient personnel and management system with the aim of improving their accountability to meeting their federal obligations. Suggested strategies to meet these goals include redefining IA as an organization committed to the continuous improvement of its service to Indian Country through providing its staff with opportunities for education and development. Combining this paradigm shift with an intensified focus on talent management and staff development will help IA, BIA, and BIE better navigate the changes the organizations face in shifting missions, staff turnover, and a looming administration change. Moreover, a focus on staffing and training, including cross-training positions, will create a stronger organization better suited to weather any additional changes the future may hold.

Task 3: Evaluation of Leadership Plan

Task 3 has three components comprising a survey of leadership at IA, BIA, and BIE; a SWOT analysis of the issues the organizations currently face; and the creation of a training program for agency leadership.

Leadership survey

The focus of the leadership survey was to gather information on staff perspectives of key areas, such as:

- Leadership and accountability,
- Organizational structure,
- Organizational strategy, and
- Workforce and talent management.

The KAI team used a 50-item survey to measure how leaders in IA, BIA, and BIE felt their agencies were performing in the aforementioned areas. There were 147 respondents with 59% from BIA and 41% from BIE; none of the respondents identified as working for AS-IA. The survey findings suggest that the agencies should focus on developing a strategic plan to work toward short- and long-term goals. Further, there is a need to make technology infrastructure stronger, including making better use of the management information system to support strategic planning, monitoring, and the implementation of initiatives. Respondents saw a need to streamline the hiring process to better target their recruitment efforts and ensure that good hires stay on with the agency, which can be fostered by creating opportunities for employees to continue to grow through professional development. Further, the survey findings highlight the importance of accountability and the importance of linking accountability to departmental and individual performance and consequences. (See Appendix C for the entire leadership survey findings report.)

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of IA, BIA, and BIE based upon the environmental analysis that was conducted using the interviews, surveys, needs assessment, and benchmarking exercises completed by the KAI team. As a result, the SWOT analysis provides a high-level overview of recommendations for IA's overall organizational effectiveness. (See Appendices D and E for the entire analysis report and presentation materials.)

The analysis is organized into the following sections:

- Organizational Strategy,
- Organizational Effectiveness,
- Talent and Workforce Management, and
- Leadership and Accountability.

The results of the SWOT analysis for each of the four themes are outlined below.

Organizational Strategy

Strengths
- Agency culture of passion with regard to serving Indian Country
- IA's leadership and legacy
- BIE's precedent for strategic planning and direction-setting

Weaknesses
- Need for a holistic mission
- Need for the organization to understand leadership's direction
- Need for collaboration and understanding across bureaus and regions
- Need to further the agency's workforce through training

Opportunities
- Alignment of AS-IA, DAS-M, BIA, and BIE's missions
- Inclusion of the self-determination focus in the organizational strategy
- Strategic planning cadence and coherence across bureaus and regions
- A potential to serve as a learning organization for Indian talent

Threats
- Loss of momentum following changes in government and/or agency administration
- Indian Country's level of dissatisfaction with service and quality
- Capacity and responsiveness to provide technical assistance to tribes and tribal schools
- Ability to adapt to new roles with increased tribal communities' self-determination

Organizational Effectiveness Findings

Strengths
- Strong ethic and understanding of trust and stewardship of trust assets and tribal resources
- BIE reorganization with an emphasis on refining operations to better support tribes

Weaknesses
- Workflow and workforce disruptions from sequestration and reorganizations
- High leadership turnover
- Persistent state of being reactive, rather than proactive
- Organizational dissemination of information

Opportunities
- Engagement of emerging leaders in workgroups to innovate solutions to issues throughout IA
- Encouragement of operational communication and lateral relationships among regions, middle management, and DAS-M oversight
- Leveraging of data and management tools to improve workflow, tracking, knowledge management, and performance

Threats
- Dissatisfaction within Indian Country with IA's communication and coordination
- IA's urgency to demonstrate operational and performance improvement to GAO, Congress, and Indian Country
- Effective allocation of program funds and human resources for upcoming budget cycles

Talent and Workforce Management Findings

Strengths
- Cultural competency and cultural understanding
- Indian Preference policy and ability to fill staff roles appropriately

