

THE ROAD TO CLOSURE:
FEDERAL INDIAN EDUCATION LEGISLATION, ARIZONA'S INDIANS,
AND THE PHOENIX INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL, 1972-1990

by
Pamela Rector

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has been approved
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APPROVED:

_____, Chairperson

Supervisory Committee

ACCEPTED:

Department Chairperson

Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

The history of the decline of the federal Indian off-reservation boarding school system is spread over numerous decades. The reasons surrounding the individual closures have varied depending on the prevailing mindset of Congress. Scholarship covering more recent closures is limited and has yet to be synthesized.

This thesis documents the closing of the Phoenix Indian High School (PIHS)—against the wishes of Arizona’s tribes—which operated from 1891–1990. Its end came a decade-and-a-half after Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, one of three laws enacted during the 1970s dealing with Native American education, was signed into law. It’s impact has been far reaching and was the catalyst for the eventual demise of PIHS.

Chronicled are the efforts of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA), in conjunction with the tribes, to keep the school open—at least until Arizona’s Indian children could be assured of adequate educational opportunities within state / reservation boundaries. Also documented are the efforts of some of Arizona’s tribes to “take control” of and improve their tribal education programs by utilizing the landmark legislation of the 1970s. Finally, also discussed is how the school fared during its last, difficult decade.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
ONE AN OVERVIEW OF INDIAN EDUCATION TO 1972 IN THE AREA CURRENTLY KNOWN AS THE CONTINENTAL U.S.	7
TWO EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND ARIZONA'S TRIBES, 1972-1982	29
THREE THE INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA'S FIGHT TO KEEP THE PHOENIX INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL OPEN, 1982-1988	57
FOUR THE ROAD TO CLOSURE: PHOENIX INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL, 1972-1990	87
CONCLUSION	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110

INTRODUCTION

Phoenix Indian High School (PIHS) was one of the last federal off-reservation boarding schools to close in the wake of a series of sweeping changes in Indian education that began in the 1970s. Its end in 1990 came a decade and a half after Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, one of three laws enacted during the 1970s dealing with Native American education, was signed into law by President Gerald Ford in January 1975.

Through these laws Indians once again, after the dissolution of the Five Tribes' educational system at the turn of the century, gained control and responsibility for their schools. Previously, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) sanctioned some experimental, tribal schools, such as Rough Rock Demonstration School started by the Navajo tribe in 1966.

Other tribes in Arizona followed suit, with varying degrees and speeds, once such activity became legal for all Native American groups in the mid 1970s. Their activity in this regard was determined by many factors including tribal size, federal and tribal bureaucracies, and available funding. A sampling of Arizona tribes and their educational activities from 1972 to 1982 is included. A starting date of 1972 was chosen because that was the year the Indian Education Act was passed; and 1982 was chosen as an ending date because that was when the closure of PIHS was first announced.

Although the PIHS's demise seemed inevitable, it by no means went quietly. Its closing was preceded first by a battle to keep the school open and then by years of haggling over the disposition of the school's property. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, representing 19 of Arizona's tribes, became a key player in the fight to keep the school open.

Against this background the school continued to operate. The years between 1972 and its closing amounted to a roller-coaster ride for faculty, staff, and students. Rumors of closure—which added to the problem of declining enrollment, an increase in the number of students with behavior problems, and bad press—weighed heavily on the school’s administrators.

Recounting the story of how Arizona’s Indians have dealt with the 1970s federal education legislation and the subsequent changes—especially for the Phoenix Indian High School—involves the use of many and varied sources. A number of fine books about Native American education in the United States have provided background information. Tribal newspapers were the primary source of information about tribal education activities. Local newspapers and magazines have helped in tracing events surrounding the closing of PIHS and the disposition of its property.

Concerning the school itself, government and other reports, educational studies, and personal interviews have been of paramount importance. These reports are essential to understanding government policies toward the federal boarding school system. Other reports commissioned by the federal government discuss budgets and the status of Indian education, and evaluate federally funded projects. Educational studies provide, among other things, a framework for understanding environments in which Indian children do or do not thrive, evaluating how various programs are faring, and researching the roles and responsibilities of parents in their children’s educations.

Personal interviews with former employees of the Phoenix Indian High School round out the sources. The six interviewees—three of whom were Native American—were employed at the school from the mid 1950s

until its close. All worked there at some time between 1972 and 1990. The information from these interviews has been especially valuable in helping to fill some of the gaps left after all other available sources were exhausted. Interviews also add an emotional dimension that the written word does not always convey adequately.

All of these sources have helped document some of the effects of this landmark legislation at the local level. Historians often emphasize that the past must be preserved so that future generations may understand why things are the way they are, and to help them make informed decisions. It is usually decades before events are considered “history,” however, and by then, too often, much has been lost. So, only five years after the closing of the Phoenix Indian High School, and approximately twenty years since the advent of the legislation that led to its demise, it is already important to preserve something of its last years.

This particular study is one of many potential projects for documenting the school’s history. What happened in Arizona and to PIHS demonstrates on the local level how a state’s tribes were affected by this landmark legislation. Little has been done to preserve the history of PIHS’s last years. Most of the information concerning tribal activity was gathered from tribal newspapers, but many tribes do not have newspapers or have had them only sporadically throughout the years. A useful research project would be to work with the education liaisons from each tribe in gathering and organizing information about the evolution of the tribes’ educational self-determination policies. Further work is needed to preserve the modern history of the Phoenix Indian High School. Records and documents are scattered—from the Phoenix BIA office to the National Archives in Laguna Niguel, California. Organizing this

data complete with finding aids would be a start, although housing the materials in a central location would be best. An expanded oral history project involving former employees and students of the school would be most helpful. This could best be done by Native Americans trained in oral history methods. As a non-Indian I had some trouble getting Native Americans to participate. Whether it was because I am not Indian and therefore they thought I was more apt to slant my research findings to show PIHS in a negative light, I do not know. I do know that Indian or not, I have tried to preserve a portion of the school's modern history when others have not, and I have done my best to present as balanced a picture as possible. But much work is left to be done.

This study begins with a chapter devoted to an overview of Indian education in the United States to 1972, which will familiarize the reader with the differing philosophies about educating Native Americans that have existed throughout our history. From colonial times philosophies, and the statistics of where the children lived (urban or rural, on- or off-reservation), have determined how they would be educated. Early on, education was often used as a bargaining tool in treaty negotiations. Until the turn of this century much of the job of educating Indians lay with religious organizations and was generally viewed as a means of "civilizing" the Indian. This was the prevailing philosophy until around 1900 when many became disillusioned with the government's lack of success in assimilating Indians. At the same time a change in philosophy, brought on by a "new scientific outlook," better appreciated Indian cultures. These changes led to the first government-sponsored study, the Meriam Report in 1928, on the state of Indian education. Major changes in the education policies of Native Americans continued

throughout the twentieth century. Chapter one ends in 1972 when the Indian Education Act was signed by President Richard M. Nixon. This piece of legislation grew out of two major studies conducted in the late 1960s. The first, "The National Study of American Indian Education," was produced by the University of Chicago, and the second, commonly referred to as the Kennedy Report, was completed by a Senate subcommittee on Indian education.

Chapter two discusses how the new federal legislation affected a sampling of Arizona tribes between 1972 and 1982. The tribes highlighted in this chapter were chosen primarily because a large number of their children attended Phoenix Indian High School. By 1975 four tribes accounted for 83 percent of PIHS's population—Pima-Maricopa, Apache, Hopi, and Tohono O'odham (once called Papago). Since these tribes had the most to lose with the closing of PIHS, surveying their education-related activities during this time period helps gauge their preparedness when in 1982 it was announced that the school would be closing. One other tribe, the Havasupai, was also included as a comparison to tribes that had more of a stake in PIHS's closing. It is interesting to examine how a small tribe, with less to lose (in terms of number of students attending PIHS) if PIHS closed, was nonetheless vocal when it came to the issue of their children's education.

Chapter three concentrates on the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) and its battles to keep the school open, and, when it became apparent in 1988 that that would not happen, to share the profits from the disposition of the school land. This chapter presents a study in how an organization, working with its state's congressional delegation, went about fighting the federal government. In this effort the ITCA was called on to study the need

for the school. This study, which was ignored by the BIA, concluded that there was a need for the school, at least until all tribes utilizing the school could make other arrangements for their students. This chapter also explains how during this time the ITCA assisted Phoenix Indian School in dealing with some administrative crises. The chapter concludes in 1988 when it became apparent that the school would close and a preliminary agreement was reached on the disposition of the property.

The fourth and final chapter follows PIHS from 1972 through 1990, documenting the decline of the school as it did its best to cope with the changes resulting from self-determination legislation. As more and more students were being educated closer to home, PIHS's enrollment began to drop. Funding, which was calculated by enrollment, began to decline, and the student profile began to change. Many of the better students were now able to go to school on or near the reservation. PIHS began to see a disproportionate number of "problem" students—students who had been kicked out of other schools and were being sent to PIHS as a last resort. This resulted in more problems at the school. By 1980, the school also began to get unfavorable press coverage as the media became aware of the problems. This domino effect was halted somewhat by the late 1980s when the school employed a new principal who worked to bring order to the chaos. Thus, PIHS' last decade ended more peacefully than it began.

CHAPTER ONE
AN OVERVIEW OF INDIAN EDUCATION TO 1972 IN THE AREA
CURRENTLY KNOWN AS THE CONTINENTAL U.S.

The history of Indian education in the United States is rooted in the “discovery” of North America. Missionary-backed programs were the first to appear, later followed by government-sponsored day and boarding schools (both on- and off-reservation). Additionally, Indian children have been educated along with white children in public schools, and more recently tribes have established contract schools with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Indian children have attended mainstream public schools in more urban areas where the Indian and white populations reside in close proximity. By contrast, in Arizona, because of the large rural expanses occupied by many of the state’s Indians, public school access has been limited.

Since colonial times the types of schools Indian children attended were determined by prevailing educational theories and where the child lived: urban or rural, on- or off-reservation. Until the nineteenth century the mission school was the most common option, especially in western North America. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Spanish Franciscan priests established missions with the goal of converting the Indians to Christianity. The Indians worked as laborers and the priests taught them Spanish laced with a heavy dose of Christianity. Although academic subjects were taught, they were considered secondary to learning agricultural skills. In what became the midwestern United States—the Great Lakes region and Mississippi Valley, and in Canada along the St. Lawrence River—French Jesuit priests worked to spread Christianity among Native Americans. But because the fur

trade was central to the Indians' existence, and thus required most of their energy, the Jesuits realized few results in their education efforts.

This overview focuses primarily on non-Indian efforts to educate Native Americans, and not on education systems of Indian origin. These systems range from teaching children the basics of survival to more sophisticated programs. For example, the Cherokee tribe in the 1830s started their own educational program using an alphabet invented by a member of the tribe. Tribal members developed literacy in both Cherokee and English. The tribe published a bilingual newspaper until the 1830s when the state of Georgia seized the press, and their tribally administered schools operated until the 1890s when they were closed by the federal government.¹

As early as the 1490s the Europeans wanted to exploit and convert Indians. Franciscan priests accompanied Spanish explorers on their first expeditions to Florida. In 1568 Jesuit priests established a school in Havana, Florida for Indian youths. Similarly, in the early 1600s, Protestant missionaries accompanied English colonial settlers to the New World. In 1617 King James I asked members of the Anglican clergy to collect money for use in building churches and schools for Indian children in Virginia. For the next 300 years religious groups dominated European attempts to educate Indians. But different religious and political factions combined with economic interests prevented centralized control. Indian education was fragmented and left to competing churches and missionary groups. Most Indians were never touched by the missionaries' efforts.²

Because of the belief that European cultures were superior, educational systems did not accommodate the native cultures. Suppression of Indian religions, banning of tribal languages, and the forcible removal of children

from their homes were common practices by the nineteenth century. The U.S. government hoped the missionaries' efforts with their "emphasis on Christianity, education, and industrious work habits would promote the proper environment." Although not identical, the federal government and missionaries had similar goals for Indian education. The government viewed education as a tool for assimilation whose main function was to eliminate Indian culture and destroy Indian tribal life, as well as to complete the government's "trust and treaty responsibilities," and compensate the Indians for lost lands. Conversely, colonial charters and missionary activities had "altruistic aims" of "civilizing and Christianizing" natives. Most missionaries viewed education as a tool to convert Indians to Christianity and felt native cultures had to be destroyed to facilitate conversion. By the mid 1800s the government became more involved in educating native children and began to prefer secular schools over religious schools.³

Both types of education required monetary support. Although the majority of those involved in securing financial support for the education of Indians were sincere in their efforts, some saw it as an opportunity to make money. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries donations from inside and outside North America came from well-meaning people wanting to aid the "civilization" process. More money came from the government's "civilization fund" (established by Congress in 1819) in the form of grants to religious organizations. In the nineteenth century, bureaucrats made money from Office of Indian Affairs corruption, and from congressionally authorized payments in the twentieth century to states for Indian students attending public schools, because of the lack of property taxes available to the states from Indian trust lands.⁴

