Madame Chair, members of the Committee, it is an honor to speak with you today. My name is Nate Morrison, and I'm the Executive Director of Teach For America, based out of Gallup. I'm here to share updates about our work in indigenous communities, to report on our efforts to uphold the Indian Education Act through a partnership with the Growing Educators for Native American Communities program, to hear feedback from the committee, and to answer any questions.

I'm not form this area. I grew up on the east coast in Massachusetts. Picture apple trees, pumpkin patches, and some sheep – that's my hometown. My mom was a teacher for most of my life – still is – and I went to the local public schools. My high school was one of the best public schools in Massachusetts, which has some of the best public schools in the nation. My family was firmly in the upper middle class. I worked hard in school, but the fact is the deck was stacked in my favor from the very beginning simply by virtue of the circumstances of my birth, and I sit in front of you today as the result of an immense amount of privilege.

I came to New Mexico in 2008 through Teach For America. I didn't know what to expect. What I found at Shiprock High School were some of the most amazing kids in the world. My students in Shiprock are brilliant, persistent, and resilient. Day after day they blew me away with their intelligence.

My students in Shiprock are all of those things because they are amazing people, but they are also all of those things because of the place they are from. Shiprock – the power of that place – it made them them strong. They drew from the strength of their culture, their language, their family, and their people. My students so love Shiprock that to this day they will say when they see me, "once a chieftain, always a chieftain." And yet Shiprock is a place of tension and contradiction for my students, because while they draw so much strength from their home, none of them would say that it is the Shiprock they dream that it could be. While they draw strength from Shipock, it also presents them with challenges that no child should ever have to deal with. And sadly, most of them wouldn't say that their school is everything they want it to be either. Last year I read the Public Education Department's audit of Shiprock High School. It was heartbreaking to read interviews with the students. One senior said if he could do it all over again, he wouldn't go to Shiprock High – and every other senior that the interviewer asked agreed. If they could do it all over again, they wouldn't go to SHS.

People talk about the historical trauma of colonization and the boarding school system, but for students in our schools thattrauma isn't always historical, it is too often current. My students at Shiprock High weren't being prepared to succeed academically or to go to college, but too many also weren't with pride in their heritage, culture, or identity. All of us involved in the schools – myself most of all, as one of their teachers – has to look in the mirror and ask what we're doing to create better schools for our kids.

People look at our schools and say "the system is broken." I disagree. It has only been a short period of time since many of our students' parents and grandparents attended boarding schools. 40 years ago the Kennedy report found that only 1 in 10 teachers in BIE schools believed that academic achievement was an important outcome for Native kids. Our sovereign nations haven't had control over what goes on in their schools for long. The system isn't broken – it continuing to do what it was designed to do – it is continuing to assimilate and to oppress.

We need to support new models of excellence in indigenous education. Every Native child in our state deserves to go to a school that prepares them academically for college and builds security and confidence in their identity. Right now we don't have many schools that do that for every student, but I believe we can. Examples of schools that do this – from the Native American Community Academy in Albuquerque to Puente de Hozho in Flagstaff – have me convinced that we can build schools that honor all the strengths that Native students bring with them to school, and build on those strengths to challenge and affirm students identities.

How do we build more great schools? There isn't a silver bullet, but all the examples of great indigenous schools I've visited have common factors; a great leader, a vision based in community context and community relationships, a culture that views who students are as a strength, and great teachers who love and push

I work for Teach For America because I believe we can play a role in building great schools by developing leaders who are committed to Native education. Earlier this week I had the honor to speak with Governor Luarkie in Laguna about how we can support the Pueblo in its educational efforts. Governor Luarkie told me that Teach For America can play a role in the strengthening and re-emergence of nations like Laguna if it is done right.

In the short term we recruit and support teachers who do everything they can to create classrooms that are community-based and academically rigorous. Right now, nearly 4000 Native students in this part of the state are in our teachers' classrooms. Our teachers are helping to developing the academic skills that these young Native students will need to be the future leaders of their sovereign nations. We're proud that students in our teachers classrooms are achieving strong academic results – last year, for instance, the students with special needs in Eric Cheever's class at Shiprock High had the highest profiency rates of any students in the state, regardless of income. Similarly in 2011 the state recognized four of our teachers for making the most growth in the state with their students – the only classes from this part of New Mexico recognized.

In the long term, we're developing a group of young leaders – Native and non-native – who can form part of a movement to transform our schools. These are people who have been classroom teachers, who know how amazing our students are, and who know that when given the opportunities they can do anything they put their minds to. Investing in Teach For America isn't just an investment in teachers for the short term – it's an investment in this long-term leadership pipeline, the folks who will go on to become master teachers, instructional coaches, policy makers, and school leaders for excellent indigenous schools.

I want to offer an example. Earlier today, you heard about the work to build a new school in Navajo NM that reimagines what is possible in indigenous education. I'm inspired by the community support for this project – and proud that Teach For America alumni are playing a key role in making it happen. Kayla Begay, one of our corps members, is leading many of the community advising and organizing efforts. She would have been here today, but she's busy teaching her elementary class. Kayla is already a leader in building excellent models of indigenous education, and her example gives me hope.