Weaknesses
- Vacancies and process delays in candidate selection
- Need for leadership pipeline and succession planning
- Need for greater staff skill-building over time
- Retention of workforce and Indian talent

Opportunities
- Broadening of workforce accountability through a Talent Management Operating Model

- Deployment of workforce planning tools from IA Human Resources and OPM
- Expansion of recruiting to engage regional offices and tribal institutions
- Deployment of IA and DOI training resources with DAS-M oversight to develop talent

Threats

- Effect of chronic workforce vacancies on services provided
- Effect of workforce vacancies on performance evaluations conducted by GAO and Congress
- Aging and retention of workforce
- Development of Indian talent and capacity
- Sustainability of funding toward full-time positions

Leadership and Accountability Findings

Strengths

- IA leadership as advocates for Indian Country
- IA's mission-driven culture and drive for tribal self-determination

Weaknesses

- Leadership's state of rapid response
- Need for transparency and direction within teams and across the organization
- Need for leadership pipeline
- High leadership turnover

Opportunities

- Codification of leadership development and mentoring program under DAS-M-based training officer
- Sponsorship of interdisciplinary innovation workgroups to identify and engage emerging talent in IA problem-solving
- Institution of strategic planning process and expectations across IA
- Articulation of IA organizational values for talent management and leadership development

Threats

- The potential loss of momentum from changes in federal and agency administration
- Effective management of relationships with tribal leadership
- Retention of Indian talent and potential leaders
- Knowledge loss and gaps in service quality due to leadership turnover

Training program for leadership

The KAI team identified gaps in the IA leadership development trainings and developed a Leadership Training Curriculum to address the gaps through four training sessions on different

aspects of leadership development. The Leadership Training Curriculum and Manual focus on how to develop high-performing leaders. Based on research completed as part of the work for Tasks 1 and 2, the KAI team developed a Leadership Framework for IA.

The Framework consists of four areas:

- **Purpose:** Mission and strategic alignment of leadership,
- **People:** Team management and talent development,
- **Partnership:** Internal and external relationship-building and collaboration for strategic impact, and
- **Performance:** Organizational service and impact improvement.

The training curriculum follows these same four focused units with modules, workshops, playbooks, and other activities, along with suggested opportunities for leadership development trainings already available internally through IA and DOI. The training curriculum is intended to be managed by a chief training officer, a position the KAI team recommended be put in place as part of the Task 2 Recommendations report. The chief training officer would use the Leadership Training Curriculum created by the KAI team in conjunction with trainings offered by OPM and DOI to create an overall leadership training program. (See Appendix F for the entire training curriculum.)

Task 4: Academic Recommendations

The KAI team reviewed and evaluated the curriculum alignment, scope, and sequence of instruction at BIE-run schools and provided recommendations on how BIE might build upon and improve their practices. To do this work, the team drew on several methods, from analyzing assessment data to conducting a survey and one-on-one interviews with BIE principals. Using an asset-based approach, the team produced a series of recommendations to strengthen BIE's practices for better educational outcomes for their students. The team used assessment data from the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments and BIE's Annual School Report Cards to identify BIE schools with the most academic growth in reading and math over the last 1 to 2 years. This data, paired with the BIE school principal survey data, allowed the team to identify characteristics of leadership and strategies used by the schools that demonstrated the largest student achievement gains and then delve more deeply into learning more about best practices through the principal interviews to generate a series of recommendations. (See Appendix G for the entire Academic Recommendations report.)

The team used the following four overarching research questions to guide the evaluation and analysis of data:

1. In the highest performing BIE schools, what does data reveal about scope and sequence of instruction, standards alignment, and culturally relevant practice?

2. What factors explain the highest student achievement and correlation to instructional leadership approaches, including educational support strategies leaders use broadly within their schools and with teaching staff specifically?
3. What other organizational traits and supports of BIE schools are most present that influence curriculum, fidelity, and instructional leadership?
4. What are the strongest systemic supports of student achievement at BIE schools?

BIE school principal survey

The team created a 59-item BIE school principal survey aimed to measure principal engagement in leadership activities traditionally linked to student achievement. Using the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, the Association of Washington State Principals Principal Evaluation Framework, and the Learn-Ed Nations (LEN) Inventory, the team found 10 dimensions that provided a detailed inventory of factors and characteristics related to principal leadership and other aspects of the school's organization and operation.