In colonial America many experiments were tried, with varying degrees of success, to educate Indians. New England, a stronghold of formal schooling in colonial America, developed the most available schooling for both Indians and English Americans. Measuring the success of these efforts “remains relative, firmly rooted in the expectations of the given culture.” Notions of what constituted “success” varied from region to region. Local characteristics such as the hide and slave trade in the southeast which hindered schooling and virtually destroyed it because of constant warfare, and cultural movements like the Great Awakening, which spawned such efforts as Moor’s Indian Charity School in Connecticut in the 1750s also influenced Indian schooling in the eighteenth century. Another factor affecting colonial schooling was the frequent “disruption experienced by that student’s native culture,” in the form of plague, migration, and warfare.⁵

United States and colonial governments put forth “conciliatory gestures” in the 1700s. In 1744 an offer was made to the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy to send their sons to the College of William and Mary. (The Iroquois rejected the offer.) The Continental Congress appropriated five hundred dollars to educate Indians at Dartmouth in 1775. In 1789, in a treaty with the Oneida, Tuscarora, and Stockbridge, the Federal government included an educational provision. Between 1778 and 1871, of the almost 400 treaties entered into between the United States’ government and Indian tribes, 120 included educational provisions.⁶

The growing number of treaties between the government and Native American groups caused an increase in Indian education activity. Congress therefore began increasing appropriations, mostly to religious groups, for educational purposes. In 1802 up to \$15,000 per year was available “to provide

Civilization among the aborigines." Largely because of the efforts of Thomas L. McKenney, who became superintendent of Indian trade in 1816, Congress established a Civilization Fund in 1819 to provide "financial support to religious groups and other interested individuals who were willing to live among and teach Indians." The fund contributed \$10,000 annually to Indian education. This sum was augmented by various treaty provisions "for after the act of 1819 had stimulated the movement for Indian schools, numerous treaties contained provisions to aid in the education of the young." McKenney, an ardent supporter of Indian education, "again and again recommended government aid in establishing schools for the Indians." As a result, from 1819 to the mid 1870s, missionaries bore much of the responsibility for delivering on the promise of education.⁷

Indians warranted enough attention that the War Department created the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1832. By 1849 the Office of Indian Affairs was transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. This move had little effect on Indian education, since missionaries continued to be the major influence on the formal education of Indian children. By the late 1830s the federal government was operating six manual training schools and eighty seven on-reservation boarding schools. About 3700 students were being educated in farming and homemaking skills in these institutions.⁸

In 1851 the period of reservation settlement began and continued into the 1930s. During this time U.S. government officials "saw themselves as trading education for land." After the 1850s the federal government began to involve and impose itself more in the process of educating the Indians. In 1867 the Peace Commission was established, with members appointed by

President Ulysses S. Grant. The commission's agenda called for "cultural, and specifically linguistic, genocide" because they felt that less "differences" would foster greater understanding between Indian and Anglo cultures. This agenda was also a less harsh alternative to the "westerner's call for actual genocide." By 1870 responsibility for Indian education lay with the Bureau of Indian Affairs although, until the Civilization Fund was repealed in 1873, "administrative control on the reservations remained primarily in the hands of religious organizations. The emphasis was on day and boarding schools which taught the speaking, reading, and writing of English, basic arithmetic, and a half-day of vocational training. In this same year Congress appropriated \$100,000 for "the support of industrial and other schools among the Indian tribes." But federal appropriations were unable to keep up with the demands. By 1875 only about 15 of every 100 Indian children attended school.⁹

In 1879, in order to expand its educational efforts, the federal government opened its first off-reservation boarding school—Carlisle Indian Industrial School—in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The "English only" campaign expanded its efforts in 1880 when the Indian Bureau issued regulations requiring that "'all instruction must be in English' in both mission and government schools under threat of loss of government funding." In spite of this order some successful teachers of Indian children learned tribal languages "so that they and the children could understand each other." By 1883 reform organizations were established with the express purpose of improving the plight of Indians. Both Congress and the public's opinions on Indian policy were being reshaped. The federal bureaucracy took an increasing interest in Indian reform. Before 1880 Congress had never allocated more than \$130,000 per year to support Indian schools.¹⁰

By 1887 Congress allocated more than a million dollars a year for Indian education. By 1895 this figure had nearly doubled. Approximately half of this went to missionaries contracted by the federal government to educate Indians. But by the end of the nineteenth century the federal government, not religious organizations, “had become the dominant agent in educating the American Indians.” In 1900 all direct funding of missionary schools ended. This came about in large part because of feuding between Protestants and Catholics. Catholics were frequently more successful in establishing schools. Consequently, the Protestants wanted the government to fund only government-run schools—which still included Bible reading in their curriculum. Beginning with the appointment of Thomas J. Morgan, a Protestant minister as commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1889, Republican lawmakers fought and were eventually successful in ending direct funding to missionary schools. The importance of Morgan’s appointment was underscored by the fierce competition between Protestants and Catholics for control over the spiritual salvation of Indian youth.¹¹

Reformers hoped to assimilate the Indians and “looked upon themselves as the guardians of the Indians and the watchdogs and arbiters of national Indian policy.” They organized many voluntary organizations—two of which were the well known Indian Rights Association and the Lake Mohonk Conference. The reformers were primarily evangelical Protestants and their fervor created tensions with Catholic missionaries. Although both advocated Christianity and viewed it as an integral part of the assimilation, they differed over the “place of each other within American society.” Protestants had long been dominant—the United States was, after all, a Protestant nation. Catholics were sensitive about their “position of

inferiority.” They fought to be recognized, which infuriated the Protestants who felt that the formation of a universal public school system, maintained by the federal government, was being delayed because of the extensive “system of Catholic mission schools.” At that time Catholic mission schools received most of the available federal funds.¹²

Protestants felt that federal schools “fulfilled their own goals” in terms of “outlook and ideals.” In 1888 when Catholics sought federal aid (and were fighting hard to maintain their schools), a wave of anti-Catholicism, reminiscent of earlier nativist episodes, was unleashed. It was also the year when the national drive for a public school system for Indians heated up. The period 1888–1912 marks the time when Catholics and Protestants fought over the control of Indian education. The Catholics, represented by the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, went up against the Indian Rights Association (“allied with the mission boards of the chief Protestant denominations”).¹³

The presidential election of 1888 ousted Grover Cleveland and the Democrats and returned the Republicans, under Benjamin Harrison, to power. Most Protestants belonged to the Republican party and President Harrison did not disappoint them. He appointed Baptist minister, Civil War general, and public educator Thomas Jefferson Morgan commissioner of Indian Affairs, and Methodist clergyman Daniel Dorchester as superintendent of Indian schools. Harrison’s election and subsequent appointments signaled the end of the predominance of mission schools in the educating of Indian youth.¹⁴

During the late nineteenth century government day and reservation boarding schools began to replace mission/church schools. In 1870 half of the \$100,000 appropriated for the education of Indian children went to the

operation of day schools—providing elementary (kindergarten to fifth grade) or primary (kindergarten to third grade)—the other half to on-reservation boarding schools. Government day schools were located on the reservations and were introduced in the 1880s. These schools were maintained by the federal government rather than the state and they served children who did not live in close proximity to public schools. When government day schools were first established, the teaching of Indian children in public schools was not as accepted. The original purpose of these day schools was to educate the younger children who would, when old enough, be transferred to boarding schools. Half of the child's day was spent on academic work, the other half on industrial training. Day schools were not as well accepted by reformers because they did not help in the "total transition" to mainstream society.¹⁵

In 1879 federal off-reservation boarding schools began opening across the country. The first, Carlisle, was led by Army officer Richard Henry Pratt and became the model for other non-reservation schools. This and other off-reservation boarding schools taught vocational trades with academic instruction at the grammar-school level. Students came away with relatively few academic skills. Before Carlisle, Pratt had established an Indian school in a prison in St. Augustine, Florida, to prove that Indians could learn English. He thought educating Indians was cheaper than fighting them. His efforts were successful. After their three-year prison term expired in 1878, many of the prisoners wanted to learn more. A number of them enrolled in Hampton Institute in Virginia, a black school, in 1878. General Samuel Armstrong, head of Hampton, influenced Pratt's model of Indian education. "In fact, the off-reservation schools resembled in many ways the industrial schools for southern blacks during this era." But Pratt was unhappy with Hampton

because he was afraid that prejudices directed at blacks would “rub off” on the Indian students. He did not want to risk this because he hoped the Indians would eventually become fully assimilated into mainstream society. Pratt’s philosophy of Indian education fell in line with that of most reformers of the day—complete integration of Indians into Anglo-Saxon society. He felt assimilation could only be achieved away from the reservation.¹⁶

Carlisle Indian Industrial School provided instruction in academic subjects, various trades and vocations. Initially grades one through ten were enrolled with the first class graduating in 1889. Eventually the school included two years of high school and a teacher training program. An “outing system” was added whereby students were placed with non-Indian families for the summer, providing further isolation from their culture. The students performed farming and domestic chores for these families. Educators believed that this gave the students the advantage of earning wages and acquiring skills which would serve them well in mainstream society. Some students remained with non-Indian families during the fall months while attending public schools, and they worked for the families to pay their room and board.¹⁷

The last two decades of the nineteenth century found the Office of Indian Affairs implementing changes to better manage the growing number of government schools. Although the Indian office had had direct control of Indian education since 1870—creating in 1873 an Education and Medical division—in 1883 a second attempt at making this division more successful was pursued. The office was responsible for implementing educational policies, for starting uniform curriculum and building programs, and for expanding the off-reservation boarding school program. In the 1890s the

Indian office implemented the civil service merit system. The system sought “to hire or promote a person based on character and experience.” It was hoped that fewer people would be hired based solely on “who they knew.” In 1896 all employees except Indian agents became part of the civil service.¹⁸

As the twentieth century neared many became disillusioned because of the “failure of boarding schools and English-only education to make over Indians into white people in a few years.” Expectations had been lowered. Coinciding with these disillusionments came the beginning of a change in attitudes by the dominant culture about other cultures. This change was due in part to a “new scientific outlook,” influenced by the new science of anthropology that tended to appreciate, more than the society at large, Indian cultures. In the early twentieth century new reformers led by John Collier began moving away from the policy of assimilation.¹⁹

One outgrowth of this new attitude appeared in a trend to enroll Indian children in public schools. As early as 1890 Congress authorized tuition payments to some public schools. By 1912 the number of government schools began to decline and more Indian children were enrolled in public schools than in government schools. In the late 1920s and early 1930s public school enrollment of Indian children slowly increased, coinciding with a growing criticism of boarding schools, and praise for day schools. In 1924 a committee, formed at the request of the secretary of the interior, began to discuss how Indian education could be improved. Its recommendations led to some positive changes: reservation day schools offering schooling through the sixth grade, and reservation boarding schools offering an eighth-grade education.²⁰

The government-sponsored Meriam Report in 1928 dealt with the BIA's treatment of Indians as a whole, and made more sweeping educational recommendations. It found the conditions in boarding schools "shocking," and recommended "not sending elementary age children to boarding schools at all," and urged that the number of day schools be increased. Additionally, the report "called for a curriculum based more on 'local Indian life, or at least written within the scope of the child's early experiences.'" This came as a partial response to the growing realization that "cultural disintegration," not "cultural replacement," was occurring.²¹

The report's impact was especially great given the "substantial reform fervor" of the time. A "renewed assault on assimilation" combined with Meriam Report findings cast Indian schools, especially boarding schools, in a bad light. For example, the Phoenix Indian School, between the years 1928 and 1935, totally changed its internal structure. After being subjected to embarrassing publicity resulting from the release of the Meriam Report, and assaults on assimilationist theory, the school almost closed. But it and other schools of its kind were able to regroup "and a new era in educational history had begun."²²

In 1933 the BIA's leading critic, John Collier, having been appointed commissioner of Indian Affairs, immediately concentrated on implementing Meriam Report recommendations. Key pieces of legislation followed. Most notable in terms of its effect on Indian education was the Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Act in 1934, that allowed the federal government to pay (contract with) the states, rather than individual school districts, for the education of Indians in public schools. Prior to this the money went into the general operating fund of individual school districts where it could be used for the education of

non-Indian children. In 1950 Public Laws 81-815 and 81-874, known as the 'federally impacted area' legislation, were passed. Public Law 874 provided for general operating funds "in lieu of local taxes"; and P. L. 815 provided funds for the construction of schools in federally impacted areas. These, combined with the JOM legislation, currently "provide the basic Federal subsidy for public school education of Indian students." Two-thirds of Indian students are presently enrolled in public schools.²³

To this day the JOM Act, though amended, provides money to public schools enrolling Indian children. It must be used in what are termed "supplemental programs"—like special counseling, tutoring, and cultural programs. These programs must also be approved by an Indian parent advisory committee (PAC). Legislation such as the JOM Act occurred during what is known as the "Indian New Deal." With Franklin D. Roosevelt's appointee John Collier leading the way, the government made substantial changes in Indian education including: constructing more day schools, closing some boarding schools, authorizing for the first time the writing of a few native language textbooks, and allowing greater emphasis to be placed on Indian cultures in BIA classrooms.²⁴