Key Updates:

At previous committee meetings I've heard members ask about our outcomes and reporting. We submit regular reports to the Indian Education Division on our programmatic outcomes. We submitted our most recent report in June, and it is in your folders for your reference. In the following comments I will try to pull out some highlights.

- Finances: Our ability to compete for state funding is critical for our ability to sustain our operations in New Mexico – but we leverage the state's investment more than 3 to 1 in order to bring private resources to support the Indian Education Act in New Mexico. As you can see on this chart, we're bringing over $1 million in private dollars each year to support our work in New Mexico, including funding from foundations and individuals. About half of this private funding is raised locally, and the other half is matched by our national organization to support our work in New Mexico. We are one of the few Teach for America regions that receives financial support from our national organization, which is an investment that we make because we believe in the need for great teachers in our state. Over the last ten years, we've invested over $10 million in national funds to keep our New Mexico region open.
- Diversity and Native Recruitment: We aspire to be one of the largest, most diverse sources of teachers for American Indian communities in the state. This year nearly half of our incoming teachers identify as people of color, and 56% either identify as people of color or come from a low income background. We maintain this diversity while being very selective – last year we received over 60,000 applications, and our acceptance rate was 14%.

  I'm particularly happy to report on our efforts to recruit more Native teachers to New Mexico. This year, 25% of our incoming corps identifies as Native. Next year if we hit our goals, nearly half our new teachers will be to be Native teachers from New Mexico tribes or pueblos; we have set the target of recruiting 10 Diné, 4 Zuni, and 2 Laguna teachers into Teach For America.

  We are already one of the largest, most essential sources of new talent for schools in this region – often when we can't provide a candidate for a school then that school doesn't have applicants. This morning I looked at the GMCS website – there are still nearly 20 open positions in core subject areas – math, science, 3rd grade – at schools in our county. Without Teach For America there would be many, many more. In the future, I'm excited that not only will we be one of the largest sources of talent overall, but also one of the largest sources of new Native talent for our schools and districts.

- Retention: Our teachers commit to teach for a minimum of two years, and we do everything we can to keep them for longer. Over the past four years, support from the Indian Education Act has allowed us to bring 145 new teachers to New Mexico. Today, there are over 160 Teach For America alumni working across the state. 70% of our alumni here in New Mexico are working in education; nearly 50% are still in the classroom. There is always room to improve in retention, but I'm proud of the impact that our alumni are having

- Results: In your packets, I've included information on research on Teach For America, both in New Mexico and nationwide. We're one of the most studied teacher preparation programs in the country. The reality is that, as with most research, you can find studies that show our teachers are great, and others that show our teachers aren't as effective. Not all studies are created equal, though, and the most rigorous studies have confirmed our teachers' effectiveness. There are four things I want to highlight:
    - First, three states – North Carolina, LA, and TN all recently conducted studies of new teacher preparation programs and found that we were one of the top sources of effective teachers for schools in those states.
    - Second, the US DoE recently completed a large-scale experimental study of our math teachers' effectiveness. This study used random-assignment of students, and represents the highest, most rigorous standard in research. The DoE study found that students in our math teachers classrooms, on average, gained an additional 2.6 months of learning compared to the general teaching population. One thing that is interesting about this study is that at the middle school level it used a test which neither the students or teachers had ever seen before – and on that assessment, students in our teachers classrooms did even better than the 2.6 months of learning average, which shows that the gains in our classrooms are not because our teachers are teaching to the test, but instead because of actual growth in mathematical skill and comprehension.
    - Last year we commissioned an independent survey of New Mexico principals. This survey found that 100% of principals in NM with Teach For America teachers would hire more if they could, and 100% believe their teachers are having a positive impact in their school. 84% believe our teachers are more effective than other new sources of teachers, and 75% believe our teachers are more effective than the average teacher. More information on this study in in your folders.
    - Today our teachers are impacting nearly 4,000 Native students in New Mexico. The results we see in data mirror the strong comments from principals. Last year, our teachers who administered growth assessments averaged approximately 1.5 years of classroom growth in their classrooms; and in classrooms that administered nationally-normed assessments like the NWEA, on average students in our teachers classrooms grew as much as students in the top 25% of classrooms in the nation.
- Partnership with Growing Educators for Native American Communities: This year we applied for funding through the Indian Education Act in partnership with Growing Educators for Native American Communities, a local teacher preparation program developed by Kara Bobroff at NACA and CNM. We are the main contractor for the funds, and GENAC is the subcontractor. We're excited that this partnership will help make both programs stronger as we support each other in recruitment of teachers, placement of teachers, and development of culturally responsive teacher training. In particular, I want to highlight that through this partnership we will collectively support over 70 teachers currently working in indignenous schools, as well as recruit and train 45 to 60 new teachers to work in schools next year, approximately 30 of whom will identify as Native. As a teacher preparation pipeline for 30 Native teachers, collectively, our

partnership will be one of (if not the) largest sources of new American Indian teachers for schools in the entire state.