Principal interviews

To supplement the findings from the surveys, the team used a case study approach with five school principals from high performing BIE schools. The aim of the interviews was to identify best practices in areas known to contribute to student achievement gains, such as community relations, leadership, communication, and teacher support. The principal interviews consisted of 23 questions guided by the LEN Inventory and were categorized by the four overarching research questions set forth by the team.

Academic recommendations report

The results of the analysis of assessment, survey, and interview data points to various framework components that contribute to successful staff and student performance. The MAP assessment data indicates that student performance improvements in math and reading are correlated with the following:

- The incorporation of tribal culture into educational improvement efforts, school policies, practices, and curricula;
- Regular collaboration and interaction between the school and the community; and
- A continuous effort focused on school improvement.

Other areas to consider with developing and implementing efforts to improve leadership and educational alignment were regular collaboration between educational stakeholders and community members, using data to inform decisions, supporting staff improvement, creating an empowering school environment, and having strong school autonomy. Recommendations for leadership and improving student performance were to:

- Increase opportunities for community engagement with schools,
- Increase principals' skills and capacities to serve as effective instructional leaders and administrators,
- Strive to incorporate local tribal culture into various aspects of the school environment,
- Foster a supportive teacher learning environment,
- Support and empower students,
- Develop and work towards a shared and measurable vision for school improvement, and
- Use evaluation and assessment resources to monitor performance and engage in data-driven decision-making.

Task 5: BIE Executive Advisory Council

Advisory council report

As part of the work to create a strategic workforce plan, the KAI team developed a plan to establish an Executive Advisory Council to advise the BIE director. The advisory council's purpose is to "improve the quality of the educational programs under BIE's jurisdiction."[7] The advisory council is structured to support the BIE director in BIE's mission to provide American Indian communities with quality education opportunities lasting from early childhood through life that account for tribal-specific needs for cultural and economic well-being. BIE's mission further dictates a holistic approach that considers people's spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural needs. The KAI team took several factors into account in designing the shape of the BIE Executive Advisory Council, such as the shifting role of the BIE given the recent Blueprint for Reform and the wide diversity of AI/AN tribes and cultures. Using the Federal Advisory Committee Act regulations as a guide, the KAI team ultimately settled on creating an advisory council composed of tribal leaders, federal employees, and others to represent a broader group of stakeholders. (See Appendix H for the complete Advisory Council report.)

With these considerations in mind, the KAI team recommends that the BIE Advisory Council members should come from:

- Tribal education departments representative across regions;
- Tribal leaders who currently operate or are seeking to operate their own schools;
- Representatives of the technological industry;

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[7] BIA Solicitation No. A15PS00426 – C7

- Members of groups with ties to wider issues in AI/AN education, such as the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, the Office of Indian Education, and the National Indian Education Association;
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Native Youth Educational Services to address issues of mental health; and
- Independent Indian education scholars, experts, and members of tribal colleges and universities.

An Executive Advisory Council composed of representatives from the aforementioned groups would serve to meet BIE's needs as it shifts from being an organization that operates schools to one that has the role of primarily supporting and providing technical assistance to tribally controlled schools.

Recommendations for Strategic Workforce Development

As noted earlier in this report, the proposed strategic workforce plan for IA provides comprehensive guidance to assist the agency in achieving an agency-defined set of objectives. Specifically, these objectives seek to:

- Align IA's human capital program with its current and emerging mission and programmatic goals;
- Develop long-term strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining staff to achieve programmatic goals;
- Determine the critical skills and competencies needed to achieve current and future programmatic results;
- Develop strategies tailored to address gaps in the number, deployment, and alignment of human capital approaches for enabling and sustaining the contributions of all critical skills and competencies;
- Build the capability needed to address administrative, educational, and other requirements important to support workforce planning strategies; and
- Monitor and evaluate the agency's progress toward its human capital goals and the contribution that human capital results have made toward achieving programmatic results.