The period from 1945 to 1968 is known as "the termination era." Critics argued that the Indians should be "set free." Congress' solution was to free the Indians by terminating their reservations. This policy was quickly judged a failure in part because those Indians from rural reservations were ill equipped to live in urban centers. Part of the termination plan required states to assume the responsibility for educating Indian children who attended public schools. Reservation schools of this era—BIA, mission, or public operated, though located on reservations—were "islands" in that there was

little interaction between the Indian community and the schools. The push to get Indians into public schools continued during the termination era, and in 1950 laws under the heading "Impact Aid" were passed to aid in this process. They were designed to spare states' public schools from the financial burden of educating these children. Initially these laws "authorized funds for public schools with students who lived on tax-exempt federal land, such as military bases." The laws were amended in 1953 "to include Indians living or working on reservations or other federal trust land."²⁵

The decade of the 1960s was pivotal for Indian education. Factors including the Kennedy Report and a desire on the part of Indians to take more responsibility for educating their own, led some tribes to contract with the BIA to administer their own schools. Prior to this time the federal government had total control over all Indian schools. But in 1966 an experimental school—Rough Rock Demonstration School—was started by the Navajo Indians on their reservation. Rough Rock became the first tribally controlled school since the dissolution of the Five Tribes' educational structure over sixty years earlier, and the first school in which students learned both their language and culture as well as that of the Anglo (dominant) society. Within seven years eleven other contract schools were started, beginning a movement by Indians to gain control over their educational system.²⁶

A study conducted by the University of Minnesota in the late 1960s surveyed 1,051 Indians who had migrated to Chicago. Approximately 55 percent of the participants were born on a reservation, while only 11 percent were from a small town or urban area. Included in the survey is a breakdown of the types of schools where about 40 percent of those surveyed received

their education. The study provides a cross-section of a diverse group of Indians from many parts of the country, both reservation and non-reservation born. The numbers show that a majority were educated in day schools, followed by urban schools, and finally boarding schools (almost all on-reservation).²⁷

The move toward Indian-controlled education, began in the late 1960s with two major studies. The first, "The National Study of American Indian Education" was conducted by the University of Chicago between 1967 and 1971. The second, completed by the Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education in 1969, was titled "Indian Education: A National Tragedy, a National Challenge." This report, commonly referred to as the Kennedy Report, led to the passage of the Indian Education Act, Title IV of P.L. 92-318, in 1972. Title IV authorized funding for special programs for Indian children "in reservation schools and, for the first time, urban Indian students." But it lacked specificity and raised more questions than it answered. The law "did little but shift the focus of Indian involvement from non-participation to nominal involvement."²⁸

By the 1970s native American education in the United States had just about come full circle. For the most part, colonial rulers, and later the federal government, ignored native American education well into the eighteenth century. Government interest was aroused only when government benefitted—usually where the acquisition of land was involved. Then it was sometimes advantageous to include education as a treaty provision. Even with that the government relied mostly on missionaries to fulfill treaty responsibilities. Not until well into the nineteenth century did the federal government take a more active role/responsibility for educating Indians.

By the end of the nineteenth century five types of BIA-administered schools were educating Native American children: missionary contract schools, government contract schools, off- and on-reservation boarding schools, and government day schools. The contract school, run by missionaries, educated children with the assistance of government subsidies. These contract schools continued until 1897 when quarreling among religious groups led to the elimination of this form of subsidy in 1900. Some tribes still contract directly (no government involvement) with missionary / church groups for schools. In the late 1890s the growing role of public schools led to the formation of government contract schools. The Indian Service eventually began contracting out to public schools, which received an appropriation for each Indian child enrolled. The number of children enrolled in these schools was small—most children remained in off-reservation boarding schools. The anti-Indian attitudes of the time, and the desire of Indian parents to keep their children out of public schools kept enrollment numbers low.²⁹

By the 1930s, however, this had changed dramatically. Nationally the majority of Indian children were attending public schools (if one includes children in Oklahoma who primarily attend what are termed “town schools”), followed by boarding schools. Many Indian children lived in or near enough to urban centers that public school was not only possible, but encouraged. Philosophical and financial reasons help explain this trend. The government’s view of educating these children had evolved to the point that it was believed they should be schooled like non-Indian kids. The logical and most cost effective way of doing this was in public schools. The government’s viewpoint was also influenced by the financial restrictions brought on by the Great Depression.³⁰

In California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Montana, Washington, and Oregon the populations were “mixed”—so public schooling made and continues to make sense in urban areas. The new attitude that assimilation could be achieved through contact with non-Indian children allowed this reliance on urban public schools to occur. From the federal government’s point of view, shifting the responsibility for Indian education whenever feasible to the states made fiscal sense.³¹

Although by the mid 1930s most of the Indian children enrolled in schools were attending public schools, boarding schools consumed the largest part of the federal budget for Indian education. Most of these schools were located in the western U.S. because of the large number of rural, isolated reservations. These schools increasingly came under fire because they separated Indians from non-Indians. Under such conditions people wondered how the Indians would ever assimilate. Except for the outing system, these students had little contact with non-Indians.³²

The off-reservation boarding schools (of which Carlisle and PIHS are examples) were located in urban areas, yet students were still for the most part separated from the non-Indian population by the walls of the school. Their major opportunity for spending time with whites was the “outing program,” which placed girls as domestics and boys as laborers in the community. Except for locale, the on-reservation boarding schools resembled their counterparts off the reservation but had the advantage of allowing students to remain closer to home.

By 1972 Indian education was making major evolutionary strides. The major change came in philosophy. The U.S. government was no longer blatantly striving to destroy the Native American cultures and assimilate

Indians into mainstream society. Early in the twentieth century this philosophy had begun to crumble as the social sciences began to change the way people thought about culture, race, and ethnicity. These translated into a move to reduce the number of boarding schools where Indians were for the most part isolated from whites, and toward a greater reliance on public schools where Indians could be exposed to mainstream society. This process was slower in more rural and isolated parts of the country where access to public schools was limited. But while implementation was slower in these areas, the new philosophy was taking hold.

On rural reservations more children were able to stay closer to home for the majority of their education as the number of day schools increased. Boarding schools were reserved for older children. But for most of this century reformers inside and outside of the federal government have worked to reduce the number of boarding schools. Altruistic aims are not the only reason. The boarding school system is very expensive to maintain. It made fiscal sense for the government to try to find alternatives.

The threshold of the twenty-first century finds native Americans more responsible for educating themselves than at any time since the Five Civilized Tribes were stripped of their powers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Key pieces of federal legislation in this century have provided the means, but the usual bureaucratic red tape, combined with the time tribes need to build the administrative structures necessary for the implementation and maintenance of comprehensive education programs, prevents a swift and easy transition.

In light of this legislation, it is important to examine how Arizona's tribes were responding. Were they moving ahead with their own education

programs and schools? What effect did, and does, the government's bureaucracy have on their motivation and progress? How the tribes responded relates to the eventual impact that the closing of the Phoenix Indian School would have on its students and their respective tribes.

Notes to Chapter One

¹Jon Allan Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *A History of Indian Education* (Billings: Eastern Montana College, 1989), 2.

²Jon Reyhner, ed., *Teaching American Indian Students* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 35.

³Michael Adessa, "The Santee Sioux and the Flandreau Indian School" (Arizona State University, M.A. Thesis, 1992), 60; Penny Ann Quintana, "The Early Years of the Albuquerque Indian School 1879–1928" (Arizona State University, M.A. Thesis, 1992), 5. For a discussion of the federal government's decision to support secular schools see Francis Paul Prucha *Churches and the Indian Schools, 1888–1912* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979).

⁴Reyhner and Eder, *A History of Indian Education*, 1; Reyner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 34; For a case study of fraud see William E. Unrau and H. Craig Miner, *Tribal Dispossession and the Ottawa Indian University Fraud* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985).

According to Robert Trennert, Jr., during all of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century the official title of the Indian Bureau was the Office of Indian Affairs. He says it was still called that as late as 1922. Many people do not realize this and simply refer to it as the BIA, which is not technically correct.

⁵Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607–1783*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 262, 259.

⁶Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 36–37.

⁷*Ibid.*, Reyhner, 37–39; Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790–1834*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 220, 224; For further information on Thomas McKenney see Herman J. Viola's *Thomas L. McKenney: Architect of America's Early Indian Policy, 1816–1830*, (Chicago: Sage Books, 1974).

⁸Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 39.

⁹Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 39–44; Adessa, "Santee Sioux," 61–63.

¹⁰Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 46, 41–42; *Ibid.*, Adessa, 62–63. On the Carlisle School see William Heuman *The Indians of Carlisle* (New York: Putnam, 1965).

¹¹Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 47–48; Adessa, “Santee Sioux,” 62–63.

¹²Prucha, *Churches and the Indian Schools*, iv, x, xi; *Idem*, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984, 1986), 267. According to John Radzilowski, in the late nineteenth century tensions between Catholics and Protestants occurred against a background of struggle over education of immigrants. Protestants wanted immigrants put into public schools to keep them away from the Catholic church and its schools.

¹³Prucha, *Churches and the Indian Schools*, x, xi.

¹⁴Prucha, *Churches and the Indian Schools*, xi.

¹⁵Quintana, “Albuquerque Indian School,” 14–15, 19.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 14–16; Prucha, *The Great Father*, 235. On Pratt and his work with Indians see his *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867–1904* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987; reprint of 1964).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 17; For more information about the outing system see Robert A. Trennert, Jr.’s article, “From Carlisle to Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of the Indian Outing System, 1878–1930,” *Pacific Historical Review* 52 (1983): 267–291.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁹Reyhner *Teaching American Indian Students*, 48. On assimilationist views see Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

²⁰Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 49–50.

²¹Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 50; Reyhner, *A History of Indian Education*, 1–2. For a comprehensive study of twentieth-century Indian education legislation see Margaret Connell Szasz, *Education and the*

American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977).

²²Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 182, 183.

²³Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 51–52; David H. DeJong, *Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States*, (Golden, Colo.: North American Press, 1993), 190, 207. In 1953 Public Laws 81-815 and 81-874 were amended to include Indians.

²⁴Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 51-52.

²⁵Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 52–54.

²⁶Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students*, 56; DeJong, *Promises of the Past*, 229.

²⁷Prafulla Neog et al., *Chicago Indians: the Effects of Urban Migration*, (Minneapolis: Training Center for Community Programs, University of Minnesota, 1970), 6–8. This report is a section of the Final Report of the National Study of American Indian Education, funded by the U.S. Office of Education.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 54–55; DeJong, *Promises of the Past*, 229, 230.

²⁹DeJong, *Promises of the Past*, 230. One educator feels that BIA authority regarding the contracting process in fact denies Indians self determination. See Guy Senese, “Self Determination and American Indian Education: An Illusion of Control.” *Educational Theory* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 153-164.

³⁰Francis Paul Prucha, *Atlas of American Indian Affairs* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 19–21.

³¹Solomon R. Ammon, *History and Present Development of Indian Schools in the United States* (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1977; reprint of 1935), 38, 24.

³²*Ibid.*, 33–35.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND ARIZONA'S TRIBES, 1972–1982

When Phoenix Indian High School closed its doors in 1990, some tribal representatives believed the move was premature, arguing that a number of tribes did not possess suitable alternative schooling options. Others, however, maintained that the Indian self-determination legislation passed in the mid 1970s had given tribes ample time to find alternative facilities for high school students. Although the latter statements were basically correct, it is clear that the remaining lack of reservation school facilities was not entirely the tribes' fault. Given the usual bureaucratic roadblocks, they had done their best to take control of educational programs designed for their children. The response of the Arizona tribes to the 1970s legislation proved quite mixed, with some groups displaying much more initiative than others. The discussion below reviews the actions of tribes affected by the closing of PIHS during the decade from 1972 to 1982. The differing degrees of success demonstrate why the announced closing of the Phoenix school in 1982 seemed to come too soon for some.

