

**Question 22:** What does the federal trust responsibility to Tribes mean to you?

Federal trust responsibility is the moral and legal obligation of the federal government to respect the provisions of treaties with tribal nations, respect tribal sovereignty, and carry out its responsibilities to the tribes.

22a. What role do you believe the Department of Education plays in fulfilling the federal trust Responsibility?

The federal government has an obligation to provide appropriate educational facilities to recognized tribes. While the vast majority of this work is carried out by the Bureau of Indian Education at the Department of the Interior, the Department of Education does maintain grant programs that support tribal education.

22b. How will you ensure that the Department of Education's budget requests, funding allocations, staffing levels, and implementation of policies will uphold and advance the federal trust responsibility to Tribes?

The vast majority of tribal education needs are handled by the Bureau of Indian Education at the Department of the Interior. The Department of Education will continue to maintain grant programs that support tribal education and will continually look to identify ways to deliver this support more efficiently and effectively.

22c. What steps will you take to ensure that government-to-government consultation between the Department of Education and Tribes is a meaningful and enforceable process rather than a box checking formality?

If confirmed, I look forward to visiting tribal reservations and meeting personally with leadership to learn how we can work together.

22d. Describe how you will monitor states' implementation of the tribal consultation requirements under ESSA.

If confirmed, I look forward to visiting tribal reservations and meeting personally with leadership to learn how we can work together. I will also review federal funding provided to the state to ensure that its recipients are working closely with tribal representatives to provide high-quality education opportunities for all students, including Native students.

**Question 23:** Congress has worked to support Native educational programs for decades, including through passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act, the Johnson-O'Malley Act, Public Law 81-874, the Indian Education Act, the Tribally Controlled College and University Assistance Act, the Native Americans Languages Acts of 1990 and 1992, and the Native American Language Resource Center Act. These each established vital programs in the Department of Education, in efforts to better uphold the federal

trust responsibility to Tribes. How would terminating the Department of Education ensure the federal government meets its trust responsibility to Tribes, including through effective implementation of the aforementioned laws?

The vast majority of federal Native education needs are handled by the Bureau of Indian Education at the Department of the Interior. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing all laws and programs that support Native educational programs, meeting with tribal leaders and key stakeholders, and charting a path forward that provides support to the tribes in the most effective way possible.

23a. How would diverting resources towards private schools, including through “school choice” programs, help the federal government meet its trust responsibility to tribes, including through effective implementation of the aforementioned laws?

Students and families who are members of tribes deserve education freedom, too. Parents know their children best, and I trust them to choose the education pathway that meets their needs, whether it be traditional public, charter, private, or homeschool.

23b. The federal trust responsibility cannot be passed off to the private sector. How will you uphold the unique federal role in Indian education while implementing any efforts to privatize education?

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23c. Native children are seven times more likely than other children to be victims of abuse. Child sexual abuse cases are the most common crime that the FBI investigates in Indian Country. How will you ensure that Native children are protected from abuse and neglect if they are not in public schools with mandatory reporters who have a legal responsibility to protect them?

Protecting children in Indian Country from abuse is a key responsibility of the FBI at the Department of Justice, not the Department of Education. If confirmed, I look forward to coordinating with the Department of Justice and meeting with tribal leaders and key stakeholders.

23d. In 2023, one in four Native students considered attempting suicide. School counselors play critical roles in the public educational system—especially in Title I schools—providing mental health support for students in need. Oftentimes, these are the only mental health resources Native students may be able to access. Counselors are also often one of the first positions eliminated when schools face funding shortfalls. Online schools often lack counseling resources altogether. If federal funding is diverted from public schools to “school choice,” private schools, or online schools, how will you ensure that Native students are able to access the mental health care they need?

As I said during my hearing, there are no plans to cut Title I funding. The goal is to cut red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy that diverts funding toward compliance instead of actually helping teachers teach and students learn.

**Question 24:** Do you support moving any programs at the Department of Education to the Bureau of Indian Education? If so, which?

The vast majority of federal tribal education needs are handled by the Bureau of Indian Education at the Department of the Interior. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing all laws and programs that support Native educational programs, meeting with tribal leaders and key stakeholders, and charting a path forward that provides support to the tribes in the most effective way possible.

24a. How do you plan to consult with Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Tribal schools to ensure they have input into any decision to move programs to the Bureau of Indian Education? If confirmed, I look forward to visiting tribal reservations and meeting personally with leadership to learn how we can work together.

**Question 25:** Many state laws require instruction in Native history and culture. Will you commit to protecting states' rights to require the teaching of Native history and culture?

It is not the role of the federal government to set curriculum requirements for states.

25a. How will you ensure federal programs support these efforts—including through Tribally-led initiatives supporting Native cultural, linguistic, and historical education?

If confirmed, I look forward to visiting tribal reservations and meeting personally with leadership to learn how we can work together.

**Question 26:** What is your understanding of the events that took place during the Indian boarding school era?

I condemn the actions of U.S. government officials who removed Indian children from their homes, against the wills of their parents and families, to force them to attend boarding schools, in many instances in other states. This is a key example of why local communities should direct education systems, not Washington bureaucrats.