Following conclusion of the various surveys, assessments, and analyses, the KAI team has created a detailed set of recommendations for actions to take to help IA meet these objectives. These recommendations include:

- **Establish IA as a learning organization operating under a holistic mission and values.** Shift to an internal focus of the agency to include a function as a learning organization dedicated to the continual education, development, and capacity-building of its employees. To accomplish this shift, the agency must redefine its vision to reflect a unified, holistic mission with a set of core organizational values. This shift will further work to improve IA's ability to serve Indian Country; share best practices; and prioritize more active sharing of knowledge, technical assistance, and best practices.

- **Improve cross-collaboration and lateral relationship-building between teams and across agencies.** Expanding and focusing on positive cross-collaborative interactions and building lateral relationships with other agencies will improve IA's organizational and operational effectiveness. Improved cross-collaboration and lateral relationships will allow for a more comprehensive and, ultimately, more effective approach to addressing issues and challenges, and will contribute to a more substantive stakeholder and resource network accessible to IA as a whole.

- **Update and improve the efficiency of the talent acquisition and management process.** Improvements to talent acquisition and staff management will allow IA to meet labor and workforce needs, particularly in the face of staff turnover and transitions. More efficient processes in this area will allow IA to identify, hire, and manage staff in a timely manner, preventing lags in service provision and helping ensure the agency's ability to provide continuous, quality service to Indian Country.

- **Provide professional development opportunities to staff.** Following more efficient staff hiring and management, it is essential that IA continue to invest in staff development to improve its capacity to effectively serve tribal communities. Closely tied to establishing IA as a learning organization, these development opportunities also allow IA to develop and improve its leadership internally, ultimately improving the operation and function of the agency as a whole.

- **Regularly track and evaluate progress toward agency goals and objectives.** Improved performance requires regular evaluation for sustained success. IA must implement internal review and evaluation processes to assess the agency's progress towards its goals and objectives, to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement, and to identify and adjust as necessary to meet any identified challenges or make better use of any identified assets.

- **Improve access to and the use of technology.** Improved technology will allow IA to better collect and manage data necessary to track its progress toward its goals and objectives. These technology considerations will also allow staff, after they have been provided with the necessary access and training, an opportunity to utilize data to inform and evaluate their actions or those of their teams. Improved access to technology can also contribute to more

efficient work flows throughout the agency, particularly in terms of more effective meetings and communication between IA staff and leadership.

- **Decentralize services where possible and appropriate, specifically giving greater control to BIE-operated schools.** In its work throughout Indian Country, IA will find that its role within tribal communities may shift from resource and service provision to resource and service support. That is to say, IA's effectiveness should lead to increased tribal autonomy, particularly over resources and services. Granting BIE-operated schools greater control over funds and budgets is a notable example of this concept. To demonstrate its support of tribal sovereignty, IA should seek to decentralize services were possible, and work with tribes to take increasing ownership over and operation of resources and services.

- **Implement policies and procedures specifically aimed at improving teacher and student performance across BIE-operated schools.** Specific efforts must focus on the continued improvement the performance of teachers and students in BIE-operated schools. IA/BIE must work to align state standards, curriculum, and classroom instruction. Efforts must also see to increase transparency in school policies and the decision-making process, and promote increased collaboration with the local community.

- **Establish and make use of an effective Executive Advisory Council for BIE.** Finally, IA should establish an Executive Advisory Council for BIE as the agency transitions from its role of tribal school operator to that of a resource and technical assistance provider to tribally operated schools. Making a conscious effort to establish a diverse board supported by subject matter experts, advocates, tribes, and government agencies will help ensure that the council reflects the full range of needs, stakeholders, and interests and that it maintains a level of efficiency and effectiveness necessary to have a measureable, positive impact on tribal schools nationwide.

Steps for Implementation

Specific steps to achieve the recommendations for developing the IA workforce draw collectively from the findings uncovered by the many analyses and assessments conducted as part of this study.

Recommendation: Establish IA as a learning operating under a holistic mission with holistic values

- Create a holistic mission for IA behind which all of its subagencies align. A single, holistic mission will allow leadership throughout the agency to speak clearly and consistently about the IA's mission, vision, and purpose.
- Connect individual subagency and regional office purpose statements to IA's mission to clarify roles and responsibilities while uniting staff under a single IA banner.
- Actively encourage and engage in the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and technical assistance with colleagues, direct reports, and tribal partners.

