

**Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) School Replacement Program<sup>1</sup>**  
**Public Meeting for Final School Replacement Candidates**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Question: What happens if a school is selected to be on the final approved priority list? What are next steps?**

**Answer:** The FY 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Act provided \$8 million for planning and design for schools on new priority list. The BIE will award a contract to work with selected schools on planning and design for construction. The number of schools receiving planning and design funding in FY 2016 will be based on the final approved priority list.

**Question: When will selected schools on the final approved priority list receive funding for construction?**

**Answer:** The Department of the Interior will begin requesting funding in fiscal year 2017 for the replacement of schools on the final approved priority list. As Congress appropriates funding for these schools, those schools that are the most “shovel ready” will be prioritized for construction. The final approved priority list will remain valid until all schools on the list are funded for replacement, which may take several years.

**Question: What does it mean if a school did not receive an invitation to the public meeting? What can that school do to receive funding for school construction projects?**

**Answer:** If a school was not invited to the public meeting, the school did not receive sufficient points to be rated among the top ten candidates for replacement as determined by the criteria established by The No Child Left Behind Act School Facilities and Construction Negotiated Rulemaking Committee. Schools not invited to the public meeting remain eligible to receive deferred maintenance funding. In order to be eligible school replacement funding, a school would have to reapply during the next cycle of applications. Schools will be notified if they are eligible to apply for replacement when the process to develop the next replacement cycle begins.

**Question: What criteria did the National Review Committee (NRC) use to prioritize the schools selected to present at the public meeting?**

**Answer:** The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) School Facilities and Construction Negotiated Rulemaking Committee determined the school selection process. The NRC developed the

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<sup>1</sup> The Department’s School Replacement Program focuses on construction projects that replace a majority of the facilities on a school campus, or in the event that the existing site could not be used, the entire campus. **This is unrelated to the Department’s Replacement Facility Program which focuses on construction projects that replace a single facility on a school campus.**

process and formula for prioritizing schools for replacement with stakeholder input, including from tribes with BIE school facilities.

Eligibility for the initial list for the School Replacement Program was determined by meeting one or both of the following factors: BIE school facilities that have an overall Facility Condition Index (FCI) of “poor,” and/or are both 50 years or older and educating 75 percent or more of the students in portables. Based on these criteria, 78 BIE-funded schools met one or more of these criteria. Schools meeting these eligibility requirements were invited to submit an application to be reviewed and scored by the NRC with representatives from each of the BIE Regions with eligible schools. Of the 78 eligible schools, 53 submitted an application.

The top ten schools will make a presentation in a public forum to the NRC panel to discuss their needs and ability to execute their school replacement project. The NRC panel asks follow-up questions. The NRC will make a recommendation to the Acting Assistant Secretary -- Indian Affairs of the top priority schools for approval.

You can learn more about the process the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee established [here](http://www.cbuilding.org/sites/default/files/NRC_BIA_Schools_Const_Rpt_0.pdf) ([http://www.cbuilding.org/sites/default/files/NRC\\_BIA\\_Schools\\_Const\\_Rpt\\_0.pdf](http://www.cbuilding.org/sites/default/files/NRC_BIA_Schools_Const_Rpt_0.pdf)).

**Question: Were all eligible schools considered for the school replacement selection process?**

**Answer:** Yes. All eligible schools that submitted an application were considered for replacement. Of the 78 eligible schools, 53 schools submitted an application.

**Question: A school applied to replace a single school facility; why was it not considered?**

**Answer:** The Department’s School Replacement Program focuses on construction projects that replace a majority of the facilities on a school campus or, in the event that the existing site could not be used, the entire campus. This announcement is unrelated to the Department’s Replacement Facility Program which focuses on construction projects that replace a single facility on a school campus.

**Question: Will there be a separate application process for the Replacement Facility Program?**

**Answer:** The FY 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Act provides \$11.9 million for replacement facility construction. Congress directed the Department to develop a comprehensive plan and to work with tribes to repair and replace all substandard educational facilities, especially facilities being used for purposes other than those for which they were built. Information about facility replacement will be made available separately.

**Question: Why are there so many schools from the Navajo Region invited to the public meeting?**

**Answer:** The Navajo Region has the most number of BIE-funded schools, with 65 schools in the region. These schools are among BIE's worst condition schools, i.e., have the highest Facility Condition Index. Of the 78 eligible schools, 33 (42 percent) are Navajo schools. Of the 53 schools that applied for replacement, 25 (47 percent) are Navajo schools. Of the schools that made the top ten list, seven are Navajo schools. The other three schools on the top ten list are located in the Southwest, Western, and Northwest Regions.

**Question: What is the approximate timeline to replace all BIE-funded schools currently in "poor" condition?**

**Answer:** At the requested FY 2016 level of funding per year for school construction, it would take more than 23 years to bring all of the schools in "poor" condition into fair or good condition.

The FY 2016 budget represents a \$64 million increase over FY 2015 funding for school construction. The FY 2015 budget represented a \$20 million dollar increase over FY 2014 for school construction. Recent action by Congress allows the Department to complete construction of the remaining schools from the 2004 list and begin the planning and design of several other schools. It is the Department's goal to move all BIE school facilities into good condition.

**Question:** Will the NCLB School Facilities and Construction Negotiated Rulemaking Committee new formula and process be reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement?

**Answer:** Yes. Once the process has been completed, the Department will assess the process and implementation of the school construction replacement program. This assessment will be critical as we continue to maximize resources to improve BIE-funded school facilities.

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