Indian education has been around as long as the tribes, but prior to the 1970s no major legislation had been enacted dealing with Indian self-determination in education. In 1972 and 1975 Congress passed three bills. First came the Indian Education Act, Title IV of Public Law 92-318, enacted on 23 June 1972. Title IV, which pertained to Indian children attending public schools (at that time 68 percent of federally recognized Indian children attended public schools), contained four parts. Part A provided funds to schools for curriculum development and teacher training and made

mandatory parental and community participation in instituting and directing impact aid programs. Part B dealt with cultural and bilingual curriculum materials and a series of grant programs. Part C provided grants for adult education projects, giving preference to Indian tribes, institutions, and organizations. Finally, Part D established an Office of Indian Education in the U.S. Office of Education. What distinguished Title IV from previous legislation was Indian control. Following its passage, Herschel Sahmaunt (Kiowa), president of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), wrote: "In effect, it is the first piece of legislation enacted into law that gives Indian people on reservations, in rural settings, and in the cities, control over their own education."¹

On 2 January 1975 President Gerald Ford signed Public Law 93-580, which provided for the American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC). For the first time Indians themselves would review government programs and policies affecting Native Americans. Three days later the president signed Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. A major feature of this act authorized tribes to contract with the BIA in administering their own programs. These three acts laid the groundwork for Indians to lead and direct their own education.²

This chapter samples the activity of various Arizona tribes and the education of their children (pre-school through high school age) from 1972 through 1982. The tribes and years covered have been chosen because of their relationship to PIHS. Figures for 1975 indicate that 83 percent of the school's students were, in descending order, members of the following tribes: Pima-Maricopa, Apache, Hopi, and Tohono O'odham. A starting date of 1972 was chosen because that was the year the Indian Education Act was passed; 1982

was the year that the closure of Phoenix Indian High School was first announced. Exploring tribal education activity (or lack of it) during this period helps explain the furor that the school's announced closing created among the Indian community in general, and some of the tribes in particular.³

One other tribe, the Havasupai, has been included as a comparison to tribes that had more of a stake in PIHS's closing. Because the larger tribes provided PIHS with many children, it would seem to make sense that a small tribe would carry little clout because so few of its students would be affected by the closing. But despite this, they serve as an example of how vocal tribes became on this issue, regardless of size. By surveying these tribes the following questions may be answered: Did the fact that self-determination legislation was in place by the mid 1970s motivate tribes to strive toward control of their education systems? Was self-determination activity limited unless the tribe was faced with the threat of a school closure? Was there a relationship between tribal size and self-determination activity? The extent of tribal activity has been determined through the use of newspapers, primarily tribal newspapers. Most of the papers were only published for a few years at a time. Only one, the *Fort Apache Scout*, was published during most of the decade covered. However, there is enough information in a sampling of the other papers to get a sense of how the tribes addressed their education needs.

The Pima-Maricopa Indians live on two separate reservations in the Phoenix area: Gila River (pop. 11,550) and Salt River (pop. 5,366). Because the Salt River tribe did not publish a newspaper during this period, information here will focus primarily on the Gila River tribe. According to the *Pima-Maricopa Echo* (1975–82), secondary students from the reservation attended

both public schools (Casa Grande Union High School, Maricopa High School, Carl Hayden High School, Chandler High School, and Coolidge High School) and BIA off-reservation boarding schools (Intermountain Inter-Tribal High School in Utah, Sherman High School in California, Stewart Indian High School in Nevada, and PIHS). By 1975 there are no indications that the tribe had yet taken advantage of the new legislation, but that soon changed.⁴

At a Maricopa Community Meeting on 9 August 1976, the tribe approved an alphabet for reading and writing in Maricopa so that they could develop a written language. This appears to have been their first step toward education self-determination, since the move could have resulted in written materials for use by their children in school. The federal government backed bilingual education in the form of rhetoric and laws, but it did not appropriate enough money to finance the legal mandates. A 1977 article in the tribal paper spoke of the necessity of bilingual and bicultural programs in Indian education and indicated a need for funding. Also in 1977, the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) petitioned the Pinal County Board of Supervisors, requesting that additional land be annexed so that more children would be eligible to attend school in the Sacaton School District rather than in the Coolidge District. Approval, however, would have required a special election, to which the board would not agree. In November of that same year, the tribe sponsored an eight-person delegation to St. Paul, Minnesota, where Indian educators were holding a conference sponsored by the National Indian Education Association. Gila River Indian Community representatives conducted a workshop about the GRIC education program and staffed an exhibit where they answered questions about their community. The exhibit's theme was tribal unity.⁵

The community continued to focus on a variety of education issues. It kept its members informed about education policies being enacted both locally and on the “legislative scene.” One example is Public Law 95-561, the Education Amendments of 1978 which, in part, addressed some of the bureaucratic roadblocks to self-determination, including the makeup of school boards. The law directed that local school boards be composed of members “chosen in accordance with the laws of the tribe to be served or, in the absence of such laws, elected by the parents of the Indian children attending the school.” The GRIC was fortunate because the two federal schools at Casa Blanca and Gila Crossing already had elected, not appointed, school boards; all that needed to be done was to rewrite the constitution and bylaws to “clearly identify” their roles.⁶

Like other tribes, the community had a high dropout rate, but still celebrated its successes in announcements like the following: “In spite of our difficult and trying times in keeping our high school students in school, there will be six seniors graduating from Carl Hayden High School.” (Carl Hayden is located in Phoenix). Each spring its newspaper, like most tribal papers, included a list of the tribe’s high school graduates and the enrollment figures for each of the schools. During the 1978–79 school year the Intermountain Inter-Tribal School enrolled 6 and graduated 1; PIHS, 81 and 13; Stewart Indian School, 94 and 12; and Sherman Indian School, 106 and 9.

The GRIC’s efforts to actively participate in their children’s education extended beyond documenting their successes. Keeping the community apprised of BIA hearings and other education information was also a priority. In December 1979 members were informed of hearings dealing with Indian education policies and standards, and supplied with an address and phone

numbers for further information. A 1980 newspaper notice directed to “All Public School Parent Committees” told of the availability of a new book about public school finance, written “in easy-to-understand terms.” The Gila River Indian Community clearly considered education a priority. Leaders kept tribal members informed and encouraged them to participate in the process.⁷

The Pima-Maricopa have long demonstrated a concern for the education of their members, especially children. As early as 1959 the Gila River Indian Reservation participated in a survey conducted by Arizona State University (ASU) for the BIA. Data was collected concerning the status of reservation education. The university then made recommendations. Although the survey was probably commissioned by the BIA rather than the Gila River tribe, nonetheless the following statement reflects a tribal concern for education: “The adult Indians appear to be appreciative of the educational opportunity provided in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, but, in general, would like to see their children integrated into public schools having a typical cross-section of pupil enrollment.” The survey recommended that the tribal council work with the public schools to “impress on the parents . . . the importance of educational experiences for their children and the need for compulsory attendance laws.” The 1976 “Code of Ordinances of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community” states that school attendance is required for children ages six through eighteen, and that parents are responsible for seeing that this regulation is enforced.⁸

A more recent example of the tribes’ commitment to education occurred in 1978. The Pima-Maricopa Community participated in the “6th Annual Indian Town Hall,” held at the White Mountain Apache Reservation. The topic was state aid to reservation school districts. Although

the tribe indicated they did not yet have a “comprehensive education plan,” their voluntary attendance shows a concern for education. That concern went beyond secondary education, as shown by tribal permission in 1970 to build Scottsdale Community College on the reservation. Tribal commitment and planning for the education of all tribal members, while not large scale and consistent, clearly began before the federal educational self determination legislation of the 1970s.⁹

The Apaches were second to the Pima-Maricopas in enrollment at PIHS in 1975. There are three separate Apache tribes in Arizona, each with its own reservation: the Tonto (Tonto Apache reservation), Apache (San Carlos reservation), and White Mountain Apache (Fort Apache reservation). Two of these tribes, the San Carlos Apache and White Mountain Apache, published newspapers—the *San Carlos Crown Dancer* (1978–80) and *Fort Apache Scout*—during this period.

As of May 1979, the San Carlos Apaches (pop. 10,452) relied on a combination of mission, public, and boarding schools. Secondary schools attended by students from the reservation were Ft. Thomas High School, Globe High School, and Globe Alternative School (Skill Center). Globe Alternative is a vocational school affiliated with Globe High School but housed in a separate location. Half of all 1979 Apache graduates attended this school: as of May 1979, 43 students were enrolled. Graduates from boarding schools included 3 from Intermountain Inter-Tribal; 5 from Phoenix Indian School; 1 from Stewart Indian School; and 4 from Sherman Indian School. In fall 1979 the following numbers of Apache students enrolled in boarding schools: 39 at Phoenix Indian High School; 10 at Intermountain Inter-Tribal; 8 at Stewart Indian School; and 15 at Sherman Indian School.¹⁰

Reflecting the tribe's concern for its youth, an article, "Education is Power," appeared in a September 1979 issue of the *Crown Dancer*, encouraging parents to get involved in their children's education. Two examples further illustrate this concern. In fall 1979 the tribe proposed building a youth center on the reservation in the town of Bylas. The center promised to focus on drug abuse prevention and serve as a recreation room. Second, the Youth Advancement Center provided educational assistance to fifteen and sixteen year olds who had not completed the eighth grade at Rice Elementary School. Two of the major problems facing Indian youth—drugs and dropping out of school—were to be met head-on by the tribe.¹¹

As early as fall 1980, the San Carlos Apaches took advantage of federal education monies. In March of that year they had garnered approval to receive \$317,840 in Johnson O'Malley funds (Public Law 93-638). Then in April, the Rice School Board approved the Johnson O'Malley programs that were to be implemented with the funds in the fall. In the fall of 1980 the breakdown of Apache students returning to boarding schools changed. Although PIHS enrolled only one more student than it had had the previous year (40 versus 39), both Intermountain Inter-Tribal (35 versus 10) and Sherman Indian School (30 versus 15) experienced proportionally large increases. Stewart Indian School had closed the previous spring, forcing its students to choose alternative schooling; PIHS was clearly not the school of choice. Stewart's closing may not have been the only factor affecting shifts in boarding school enrollment. The Skill Center in Globe realized an increase of 87 students between October 1979 and May 1980. A May 1980 article about the center does not mention where the 87 new students came from, but most were probably former boarding school students. The opening of the Skill

Center in 1977 may have encouraged a number of students to stay near home and attend a public rather than a BIA boarding school. Because of costs the federal government also preferred that students attend public schools. Perhaps because the San Carlos tribe has a history of supporting formal education programs for all its members, that during the latter part of the 1970s, the tribe took full advantage of local government programs available for educating its children.¹²

San Carlos Apache history of supporting education extends at least as far back as the 1950s. The tribe's 1956 Revised Law and Order Code specifically addresses "Failure to Send Children to School." Prior to this regulation the tribe participated in an educational "resources development study." Perhaps as a result of this study, as early as 1958 the tribe formed an education committee whose purpose, in part, was to encourage parental interest in education, sponsor extra-curricular activities, and inform members of new programs, regulations, and benefits by controlling agencies. The committee's efforts were reflected in over 90 percent enrollment of school-age children for the period 1949–1961. This committee was active at a time when Indians had virtually no control over their children's education.¹³

And while some Apaches and non-Indians laughed at this committee, pointing out its numerous weaknesses and informalities . . . it was, in fact, at that time the most significant recent attempt on the part of Apaches to initiate some degree of constructive, active participation in a program of vital importance to their future social and economic progress.¹⁴

The White Mountain Apache (pop. over 12,000) have been publishing their newspaper the *Fort Apache Scout* since 1973, allowing for a clearer look

at a tribe during this pivotal decade. As with most other tribes, education news from local, state, and federal levels was included on a regular basis.¹⁵

This large tribe relied on many types of schools. A combination of both on- and off-reservation boarding schools, public, and mission schools were in place in the early 1970s. No new facility was added until fall 1978 when a BIA-operated junior high school opened at Cedar Creek. Even though it was a BIA school, it required community commitment and involvement on a large scale to get started. Travel time was one of the motivations. Parents wanted to eliminate long bus rides—the nearest school was in Whiteriver, about twenty-five miles away.¹⁶

Apart from school facilities, the type of personnel employed clarify the tribe's view of education. In the past (and even now to a lesser degree) non-native Americans in large numbers have been employed to teach Indian children. This was understandable given the fact that until recently relatively few Indians completed college. Nevertheless, the White Mountain Apaches made efforts to remedy this situation. One early example occurred in 1974 when a tribal member, Raymond Endfield, Jr., was hired as director of the Title I and IV programs for Whiteriver Public School District No. 20. He had earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona.¹⁷

School personnel were also instrumental in trying to improve their schools from within. In fall 1975 Cibecue Day School changed its instructional program. The following spring, staff and resource people met with an education professor from Arizona State University to review the school's curriculum materials and programs. Based on this meeting, a set of performance objectives were developed for language, reading, and math. The staff then spent the summer readying the school for these changes. The tribe

also emphasized the role of parents. Included in articles discussing various school programs were comments such as, "It must be emphasized that Indian parents have a role in the programs which affect their children on a day to day basis. An informed parent means parent involvement."¹⁸

A year after President Ford signed the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975), the tribe began to work toward a comprehensive, reservation-wide education program. Tribal education leaders met with local "every day people" (including elementary and high school graduates, college students, and miscellaneous reservation members) to discuss long-range education objectives. They agreed that they needed to find out what the tribal members wanted from their education programs, and then determine how to achieve those goals. They decided to make education their number one priority, stating "It will be up to the people and the Tribal Council to see that objectives are set and followed through." The group was astute in pointing out that the way to upgrade their "standard of living on the reservation" was to "first develop our human resources." Wesley Bonito, community education coordinator, (later appointed to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education by President Ford) said that the workshop "was part of an effort to help promote local community self sufficiency and self determination." This meeting signaled a major turning point in the tribe's development of a more effective education program.¹⁹

Soon after this community meeting, the reservation's first kindergarten opened in the fall of 1976. In November 1976 the tribe received notice that funds were available to construct a new high school. The school was to be completed by June 1979. Tribal leaders also announced that the

Board of Education would solicit input from members concerning “educational desires” for the school.²⁰

