



# Midwestern Legislative Conference

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

## 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments

July 21 – 24, 2019

### Resolution on Federal Support and Oversight of U.S. Bureau of Indian Education Schools

- WHEREAS,** the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) oversees 183 elementary, secondary and boarding schools across 64 reservations and 23 U.S. states, including 44 such schools in the 11 states of the Midwestern Legislative Conference — one each in Iowa and Kansas, two in Michigan, four in Minnesota, 12 in North Dakota, 21 in South Dakota and three in Wisconsin; and
- WHEREAS,** in February 2017, the U.S. Government Accountability Office designated the BIE as a “high-risk agency” in need of attention by the U.S. Congress and executive branch; and
- WHEREAS,** the GAO noted in its 2017 study that aging BIE school facilities create unsafe conditions for students and staff and that a lack of internal controls hinders oversight of schools’ use of U.S. Department of Interior funds; and
- WHEREAS,** a 2019 follow-up report from the GAO found that some progress has been made in BIE oversight and administration, but that “significant work” remains; and
- WHEREAS,** high rates of poverty and geographic isolation cause significant challenges for students, parents, staff and administrators in many BIE schools; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** that the Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC) urges adequate federal funding to correct the problem of aging and deteriorating BIE school facilities as well as persistent challenges related to academic achievement and staffing, including teacher shortages; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the MLC urges the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education to improve the management, oversight and performance of its schools; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the MLC supports recent reform efforts of the BIE, including its release in 2018 of a first-ever strategic plan (one of the recommendations of the GAO study) to increase services for students by better organizing management activities, setting priorities, and ensuring efficient and effective utilization of staff and resources; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that this resolution be submitted to appropriate federal lawmakers and officials.

*Adopted this 24<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2019 at the 74<sup>th</sup> MLC Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois*