

National Fund Hosts Historic First National Convening of BIE School Principals in Dallas

Three-day Dallas convening brought BIE principals nationwide to focus on leadership, literacy, and Native language revitalization.

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education](#) hosted the first-ever national gathering of Bureau of Indian Education school principals in Dallas — a landmark moment for Native school leadership. For the first time in its history, the BIE brought together school principals from across the nation, representing both Bureau Operated and Tribally Controlled Schools, for a three-day convening and training focused on leadership, literacy, and Native language revitalization.



NATIONAL FUND **THE FOUNDATION *for* THE BUREAU** **OF INDIAN EDUCATION**

The National Fund is the Congressionally Chartered Foundation for the Bureau of Indian Education

The event, "Leading with Purpose: From Strategic Direction to School Impact," was hosted by the National Fund and included a first-of-its-kind professional development experience for BIE principals that blended leadership theory with immersive, practice-based learning. The National Fund is the Congressionally chartered 501(c)(3) foundation supporting the BIE's 183+ schools serving approximately 40,000 Native students across 64 reservations in 23 states.

“

When we invest in BIE principals, we invest in every student in those 183 schools. These leaders came together as a community for the first time. That is historic.”

*Heath Clayton (Chickasaw),
Lead Executive Officer of the
National Fund*

Elements of the program were also held at Texas Native Health, one of the country's most innovative Indian Health Service Urban Health programs. It created a backdrop of community-centered, culturally grounded care and reinforced the connection between student well-being and

school success.

“This convening is exactly what the National Fund was created to make possible,” said Heath Clayton (Chickasaw), Lead Executive Officer of the National Fund. “When we invest in BIE principals — in their leadership, their connections to each other, and their grounding in the science of reading and Native language revitalization — we are investing in every student who walks through the doors of those 183 schools. These leaders came together as a community for the first time. That is historic.”

“Strong school leadership is at the heart of our mission,” said Tony Dearman (Cherokee), Director of the Bureau of Indian Education. “This convening gave our principals something they have never had before: dedicated time and space to learn together, connect with peers, and align around a shared vision for our students. I am grateful to work alongside our partners to invest in the people who lead our schools every day.”

BIE school leaders were joined by senior federal officials spanning three Cabinet departments, national Native education advocates, philanthropic partners, corporate supporters, and community partners — all aligned around a shared belief that school principals are vitally important for providing Native students with schools that honor their language, culture, and identity while helping them succeed.

The convening was a direct investment in those leaders, providing space for reflection, peer connection, and professional development across three focused areas: Native language and K–4 literacy instruction; alignment with the BIE Strategic Direction; and adaptive leadership.

A 2021 Wallace Foundation report found that “it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.”

That conviction drives the National Fund’s commitment to principal development as a cornerstone of its strategy for BIE schools — one that builds on its recently launched and expanding principal coaching program with New Leaders, a national nonprofit that prepares and supports transformational educators who drive student success.

About the National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education

The National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education is a Congressionally chartered foundation dedicated to strengthening Bureau of Indian Education schools through innovation, tribal leadership, and strategic partnerships. Working alongside tribal nations, educators, and federal partners, the National Fund advances high-impact initiatives in language revitalization, literacy, school leadership, food sovereignty, and student success.

Ashley Eden

National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/923981586>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.