Although the tribe made strides in improving its existing schools and acquiring new facilities, they (and other tribes) continued to be plagued with a high dropout and absenteeism rate. But with a renewed commitment to education these problems were faced head on. In May 1978 it was estimated that between 260 and 300 eligible school-age children were not enrolled. To deal with a portion of these children a GED program was designed for those older students who had dropped out. For those who had yet to drop out but were chronically absent, a concerted effort was launched by the tribe in fall 1979.²¹

In September 1979 Bonito warned about beginning-of-school-year absenteeism. He explained that many students would miss school early on and then be behind in their studies for the rest of the school year. Bonito said, “To make sure a student gets the most out of the school years, the family must be involved. . . . the student’s crisis in schooling is that he or she is not receiving firm parental supervision.” In late September Whiteriver Public School District superintendent Clifton Edwards pleaded with parents and families to enroll unregistered students. He reminded them of a tribal regulation requiring children ages 6–16 to attend school. All these efforts illustrate the tribe’s commitment to education on all levels.²²

Efforts to involve parents appeared repeatedly in newspaper articles. Parental involvement was a key component of the Indian Education Act of 1972 and the tribe took it to heart. Educators recognized that children who have trouble in school often have problems at home. It was not sufficient to encourage parent participation in the schools. A July 1978 article featured a

“study group” whose purpose was “for parents to get together, discuss common problems and then work out solutions,” in the hope that it would help some children’s school performance by getting to the root of their problem.²³

As efforts to keep children in school and to assure their success once there continued, other programs were being added to curricula. Bilingual education was one such program embraced by the White Mountain Apache and other tribes. In an effort to preserve tribal languages and cultures, and to help young students do better in school, tribes introduced bilingual education in the late 1970s. Tribal educators found that both goals could be accomplished with this program. The White Mountain Apaches began efforts to incorporate bilingual education in fall 1978.²⁴

In the 1980s the tribe continued to develop its own education program with a focus on self-determination. Their efforts included a program in conjunction with Northland Pioneer College to help Apache teacher aides move into teaching positions. In December 1978 the topic of “reservation school districts” became the focus of the Sixth Annual Indian Town Hall. Representatives from the White Mountain Apaches and eighteen other tribes met at Sunrise (located on the Fort Apache reservation) to discuss a variety of education issues. In 1979 the tribe developed a comprehensive education plan that was compiled from results gathered in a survey conducted the previous year “to find out what the people of the reservation wanted in education, and to establish a plan to help them achieve this.” All these activities formed part of a major effort begun in the 1970s to move the tribe forward. Although no documentary evidence has been located indicating that education received any significant attention from the tribe (except for the Head Start Program)

before the 1970s, the tribe had clearly committed itself to self determination in education by the 1970s.²⁵

The Hopi tribe also placed great importance on all levels of education. In November 1981 the Tribal Council enacted Hopi Tribal Ordinance No. 36, commonly referred to as the Education Ordinance. Previously, three separate school boards had been responsible for education on the Hopi reservation. According to the Tribal Council, "The Ordinance will . . . along with other provisions . . . develop a system so that the educational needs of the Hopi people are kept at a local level. This in turn, will enable the proposed Hopi Junior/Senior High School, which would allow students to be educated on the reservation, to be administered locally by one governing authority."²⁶

In an attempt to preserve their language, the Hopis applied for, and in 1980 began receiving funding for bilingual education. Previous educational efforts included starting a day school (in 1973) that offered services to disabled students (later expanded to include residential students), contracting Hotevilla Bacavi Community School in 1978, holding their first annual education conference in March 1981, and planning for a high school to be built on the reservation. In December 1980 they announced that money had been allocated for the high school, expected to take several years to build. The estimated start date was June 1981 although construction was delayed because of a Reagan Administration proposal to reduce school construction on Indian lands. Planning for the high school had actually begun years earlier in 1974 when the tribe had contracted with the BIA for \$35,000 to fund the initial planning phase. Hopi educators had already been active in Indian education issues at the national level. In November 1974 they presented a workshop about Hopi educational programs and planning at the annual National

Indian Education Conference in Phoenix. They also operated an eight-booth display about Hopi educational activities.²⁷

In March 1982, Hopi tribal chairman Ivan L. Sidney testified before a committee of the Division of Facilities Construction, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. Sidney emphasized the need for money to begin construction on Hopi High School. The tribe had appeared before this committee four times in the previous five years. Previous attempts to obtain funding had been blocked because the Division of Facilities Construction had required the tribe to redesign the entire facility. Sidney expressed tribal concern about the four hundred Hopi high school students “forced” to continue attending BIA boarding schools “whose deteriorating academic and social environment are not only inadequate but dangerous to the emotional and physical well being of our young people.” Other concerns were the “negative impact on the family unit” and the harmful social influences which resulted in “high levels of delinquency and alcohol abuse.” The Hopi tribe is representative of many tribes who have taken a continuing and active role in the education of their members; efforts which too often seem wasted because of bureaucratic roadblocks usually in the form of funding cuts or unavailable funding for previously approved programs and projects.²⁷

The fourth most populous group of students at PIHS during fiscal year 1975 were the Tohono O’odham. The tribe had been active for a number of years in education issues. By 1975, and perhaps sooner, the reservation had a public school, Baboquivari, with an all-Indian school board. By 1979, more than half of the tribe’s students were attending public schools. The breakdown of high school students graduating from boarding schools in spring 1979 was

as follows: 13 from PIHS, 14 from Intermountain Inter-Tribal School, 24 from Sherman Indian School, and 20 from Stewart Indian School.²⁹

The tribal school board, the Indian Oasis School Board, kept step with the many educational changes of the 1970s. In August 1979 the Board of Trustees emphasized the need for more Tohono O'odham teachers. One of their strategies was the Papago Teacher Education Program (PTEP), to be conducted during the 1979–80 school year; and they received a “verbal go ahead” from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to begin planning for a new high school. (The tribe had recently formed a reservation high school district.) The completion of the school was expected to take several years.³⁰

The school board was supported by a tribal council that placed a high priority on education. Tohono O'odham tribal law required children to attend school until age eighteen, two years longer than the age required by Arizona state law. Prior to this time the law had been on the books but was seldom enforced. That changed in November 1979: because of a “serious truancy problem” tribal leaders decided to strictly enforce the law. In December 1979 the tribal government sponsored a conference focusing on boarding school problems, designed to increase tribal members' awareness of the problems experienced by Tohono O'odhams attending off-reservation boarding schools. The meeting stressed student concerns about such topics as leadership, communication, and “apathy created by the apparent lack of tribal representation and concern about boarding school students.” Twenty students participated in the conference and shared their boarding school experiences.³¹

The tribe continued to keep current with education issues. For example, in April 1981 it was announced that construction of a vocational

skills center would begin soon. Nationally, vocational education was becoming a component of many programs. Because the tribe was aware of the education funding programs available to Indian people, they were able in fall 1981, to contract for \$3.5 million in grants and contracts for the 1982 fiscal year. To protect these programs, in November 1981 the tribal council adopted a resolution opposing expected budget cuts by the Reagan administration. All these actions demonstrate the tribe's commitment to education and its awareness of new opportunities in Indian education.³²

Another tribe, the Havasupai, which makes its home in the Grand Canyon, is one of Arizona's smaller tribes—601 members. The tribal capital is located at Supai. As could be expected because of its location and size, meeting the tribe's educational needs was and is difficult. But records indicate that the tribe has a history of concern for meeting these needs. *Wi Gegaba* (*Canyon Shadows*), a tribal newspaper published from 1972–1978 documents their efforts.

As early as 1972, three years before the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act was signed into law, *Wi Gegaba* published an article about the Navajo tribe's request to "take over some or all BIA programs on the reservation." The Havasupai were clearly interested in having control. In that same year one of the tribe's college students was enrolled in a two-year teaching internship program designed to "prepare Indians for teaching in tribal schools." (In 1972 fewer than 3 percent of teachers on reservations were Indian.)³³

In December 1972 the tribal chairman became involved in planning for an Indian-controlled school board. As of that year there were over sixty such boards across the country—but only one in Arizona, run by the Pima-

Maricopa tribe. The Havasupais felt that “soon we may add another.” They hoped to combine forces with their neighbors at Peach Springs, the Hualapai tribe. The Havasupai tribal council proposed a joint school that would include dormitory facilities and be located on the Hualapai reservation. The Hualapais (pop. 1,540) are also a fairly small tribe, but have a larger reservation located just west of the Havasupais. The small size of these two tribes gave them greater flexibility in dealing with the federal bureaucracy. The Havasupais’ interest in education was further illustrated at a November 1972 tribal council meeting. In a discussion concerning funding and program priorities, school operations ranked number one on their list—and three of the ten “priority” programs listed related to education.³⁴

Not everyone in the tribe expressed enthusiasm about the joint boarding school proposal. Some preferred a closer location because of concern about homesickness among the children; but they were reminded by tribal authorities that all other locations had been tried in 1955 when the local school had been closed. (At that time the tribe had a reservation day school, grades 1–4, which reopened in 1965.) Still, opponents persisted, citing lower achievement levels by Indian students at boarding schools. This concern is understandable because the tribe had recently made great strides in raising their children’s achievement scores. A decision was postponed until input could be received from both the parents and children that would be affected.³⁵

In March 1973 the tribe learned that the BIA had set aside some money for a new school building; the existing one being nearly sixty years old and in need of major repairs. They hoped to use the current building for a library, offices, a kindergarten, or storage. The tribal council voted to allocate land next to the present school for the new building. There was discussion about

expanding the school to six grades from the present four (plus three pre-school classes). A general feeling prevailed that if students could stay in their community longer, they would do better academically and otherwise. Also, parents would be more inclined to be interested and involved in their children's progress when they were living at home and attending school locally.³⁶

Student progress was very important to the tribe. Numerous mentions were made throughout the newspaper. Reading and math scores received prominent attention. Children's academic successes were printed for all to see. Parents were encouraged to become involved with education, and their names were also published. The progress and efforts of students and parents alike did not occur in a vacuum. As with other tribes, the Havasupai kept abreast of Indian issues on the national level. They knew that many Indian children, for a variety of reasons, did not perform well in school. In a November 1972 statement, U.S. Civil Rights Commissioner Manuel Ruiz "complained of the lack of Indian teachers and the lack of bilingual and bicultural education and said, 'A teacher must know and understand some of the difficulties facing the children he is teaching.'" This makes it easier to understand the tribe's concern with doing the best job they could in educating their children on the reservation, and their concern with the problems related to students in boarding schools. They strove to produce the best students possible in four years because after that they would have little control over the students' schooling.³⁷

From 1955 to 1965 no school operated on the reservation, so at age five children were sent to boarding schools. Consequently, pushing for two or even four more years of schooling at home had its roots in the tribe's

memory of “those terrible ten years.” By attending school at home, “Our children would have a better chance of successfully adjusting to the outside because they would be more mature. Our children would learn more of the things their own homes have to teach. They would have more help with their school work. Our children would receive better care at home.”³⁸

At the federal level funding for the 1972 Indian Education Act was bogged down in a bureaucratic maze, but at the local level the BIA did make efforts to help the tribes achieve control over their educational systems. In August 1973 a BIA education specialist visited the tribe. He attended a special meeting for parents, tribal council members, and other “interested persons” in order to work with the community to make their school what they wanted it to be. The tribe was pleased with what he had to say and felt that “Men like Mr. Sim[p]son can move the community further along toward the day when the tribe controls its own life.”³⁹

But in spite of local BIA support, the tribe continued to work on its own towards even better schooling for its young. The Day School, which enrolled thirty-seven students in four grades in fall 1973, continued to urge parents to visit the school. The school’s staff participated in a training workshop during the summer and visited Theodore Roosevelt Elementary (boarding) School in Fort Apache in August, bringing along students who would be attending the school. It was reported that “The Day School parents are showing much interest in school affairs this year and should give a great deal to the direction of the school.”⁴⁰

Moving in the direction of greater control and with the help of BIA education specialist Jim Simpson, the tribe made a proposal to the Grand Canyon School superintendent to allow Havasupai high school students to

attend high school at Grand Canyon. The superintendent was enthusiastic about the idea and Simpson found the Grand Canyon community open to the idea. "People in the community said they saw no difference between Indian and other students." The next step was to try to set up a dormitory at Grand Canyon staffed by Havasupai parents. The tribe anticipated a problem with the U.S. Park Service. Apparently the idea had been previously proposed, but, according to the tribe the Park Service wanted "no more Havasupai in the Park and especially not at the residency area, where Mr. Simpson proposes to have the dormitory." But the consensus was to "put the heat on the government so the kids can be near home like other high school students." The tribe began by having members fill out questionnaires concerning the proposal. Nothing came of the proposal. A December 1977 article discussed the woes of boarding schools, such as not having any alternatives close to home if their children were expelled.⁴¹

In 1975 the Havasupai with the aid of the Hualapai tribe explored the possibility of getting money to fund a bilingual program for their children. Other reservations, including the Navajo, had begun to teach children in their native language. Results showed that English could "be introduced to the children as a second language when they already have a good grasp of what school is all about." Experience had shown that this was the better way to learn English. One of the first steps was to convert Havasupai into a written language so that books could be developed for use by the children. Some of the tribe's Head Start Program staff had already begun bilingual training. One of the staff also attended a planning session with the Hualapai tribe which was hoping to introduce the program in both their Head Start and elementary school programs. This illustrates one more way in which tribes,

even small ones, were keeping up with new developments in education and were taking the initiative to incorporate them into their own systems.⁴²