- In BIE-operated schools, establish minimum time requirements for principals to serve as educational leaders in the classroom supporting teachers' efforts.
- Establish holistic values for IA that reflect the agency's role as an advocate for self-determination and tribal sovereignty. Formally codify these values into IA's mission and vision.

Recommendation: Improve cross-collaboration and lateral relationship-building

- Establish diverse, cross-functional innovation workgroups that engage emerging leaders from across IA to identify and address key organizational challenges.
- Use workgroups to identify talent and high performers for leadership roles and opportunities at IA.
- Utilize agency and subagency leaders to drive teams to build lateral ties, expand internal networks, and foster cross-organizational relationship-building.
- Continually develop relationships with networks and other organizations to improve communication and service to Indian Country.
- In BIE-operated schools, encourage school administrators to engage with the community via regular school organizational and parent support meetings.
- Actively reach out to staff from other offices, agencies, and tribal partners to discuss improvements and address organizational challenges.

Recommendation: Update the talent acquisition and management process between teams and across agencies

- Form a collaborative partnership with human resources to develop a cross-agency talent management operating model that seeks to identify, hire, and train the best qualified individuals for open positions within the agency.
- Develop separate management strategies to develop the leadership and service capacity of shorter- and longer-term employees within IA while securing program quality and service to Indian Country.
- Establish a process improvement workgroup dedicated to improving agency hiring outcomes and addressing organizational vacancies.
- Identify areas of improvement within the vacancy-to-hire process to address inefficiencies.
- Implement workforce planning and management tools designed to optimize staff efficiency and management. Ensure staff, including human resources staff, have appropriate training in the use of and access to these tools.
- Expand recruitment activities and processes to include greater collaboration with tribal and organizational partners, such as tribal colleges and universities, internship programs, and technical training institutions.

- Make more frequent and effective use of available human capital as a resource. Specifically, develop, employ, and train locally available staff and explore local staff support resources (e.g., paraprofessionals as a tribal school classroom resource).

Recommendation: Provide professional development opportunities to staff

- Establish IA as a learning organization and establish continuous professional development as an organizational imperative.
- Prioritize training, skill-building, and continuing education for agency staff and dedicate an appropriate portion of the budget to allow staff to pursue training opportunities.
- Create and implement a central IA talent development curriculum and establish partnerships with DOI University and other organizations to pursue options for physical and digital training capabilities
- Create a dedicated chief training officer position within the agency (specifically, within DAS-M) or appoint a staff person to serve in this role to manage and coordinate training and educational activities.
- In BIE-operated schools, include community members in the design and implementation of school professional development opportunities (e.g., homework training, technology, coping strategies, etc.).
- Establish a central training program and curriculum for IA leadership and integrate competencies and behaviors for supervisors and leaders in line with IA's values and cultural demands into the curriculum.

Recommendation: Regularly track and evaluate progress toward agency goals and objectives

- Assign oversight of organization-wide communications and knowledge management to a chief information and knowledge management officer (or assign the responsibility to an existing position within the agency). This roll will oversee internal agency communications and support agency leadership in best practices for verbal and digital communications.
- Utilize standardized individual development plans and incorporate them into the performance management process. Formalize base-level competencies for IA and work with leadership to name operational competencies for distinct agencies and levels.
- Coordinate with the Office of Public Affairs, as necessary.
- Establish a Talent Management Operating Model to holistically monitor IA talent management.
- Increase program evaluation using culturally appropriate methods, such as the Indigenous Evaluation Framework, particularly in tribal schools.

- In BIE-operated schools, set aside dedicated time for teacher collaboration to develop formative assessments and to build a deep understanding of the formative assessment process.
- Utilize available data sources to improve agency and BIE-operated school performance, such as achievement data or competency evaluations, to guide decision-making among leadership.