In January 1975 President Ford signed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act which, in part, authorized tribes to contract with the BIA to administer their own programs. In June 1975 the Havasupai tribal council met with BIA officials to discuss, among other things, the management of their day school. They were dissatisfied with the present management and were interested in pursuing the possibility of contracting with the BIA to run the school themselves. The BIA representatives expressed their willingness to help the tribe "in every way possible." It was determined that the school could be placed under tribal management as early as September 1976. The 21 June 1975 issue of *Wi Gegaba* devoted an entire page to "school contracting," so tribal members would understand what they were voting on. People were necessarily concerned about such a major change and needed to understand the process. Once the tribe voted to contract with the BIA the next step was to draft a resolution "asking the BIA to begin arrangements to channel the necessary . . . money to the tribe for running those parts of the school they have decided on." Then the tribe had to establish its own school board "to oversee the operation of the school." On 5 February 1976 the tribe decided to operate the Day School as a tribal contract school. The school's name was changed to Havasupai Elementary School and began operation on 24 August 1976, teaching grades 1 through 6.⁴³

Between 1972 and 1977 the Havasupai made great strides in taking control of and upgrading their educational regime. Introduction of a bilingual education program, increasing the capacity of their elementary school by two grades (from 4th to 6th), and contracting with the BIA to manage their

elementary school are the most dramatic achievements. Other noteworthy accomplishments include pursuing construction of a new school to replace their existing sixty-year-old structure and exploring options for educating their high school students closer to home. This small tribe accomplished a great deal. Because of their limited population and the small number of students affected, the Havasupais' secondary education needs probably did not carry much weight in the 1982 decision to close PIHS. After all, so few would be affected. (In 1976 only 4 Havasupai students graduated from PIHS, 2 from Stewart Indian High School, and 1 from Sherman Indian School). Despite, or perhaps because they had few student at PIHS, the tribe made major efforts to gain control over the education of their young.⁴⁴

Self determination legislation by itself does appear to have motivated or allowed tribes to work toward control over their education. The activity by tribes in the 1970s occurred apart from the threatened closure of schools—which did not happen on a large scale until the 1980s. Tribal size, as illustrated by the Havasupais, seems to have no bearing on self-determination activity. Smaller tribes with smaller bureaucracies may have realized success more easily. Overall Arizona's tribes were making considerable efforts to improve their education systems. Despite the federal legislation of the 1970s, roadblocks continued to exist in the development and control of Indian schools by tribes. Funding was a major problem. Although the government encouraged contract schools, money was often not available to build them. As a result, many Indian communities preferred, if feasible, public schools over BIA contract schools because with public schools a large share of operational costs shifted to the local or state level from the federal government.⁴⁵

Despite some notable effort on the part of those Arizona tribes with students in PIHS to develop their own educational systems, the announced closing of Phoenix Indian School in 1982 came too soon. It took years, in spite of the tribes' efforts, to establish education programs on or near the reservations that would eliminate the need to send students to off-reservation boarding schools. Recognizing that some tribes still needed the Phoenix Indian School, the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) became involved in efforts to keep the school open.

Notes to Chapter Two

¹Margaret Connell Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination*, 2d ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), 199–200; *Wi Gegaba (Canyon Shadows)*, 21 November 1973, p. 8.

²Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*, 201.

³Task Force Five on Indian Education for the American Indian Policy Review Commission, *Report on Indian Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), table 1, p. 242; appendix S, p. 342.

⁴1993–1994 *Tribal Directory* (Phoenix: Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1993). Population figures cited in chapter two are taken from this directory; A survey of several copies of the Gila River Indian Community's newspaper, *The Pima-Maricopa Echo*, was conducted using issues from 1975–1982.

⁵*The Pima-Maricopa Echo*, August 1976, October 1977, May 1977, December 1977.

⁶*U.S. Statutes at Large*, 95th Cong., 2d sess., 1978, vol. 92. p. 92 STAT. 2328.

⁷*Pima Maricopa Echo*, March 1979, May 1979, June 1979, December 1979, January 1980.

⁸*Survey Report of Gila River Indian Reservation Schools*, Prepared at Arizona State University for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, August 1959, p. 2, 39; *Code of Ordinances of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Municipal Code Corp. 1981). This volume is a republication, based on the 1976 Salt River Pima–Maricopa Indian Community Law and Order Code, and ordinances passed subsequently to Ord. No. 40A-77, adopted August 7, 1976, Chapter 11, Article III.

⁹*Reservation School Districts: Report of the 6th Annual Indian Town Hall held at Sunrise Park Hotel, White Mountain Apache Reservation*, December 6–7, 1978 (Phoenix: Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1979), 65.

¹⁰1993–1994 *Tribal Directory*; *San Carlos Crown Dancer*, 25 May 1979, p. 4; 10 August 1979, p. 5; 5 October 1979, p. 3.

¹¹*San Carlos Crown Dancer*, 21 September 1979, p. 2; 19 October 1979, p. 1; 16 November 1979, p. 2.

¹²*San Carlos Crown Dancer*, 28 March 1980, p. 7; 19 September 1979, p. 4; 25 April 1980, p. 1; 19 September 1980, p. 4; 5 October 1979, p. 3; 9 May 1980, p. 4.

¹³*1956 Revised Law and Order Code of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, Arizona*. Section 6.22; *The San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation: A Resources Development Study*, Prepared for the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council by Stanford University (Phoenix: Stanford Research Institute, Mountain States Division, ca. 1954); Edward A. Parmee, *Formal Education and Culture Change: A Modern Apache Indian Community and Government Education Programs*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968), 37–38, 85.

¹⁴Parmee, *Formal Education and Culture Change*, 85; Marvin Mull, Chairman, San Carlos Apache Tribe, to Edward A. Parmee, 8 March 1962, letter in author's possession.

¹⁵*1993–1994 Tribal Directory*.

¹⁶*Fort Apache Scout*, 5 October 1978, p. 3.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, September 1974, p. 9.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, November 1975, p. 10, 7.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, July 1976, p. 16; 22 October 1976, p. 3.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 22 October 1976, p. 10; 12 November 1976, p. 8.

²¹*Ibid.*, 5 May 1978, p. 4.

²²*Ibid.*, 7 September 1979, p. 14; 21 September 1979, p. 5.

²³*Ibid.*, 13 July 1978, p. 4-5.

²⁴*Ibid.*,q 21 September 1978, p. 4, 8.

²⁵*Ibid.* 1 December 1978, p. 10; 1 December 1978, p. 11; 8 February 1979, p. 1. On White Mountain Apache education see also *Comprehensive Educational Plan, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Part 1*, Prepared by the National American Research Assoc., Jerry E. Hutchinson, principal investigator, (Lawrence, Kan.: Native American Research Assoc., 1978).

²⁶*Hopi Tribal News*, October 1982, p. 5; January 1981, p. 1, 5. There are two major factions in the Hopi tribe, one of which does not feel that the Tribal Council speaks for it.

²⁷*Ibid.*, December 1980, p. 1; *Qua' Toqti (The Eagle's Cry)*, 21 November 1974, p. 5; *Hopi Tribal News*, March 1981, p. 3; December 1980, p. 2; March 1982, p. 11; *Oversight of Budgets of Indian Programs in Departments of HUD, Education, and HHS*. Hearing before the Select Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate, March 1, 1982; p. 54; *Qua Toqti*, 7 November 1974, p. 5.

²⁸*Hopi Tribal News*, March 1982, p. 11.

²⁹*Report on Indian Education*, Appendix 5, p. 365; *The Papago Runner*, 8 August 1979, p. 2; 7 June 1979, p. 6.

³⁰*The Papago Runner*, 31 August 1979, p. 5, 2.

³¹*Ibid.*, 30 November 1979, p. 1; 21 December 1979, p. 2.

³²*Ibid.*, 24 April 1981; 16 October 1981.

³³*Wi Gegaba*, 15 September 1972, p. 8; 30 October 1972, p. 6.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 11 December 1972, p. 2-3, 5.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 11 December 1972, p. 6; 7 February 1973, p. 4.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 24 March 1973, p. 6-7.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 23 May 1973, p. 2.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 23 May 1973, p. 5-6.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 29 August 1973, p. 8.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 4 October 1973, p. 6.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 21 November 1973, p. 7-8; 10 March 1974, p. 7; 12 December 1977, p. 3.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 29 March 1975, p. 5.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 21 June 1975, p. 1–2, 4; 15 February 1976, p. 3; 3 September 1976, p. 4.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 7 June 1976, p. 4, 2. On Havasupai education see also the *Havasupai Tribal Code*, (Supai, Ariz.: Havasupai Tribal Council, 1978) which includes a chapter on education.

⁴⁵A series of surveys—which dealt with many areas, including education—were conducted from 1960 through 1966. Most are in questionnaire form, but do address areas such as adult education, education committees, and compulsory school attendance. The 1960–1961 titles read, for example, “Hopi Reservation Report,” whereas 1962–1966 titles read “Survey of the Hopi Reservation.” All were published in Phoenix by the Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs. See *Indian Arizona*, October 1979, p. 10. Although the Indian Education Act was passed in 1972, by May 1973 it was still not being put into effect because appropriated money had been held up by the federal government. *Wi Gegaba* 23 May 1973, p. 3.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INTER TRIBAL COUNCIL OF ARIZONA'S FIGHT TO KEEP THE PHOENIX INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL OPEN, 1982–1988

Although Arizona's tribes attempted to make self-determination a reality, the fate of off-reservation Indian schools hung in the balance. Government officials—up against almost a century of policy that promoted off-reservation assimilationist education—soon discovered that Indians would not easily part with “their” schools. This was clearly the case at PIHS. When the federal government announced in March 1982 that PIHS would close within three years, tribal opposition forced a quick reversal of that decision. A final decision was not reached until 1988 when it was decided that the class of 1990 would be the last. But even this did not occur without opposition and controversy.

Between 1982 and 1988 many groups and organizations fought first to keep the school open and then to have input into the disposition of the property. One organization, the ITCA, was in the forefront of this fight. The ITCA's position throughout this period was that the PIHS should remain open for at least fifteen more years until “educational, economic and social resources [were] developed in local Indian communities; and until alternative arrangements [were] made in the State of Arizona to meet the needs of the students and the potential students served by the school.” In lieu of the school's continued operation, the council proposed the establishment of a federal trust fund to be funded by “proceeds equal to at least 45 percent of the value of the school property;” and the transfer of “an undivided interest

in five acres” of the school’s property to ITCA member tribes “with income from the property interest to be deposited into the trust fund.”¹

The ITCA was formed in 1952 “to provide its members with a united voice to address the issues which affected them collectively or individually.” Initially, this association consisted of the elected leaders of nine Arizona Indian tribes; currently nineteen of Arizona’s twenty-one federally recognized tribes are members. (The Navajo and San Juan Paiute tribes are not members). The ITCA, incorporated in 1975, is headquartered in Phoenix. “The highest elected officials of each tribe—the chairpersons, presidents or governors—sit on the council.” These tribal leaders strive toward a consensus within the council. Consensus is stressed because there is no one Indian viewpoint—the council does not wish to be perceived as speaking with one voice for the member tribes. In 1994 the ITCA operated eighteen projects and received its funding from a number of sources, the majority of which were derived from federal agencies, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the BIA. The state of Arizona was also a large contributor.²

When the BIA announced the planned closing of the school in March 1982, ITCA chairman Ned Anderson (of the San Carlos Apache tribe) responded by saying “the group’s position . . . will have an impact on whether the school will be closed . . . the statewide council will poll tribal leaders for their position on the possible closure before deciding whether to oppose or support it. . . . They [federal officials] have generally gone by our positions.” Before the ITCA had time to formally poll the member tribes, many tribal leaders were already expressing their views to the public.³

Opinions varied—there was no consensus. Although sentiment for the school might have been expected to influence views, little was apparent. Most views were of a practical nature. The following comments illustrated this point: “a closure would be an advantage if it helped speed planned construction of a high school on the reservation,” said Valesquez Sneezy, Sr. of the San Carlos Apache Tribal Council. “The student population is increasing. Instead of closing schools, they should be building a new one every three years,” noted Peter MacDonald, Navajo tribal chairman. There was also “talk” that PIHS might remain open as a technical school. This idea received support from Republican state representative Daniel Peaches of Window Rock who said, “That would bring the concept behind schools like the Phoenix Indian High School up to date. It would really meet today’s needs of Indian young people.”⁴

Such lack of consensus did little to change BIA plans. In April 1983 the BIA released “A Report on Off-Reservation Boarding Schools by the Bureau of Indian Affairs,” in which a closure of PIHS remained as a proposal to the tribes. Off-reservation boarding schools were begun by the federal government in the late nineteenth century and numbered twenty five by 1900. By mid century the need for such schools decreased as “more Indian children were being educated in public schools closer to their homes.” Only ten such schools, with an enrollment of 3,083, remained in 1983. These same ten schools had enrolled 7,031 students in 1960.⁵