Recommendation: Improve access to and the use of technology

- Engage the chief information and knowledge management officer to work with senior leaders and regional directors to support in-person meetings, where possible, and improve the use of video, webcast, and teleconference technology.
- Explore investment in an Enterprise Data Warehouse system to serve as a central repository of integrated data from existing source systems to inform management and improve service to Indian Country.
- Create the capability to track and manage documentation, such as leases, contracts, personnel hires, funding disbursements, and acquisitions.
- In BIE-operated schools, increase the number of core classes (e.g., language arts, reading, the arts, science and mathematics) required of middle and high school students, as well as the number and types of assistive learning technology (e.g., laptops, Promethean boards) to which schools have access.
- Identify and leverage new and existing tools and training to support managers and leadership in the use of data-driven management techniques to shift from rapid response to proactive risk management.

Recommendation: Decentralize agency services where possible and appropriate, specifically giving greater control to tribal schools

- Enhance IA's capability to provide technical assistance and reduce technology down time through the strategic placement of resource centers that house the expertise needed to respond more quickly and efficiently to local needs.
- Among BIE-operated schools, allow local school leadership greater autonomy over the type and use of resources (e.g., staff and funding) to improve student performance.
- Allow BIE-operated schools to adapt curricula, school improvement plans, and school visioning plans that honor and incorporate local cultural values.
- Also encourage BIE-operated schools to adopt processes that support increased teachers and student participation in decision-making activities regarding school policies and procedures.

- Foster agency and BIE-operated school relationships with the local tribal community. Encourage outreach and open communication to help engender positive lateral relationships and community support for BIE-operated school and agency initiatives.

Recommendation: Implement policies and procedures specifically aimed at improving teacher and student performance across BIE-operated schools

- Perform gap analysis between teaching resources and the Common Core standards.
- Identify, provide access to and training in the use of tightly aligned multimedia curriculum that represents best instructional practices.
- Encourage collaboration between teachers and across grades to align lessons to standards.
- Create opportunities for students to take an active role in the design of school policies and procedures, such as having a voice in establishing the school's disciplinary sanctions or participating in school board or other school or parent organization meetings.
- Change processes in schools to support teacher participation in the decision-making process.
- Regularly and purposefully engage with the local community and encourage its input on important school decisions.

Recommendation: Establish and make use of an effective Executive Advisory Council for BIE

- Clearly define the council's purpose and membership, including the intimate involvement of the BIE director and BIE staff to fine-tune these components as needed.
- Ensure diversity among council membership, beyond elected tribal officials. Include tribal education department leaders, members of the technological industry, and members of groups with ties to wider issues in Indian education (such as the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education, the National Indian Education Association, independent Indian education experts, the National Council of American Indians, and the Department of Education).
- Adhere to the rules and requirements established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, including regulations regarding transparency, council objectives and activities, and council termination.

Conclusion

In working towards its goal to provide quality, effective services to more than 1.9 million AI/ANs, IA has taken on a considerable challenge: improvement from within. This effort has required the agency to take a close and comprehensive look at its workforce, mission, and internal processes to highlight areas of strength and areas in need of improvement across IA and its subagencies. This

assessment has led to the creation of a set of comprehensive reports and recommendations designed to help the agency restructure its workforce and reset the path on which it will pursue continued improvement in organizational effectiveness and efficiency. By reviewing the content and findings from the reports and analyses contained in this Strategic Plan, giving the recommendations contained within due consideration, and by making a concerted effort to implement the suggested steps for action, IA—and as a result, BIA and BIE—can improve the quality of its efforts and services on behalf of the tribal communities they serve; thereby, having more positive relationships with and greater positive impacts in Indian Country.

Appendices

Appendix A. Task 1: Comprehensive Evaluation of Indian Affairs

- *Needs Assessment Report*
- *Benchmarking Report*

Appendix B. Task 2: Recommendations for Developing and Implementing an Effective Organization

- *Leadership Interviews Summary*
- *Recommendations for Developing and Implementing an Effective Organization Report*

Appendix C. Task 3a: Indian Affairs Leadership Survey Findings

Appendix D. Task 3a: SWOT Analysis of Indian Affairs

Appendix E. Task 3a: SWOT Workshop Presentation and Facilitator's Guide

Appendix F. Task 3b: Training Program Materials for Leadership

- *Leadership Training Needs and Curriculum*
- *Training Materials*

Appendix G. Task 4: Academic Recommendations Plan

Appendix H. Task 5: Bureau of Indian Education Advisory Council Plan