The 1983 BIA report included a consolidation plan for the remaining schools to be combined and reduced to seven. “The plan was not designed to accommodate all . . . groups, but rather to provide an improved and adequate ORBS [off-reservation boarding school] system for those students who need

such an educational and residential environment.” The plan included five phases for reaching this goal. Phoenix Indian High School appeared in phase four, with a proposed closing at the end of the 1984–85 school year. The plan originally appeared on 17 March 1982 with a notice published in the *Federal Register*. The notice was followed by a series of public hearings intended “to allow public and tribal comment on the proposed closures.” On 1 April 1982 a hearing was held in Phoenix.⁶

BIA administrator Peter Soho conducted the hearing where many opposed to the closing expressed their views. Chairman Ned Anderson represented the view of the ITCA:

We’re wondering if this is not just another form of genocide. If the tribes want to change the status of the school, that is the tribes’ decision and theirs alone. The school was built for the tribes, not the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

During the five-hour hearing, about seventy people testified against the proposed closure.⁷

Based on public and tribal input, which weighed against PIHS’s closure, and a reexamination of “enrollment trends and utilization of existing facilities,” the BIA modified the initial proposal and decided not to close PIHS. Instead, the 1983 BIA report, which included an outline of initiatives to improve the off-reservation boarding system, became a guide to improve the school. Three initiatives for improvement were: in-service training for each school’s board and staff; implementation of special program offerings above the core curriculum, and implementation of attendance areas for the system.⁸

Nevertheless, the BIA’s intent to consolidate the ORBS was clear, and rumors of the school’s closing persisted. At a February 1985 meeting the ITCA formed the Tribal Leaders Working Group on the PIHS. The working group

reached consensus that the council “should coordinate the follow up activities on the PIHS and that a study be done to assess the potential options open to the tribes as to the disposition of the PIHS and the property on which it is located.” They sent a letter to developer David Eaton, who hoped to commercially develop the Indian school property if the school closed, informing him that “the Tribes are interested in exploring a number of options regarding the PIHS.” In a May 1985 meeting ITCA President Ned Anderson appointed Josiah Moore (of the Tohono O’odham Nation) chair of the working group. (At a later meeting Donald Antone was designated co-chair by the committee.) At this same meeting the committee formally authorized ITCA staff to locate resources to fund the school study.⁹

The committee worked with representatives from local, state, and federal government levels to ensure that Arizona’s tribes would be represented and involved in decisions made concerning PIHS. The working groups also wrote to Congressman John McCain in April 1985 proposing a meeting between ITCA representatives and McCain “to determine a process for arriving at decisions that would be beneficial to all the Indian Tribes in Arizona.” Locally the city of Phoenix proposed that the city, the Veteran’s Administration, and ITCA pass a joint resolution to petition Congress to support select designated uses for the PIHS land including: commercial use, new education facilities for Indian students, facilities for the Veteran’s Administration, and a city park. The committee, in a September 1985 letter to Vice-Mayor Howard Adams, indicated that “a resolution is premature as to the disposition of the Phoenix Indian High School and property.”¹⁰

The ITCA spearheaded the effort to organize a PIHS task force after Josiah Moore, chair of the ITCA’s working group, had traveled to

Washington, D.C. to propose an impact study. Moore met with staff from the BIA, and Senator Barry Goldwater's and Congressman Morris Udall's offices. Bruce Wright of Udall's office proposed that a "staff level task force" would "be responsible for identifying, clarifying and defining the issues . . . and would develop a process for arriving at decisions in regard to PIHS." Such a task force promised to help "depoliticize" the situation. The group would include two representatives from the ITCA, and individuals from the offices of Congressmen Udall and McCain, Senators DeConcini and Goldwater, and the Phoenix mayor's office. On 11 October 1985 the first meeting of the local staff level task force was held in Phoenix. Before the meeting's conclusion Josiah Moore stated the continued position of the Arizona tribes—that Phoenix Indian School should remain open, and that the property should be retained by the tribes. He did, however, agree that communication with the City of Phoenix should also continue.¹¹

In an October 1985 letter to United States Congressman Morris K. Udall, (chairman of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs) Donald Hodel, U.S. secretary of the Interior, referred to 1984 fiscal year appropriation conference and Senate reports that mentioned the closure of the PIHS on completion of Hopi High School. Hodel indicated that subsequent language in a statement included in a BIA "list of all closure or consolidation plans with the bureau's rationale for such actions" read, "No decision has been made on any of the adjustments described." This list was requested by the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee following hearings on the 1986 fiscal year budget. Based on the 1986 statement in the BIA list report Hodel indicated that "In the absence of any subsequent direction from Congress, the

Bureau would normally proceed on the basis of what we believe to be express congressional intent.”¹²

In early 1986 the ITCA developed a timeline for its impact study with a targeted completion date of July 1986. The urgency to complete the study was probably attributable to a December 1985 BIA evaluation report on PIHS. Although the team evaluation was not an attempt to determine if PIHS should remain open, it was nevertheless a document to be viewed warily. According to the BIA, the “basic” purpose of the evaluation was “to determine if the Phoenix Indian School [was] in compliance with the approved projects as agreed upon between the bureau and the school.” A secondary purpose was “to determine whether sound educational practices [were] being followed by the school board, administrative staff and the teachers in the Phoenix Indian School.”¹³

The evaluators found sloppiness in recordkeeping, attributable in part to “total conflict” between “the academic staff and the residential staff.” Lack of compliance in approved programs was also observed. The BIA made recommendations “to assure that the Phoenix Indian school is in compliance with the approved projects.”¹⁴

Another project that consumed a fair amount of the ITCA’s time in early 1986 was a management review. The catalyst for the management review were events that began in April when school principal Richard Christman was reassigned to a BIA administrative position. This move was prompted by a number of serious incidents at the school including the “multiple stabbing of a male student.” ITCA president Donald Antone sent a letter on 9 April to Henrietta Whiteman, Director of the Office of Indian Education Programs, requesting Christman’s “immediate suspension.” On 18

April the governing board met and decided to request Christman be suspended, arranged for an assembly at the school, requested the ITCA prepare and submit a letter to federal authorities, and asked the ITCA to recommend a plan for reviewing PIHS's administration that would include participation by the ITCA, PIHS board, and the BIA. The management review was to be used by the school's governing board in "taking the lead" to help make changes in the school's operation.¹⁵

A 24 April assembly of the school's governing board, the ITCA, tribal leaders and representatives, the Tribal Education Committee, school staff, students, and parents, was held in the school's gymnasium. The gathering tried "to assure the students and staff . . . [of] the concern of the tribal community regarding the continued serious incidents of violence . . . and to express support for orderly programmatic and policy changes that must occur for the safety and well being of the students."¹⁶

In June 1986 the ITCA completed the requested "management review" for the school's governing board. The results were less than satisfactory and in some respects mirrored those in the BIA's 1985 team evaluation report. Overall, communication and coordination were found to be sorely lacking. Communication, which appears to have been almost non-existent between the various departments within the school, was especially limited between academic and dorm staff personnel. Activities took place within a vacuum with little overall coordination. As a result, many incidents occurred which might otherwise have been avoided and the school's governing board spent too much time reacting to problems rather than solving them. ITCA recommendations covered every facet of the school's operation. Lack of involvement—by parents, individual tribes, and the school's own governing

board—stood out glaringly in the review. More than a decade after passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975—legislation meant to encourage Indians to become active in education issues—involvement was almost non-existent at PIHS, except in reaction to individual problems. The school’s governing board however, was applauded for securing the services of the ITCA in order to correct a bad situation.¹⁷

Following the ITCA’s management review, and within months of the release of the BIA’s unfavorable team evaluation report, the ITCA was dealt another, more severe blow. The council received information from Senator Goldwater’s office that the PIHS property was being transferred from the BIA to the Bureau of Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service. This occurred when the Bureau of Fish and Wildlife “entered into an agreement with an entity in Florida to trade 128,000 acres of Everglades and \$50 million dollars for the PIHS school property.” In a May 21st press release the council voiced its opposition to this proposal. The council noted that it had been assured that it would “be a part of any decision in the disposal of the property in the event the school is closed.” The ITCA also felt that Arizona tribes would not benefit and that the federal government would receive little benefit “compared to the extraordinary profits that will be reaped by the Collier Corporation in Florida who will also receive even more extraordinary profits from the development of the Phoenix Indian High School site.” Apparently this is when the ITCA first became aware of the Barron Collier Corporation—the group that would emerge the victor in the fight for this most valuable piece of federal property. The Collier Corporation of Naples, Florida, had been active in downtown development in Tampa and was one of Florida’s largest landholders. In conjunction with the press release a press

conference was called by the City of Phoenix and the ITCA. Phoenix mayor Terry Goddard, Josiah Moore, and Donald Antone “expressed their displeasure with the Department of the Interior regarding the Department’s underhanded actions.”¹⁸

The following day Ross O. Swimmer, assistant secretary for Indian Affairs responded to the press release, stating that he supported the “general concept,” but was “not totally sold on the idea,” of exchanging PIHS for \$50 million and approximately 115,000 acres of Florida swampland should the Indian school close. The plan would provide “a substantial benefit to the tribes and would protect and enhance the educational programs the BIA could provide for the Indian Community in the Southwest.” Twenty million dollars of the money would be used to build an Indian school somewhere in the United States. Swimmer defended the transfer of the property from the BIA indicating that if the school were closed by Congress the property would be disposed of by the General Services Administration (GSA) “with no benefit to the tribes or Indian people.” Swimmer’s statement emphasized the importance of tribes being consulted and sharing any benefits derived should the property be sold.¹⁹

The ITCA immediately circulated a copy of Swimmer’s statement along with copies of two related articles and an editorial from the *Arizona Republic* and *Phoenix Gazette* newspapers to all tribal leaders. The memo indicated the Council would be calling a meeting in the “immediate future.” On 3 June a special meeting was called at the ITCA offices to brief and update members on recent events concerning the disposition of the PIHS property, to discuss and direct activities of the Working Group and, to review current activities related to PIHS’s operations.²⁰

The “general feeling” of participants was that the school was needed. The council passed a motion “that the PIHS be continued to assure that each child has a reasonable place to attend school.” A fallback position concerning how the tribes would work with the City of Phoenix in developing proposals for the land was also discussed. Phoenix and the tribes clearly had different interests, but it was unanimously agreed that the council “would continue to work with the City of Phoenix on a plan.” It also decided to call for a moratorium on the administration’s actions regarding the PIHS property “until a plan is in place for the use of the property.” The proposal was then submitted to the Arizona congressional delegation. Finally, in response to Swimmer’s statement of 22 May, the membership, who felt “his response was very poor” and showed a “lack of support for the Tribes,” moved to send a letter to Swimmer and President Ronald Reagan expressing their disappointment.²¹

Another ITCA project during the first half of 1986 involved a study conducted jointly with the BIA, ITCA staff, and tribal representatives, to be used “to develop information on the educational and adolescent care of Indian students at the PIHS.” The ITCA’s social and educational personnel assisted the BIA in gathering the necessary information. This study and the earlier management review of PIHS, along with the ITCA’s involvement, were especially important because of PIHS’s precarious position. Its continued existence could have depended on the outcome of both studies. John Lewis, ITCA executive director, emphasized the importance when he stressed the need to “carefully review the outcome of the [BIA] study and to become involved with the study with regard to the property issue.”²²

The study, titled "Tribal Perspectives on the Needs for Off Reservation Boarding Schools," was completed in the summer of 1986. Including both the PIHS and Sherman Indian School in Riverside, California, it was submitted to the BIA, the Senate Select Committee, and the House Interior Committee in August. The study recommended that PIHS remain in operation for fifteen years until local resources could be developed to meet the needs of students.

The study used the availability of local resources such as transportation, facilities, programs, and services as a measuring stick. The BIA's leading argument for closing the school was that the completion of schools on the Tohono O'odham and Hopi reservations would greatly reduce the need for the PIHS. The study addressed in detail both the issue of local resources and the opening of the new schools.

Transportation had always been a major difficulty on large reservations. Approximately half of the students attending PIHS did not have access to transportation to local schools. Extracurricular activities were unavailable to some students because of distance to school and lack of transportation. By contrast boarding schools allowed students access to such activities.

Perhaps more important, local resources also took the form of school programs that address the problems of students with special needs. Many local reservation schools could not provide programs for these students. Such students were passed onto schools like PIHS. Consequently, many students attending boarding schools had "special needs in the areas of behavioral health, education, family and home life." The study found that approximately half of the students attending boarding schools did so "because they [had] academic deficiencies or unique linguistic/cultural needs that . . . [could not]

be served in local schools.” Finally, “Boarding schools [had] programs designed to deal with specific academic deficiencies of Indian students.”²³

The study also disputed the BIA’s contention that new schools on the Tohono O’odham and Hopi reservations would reduce the need for off-reservation boarding schools. Tohono O’odham and Hopi students comprised less than 35 percent of the enrollment of both PIHS and Sherman Indian School. The study noted that these same students were “not disproportionately represented in the special educational and social programs of the school.” In other words Indian students from reservations not scheduled to receive new schools in the near future also required access to special programs that were not available to them at home.²⁴

The BIA was also guilty of comparing apples to oranges. Both of the new Tohono O’odham and Hopi schools were to be day schools, and some students from each tribe would continue to “need the residential services and the structured support of a boarding school program.” Furthermore, a couple of new schools would not be enough. If PIHS and Sherman Indian School were closed existing social service programs would not be able to handle the “increased caseloads of students living at home.”²⁵

The BIA was not satisfied with the results of the study and its final report, a document titled “Review of Phoenix and Sherman Indian High School,” favored closing PIHS. The ITCA critiqued the review prior to its submission to Congress. In a letter addressed to Dr. James Martin, assistant director of the Office of Indian Education, ITCA President Antone indicated that the review “fails to make its case” for closing PIHS. He stated that the BIA did not “adequately determine the educational and social needs of the Indian students who are now attending . . . nor of those youths who may be potential

students." Antone felt the BIA gave too much attention to costs rather than to their "responsibility . . . to educate Indian youth." He also pointed out that not educating Indian children would cost more, for unless individuals became self sufficient they added to the unemployment rate and welfare rolls, and drained other social services.²⁶

Independent of the council, Josiah Moore, chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation, contacted Martin on 10 December 1986. Moore emphasized that the BIA's concern with cost-effectiveness was "overshadowing" its responsibility in properly educating Indian children. He accused the BIA of ignoring the "adequate input" of "students, parents and tribal governments." His letter illustrated the concerns of tribes that had many students attending PIHS.²⁷

Additional comments in the ITCA's critique of the BIA review concerned enrollment and BIA policy. Although the review indicated a decline in enrollment during the 1970s, the ITCA pointed out that no BIA high schools were built in either the 1960s or 1970s. Also, "no public or Bureau schools were built in local tribal communities during the 1970s in Arizona." Furthermore, records showed that PIHS enrollment had been "rising steadily since 1980," and continued until 1985 when the school's rumored closing affected the enrollment level. The critique pointed out that the BIA was failing in its trust responsibility to "educate Indian youngsters as outlined in the 'United States President's Special Message on Indian Affairs in 1970,'" which said that it was not generosity but the government's obligation concerning the United States' "trust relationship with Indian people."²⁸

Bureau of Indian Affairs policy was also taken to task. Closing PIHS and sending Arizona students to Sherman Indian School would grossly

distort the BIA's policy to "educate Indian children as close to their homes as possible." The critique further noted that 85 percent of Sherman's students were Arizona Indian students. Obviously, keeping PIHS open and closing Sherman would make more sense, but the critique did not consider this a viable alternative because many Indian students were not "receiving educational services." More, not less schools were needed. Even with new tribal school openings there would "continue to be students . . . who, for educational or social reasons, [would] need boarding school services."²⁹

In terms of the survival of PIHS the ITCA was willing to put forth a best-case scenario, even if it meant downplaying Sherman's qualities as compared to those of the PIHS. This tactic became necessary because of the BIA review's bias in favor of Sherman. The ITCA thus critiqued areas of comparison between the two schools previously reviewed by the BIA such as student grade equivalency, academic programs, alcohol problems, and facilities.

The BIA maintained that academic programs at Sherman were "better meeting student educational needs . . . because the grade equivalency scores among 12th graders are a little higher at Sherman than those at Phoenix." The ITCA retorted that this one criteria should not be used to reach such a "serious conclusion," and that the "academic community would be appalled." The bureau also determined that academic programs at the school were similar without conducting a systematic evaluation as to the need or effectiveness of the individual programs at each of the schools. To the BIA this indicated a disregard for the unique student makeup of each school and, consequently, what types of programs best served each school's population.³⁰

Substance abuse, primarily in the form of alcohol, created problems at both schools. The review assumed that students were placed in the respective schools because of pre-existing substance abuse problems, but provided no substantiation. It also argued that PIHS could not deal with such problems because of the large dormitory population and an untrained staff. The review neglected to mention that Sherman maintained a similar dormitory population and a staff with job descriptions comparable to that of Phoenix. By not offering any hard data to support its position the BIA showed an obvious bias toward Sherman Indian School.³¹

Finally, the BIA review included a comparison of the two facilities' structures. Although a table in the review showed that annually it cost almost \$304,000 more to "operate and maintain Sherman than Phoenix," this fact was not included in the body of the review. Instead, the text emphasized the deterioration of PIHS, neglecting to explain that the bureau had failed to "carry out their maintenance responsibilities and improvement plans over the last five years." The review emphasized how "completely modern" Sherman was and indicated that "Phoenix is becoming obsolete." The review also considered only two options in their analysis of projected operational costs: keeping both schools open or keeping only Sherman open. The ITCA argued, based on dollar figures, that a third option—closing Sherman and keeping Phoenix open—would save money.³²

In its conclusions the ITCA's critique disagreed with the bureau's definition of "cost effectiveness." The ITCA argued that the BIA's proposed solution would effectively prevent many Indian students from attending school altogether. The council questioned the "cost effectiveness" of not having students attend school at all pointing out the potential of increased

unemployment statistics, larger welfare rolls, and an increased need for other assistance programs. They argued that in the long run “would it not be more cost effective to identify the drop outs and counsel them [back] into school?” Finally, they questioned the review’s recommended closure of the Phoenix facility during the 1987–88 school year by citing, in part, Public Law 95-561 (as amended by P.L. 99-89) which reads:

No irreversible action may be taken in furtherance of any such proposed school closure, consolidation or substantial curtailment (including any action which would prejudice the personnel or programs of the school) until the end of the first full academic year after such report is made.

Further cited, from the Appropriations Act for 1987, was a clause that read, “The Secretary of the Interior shall take no action to close the school or dispose of the property of the Phoenix Indian School until action by Congress.” Clearly the ITCA still had some ammunition, in the form of legislation, with which to fight. In spite of these legislative roadblocks on 3 February 1987 the BIA submitted their “Review of Phoenix and Sherman Indian High School” to Congress.³³

Two days later the ITCA circulated to all Arizona tribal leaders their “backup position” in the form of a memo and attachment that included a draft of the “proposed legislative concepts” on PIHS to be used in the event that the school should close. The ITCA wanted to make it perfectly clear that Arizona’s Indian people wanted something if the school closed. The draft had been approved at a January 28th meeting of the ITCA. It also “took action to request the Arizona congressional delegation to introduce the legislative concepts.” The concepts included the following:

1. One-half of the value of the property would be set aside for the benefit of the ITCA member tribes.
2. Forty-five percent of that amount would be a trust fund managed by the Secretary of the Treasury.
3. Five percent would be five acres of PIHS property.
4. The interest from the trust fund would be used to provide supplemental educational and child welfare programs for the member tribes of the ITCA.

After passing the draft, it directed Antone to “write a letter requesting early introduction of the bill by the Congressional delegation.”³⁴

Congressman Morris Udall, representing the U.S. House of Representatives Interior Committee, held a hearing on 13 February to “clear the air” about PIHS. Antone testified on behalf of the council. After explaining the historical background of the school, he discussed the proposed closure, reiterating many of the findings in the study; gave a summary analysis of the report—most of which had been contained in the critique of the review; discussed school operations; and closed with views on the “principles for meeting the continuing needs of Indian youth.”³⁵

Regarding school operations Antone remarked that recently “poor management practices and continued rumors of school closure have resulted in demoralizing morale among students and faculty and declining enrollment.” He voiced the importance of properly maintaining the school, operating it “under sound and efficient management practices,” and making “the educational and social well being of the students . . . the highest priority.” Because of recent administrative and financial mismanagement the principal had been relieved of his duties—but was still drawing a salary—and the

athletic program had been terminated. Antone requested a congressional review of the “management and operation of the school.”³⁶

On the “principles for meeting the continuing needs of Indian youth,” he cited data from the 1980 census that showed approximately one-third of Arizona Indian students of high-school age were neither attending nor had completed high school. Antone said that neither “the BIA nor the public schools are adequately addressing this problem,” and that the bureau was failing in its “trust responsibility to educate Indian youngsters.” He then outlined legislation that the ITCA wanted introduced in the event of the school’s closure in order to ensure that “suitable alternative arrangements . . . to meet the needs of the students” be made, and that the Arizona tribes’ benefit from the disposition of PIHS property. According to Antone this proposed legislation would—in the event of the school’s closure—“accommodate a land exchange.”³⁷

Within days of the public hearing Antone contacted Interior Secretary Hodel to protest the BIA’s plans to begin closing PIHS by 1 March. He cited a 3 February 1987 letter written by assistant BIA secretary Swimmer to House speaker Jim Wright, that had been submitted the same day as the BIA’s review was given to Congress. Antone indicated that without congressional approval and on such short notice, the closing was “unlawful.” He warned that such actions would “seriously compromise the good faith efforts of the Arizona tribes to work out a reasonable legislative solution to the issues of the school.” The ITCA president asked that Hodel not allow implementation of the proposed actions until Antone had had a chance to “thoroughly” review the situation; and he requested a meeting with Hodel “as soon as possible to present our case.”³⁸

Problems in Washington served to unite the Arizona tribes. The council received strong individual tribal support in the wake of U.S. legislative antics. For example, two tribes—each with numerous students enrolled at PIHS—passed resolutions. In May 1986, the White Mountain Apache Tribe declared its opposition to the transfer of PIHS property from the BIA to the Bureau of Fish and Wildlife “for eventual transfer to Collier Enterprises, a Florida Developer, in exchange for Florida swamp land and \$50 million dollars.” Their unequivocal response requested that the Arizona congressional delegation “oppose this deceitful seizure of land.” On 5 February 1987 a second resolution from the White Mountain Apache called for BIA operation of PIHS until alternative arrangements were made for students; a BIA plan for the disposition of the school to be approved by Congress; that a trust fund be established to benefit Arizona tribes in the event the Phoenix property was sold; and passage of the disposition plan for PIHS drafted by the ITCA. On 2 March 1987 the Tohono O’odham Legislative Council overwhelmingly approved a resolution stating that “the Tohono O’odham Nation fully supports the language in the legislative proposal” submitted by the ITCA. This resolution passed in spite of the fact that the tribe—which had seventy-six students enrolled at off-reservation boarding schools—was opening a new high school in the fall. Even with the new school they felt “there is still a need for alternative facilities and programs for those students who reside too far from reservation secondary schools and for those who are referred for social reasons.”³⁹

In the meantime 1 March 1987 came and went without official word concerning the school’s fate. Later that month Congressmen Udall, Campbell, and Rhodes introduced legislation (H.R. 1758) that would prohibit PIHS’s

closure “until the educational needs of Indian children are satisfactorily provided for,” and would establish a trust fund for ITCA–member tribes. Following this the school received a reprieve: it would remain open at least through the next year.⁴⁰

This shot in the arm renewed efforts to improve the school. At a 14 April 1987 meeting of the council’s Education Working Group, PIHS principal Fred Wilson presented a report on the school’s programs and operations. The school’s administration was developing two operational plans—one that would accommodate 200 students, the other 400 students. At that time 196 students were enrolled. Wilson informed the committee that the school still met minimum BIA boarding school and North Central accreditation standards. The interscholastic sports program, which had been eliminated at the end of the academic year, was scheduled to begin again in fall 1987. Wilson explained that Congress still needed to address funding for the school’s continued operation, although it had directed the BIA to keep the school open until further notice.⁴¹

Despite Congress’ moratorium on the BIA’s closing of the Phoenix Indian School, on 22 July 1987 the bureau scheduled a public meeting to solicit public comment on the historic and cultural value of the school. The ITCA attended because of its education working group devoted to “cultural resource issues of interest to tribes,” but criticized the BIA for ignoring Congress’ directive to “take no action to close the school or dispose of the property . . . until Congress has specifically approved school closure or provided for disposition of the property in legislation,” and for not providing adequate, timely notice of the meeting, contrary to the National Historic Preservation Act regulations concerning public meetings. (At least fifteen

days notice is required, but in this case only three days was given.) They felt that limited notice by the Department of the Interior did not show a “serious effort” on the part of the department “to obtain tribal participation in the identification and evaluation of the historic and cultural values of the Phoenix Indian High School.”⁴²

After testifying briefly as to the school’s historic and cultural significance, the ITCA recommended that if and when Congress closed the school, the Department of Interior hold a meeting after giving tribal leaders and students adequate notice, and that the department conduct a study of the “historical and cultural values” of all the school’s property and buildings, including the oral histories of former students. The following day the ITCA sent a letter to Secretary Hodel which included an abbreviated copy of these comments.⁴³

A week later ITCA President Antone went to Washington to testify before the House of Representatives’ Interior Committee. For the record he submitted a written statement reiterating the council’s position on the school. The statement provided background on the status of reservation high schools, ITCA activity since May 1986 when the study group was formed to investigate the necessity of the Phoenix and Sherman boarding schools, pending land transfer proposals, the cultural and historic value of the school, and pending legislation. He concluded by restating the council’s position concerning any final decision made by Congress.⁴⁴

By late fall 1987 Arizona’s Congressional delegation, headed by Morris Udall, had narrowed the field of land transfer proposals to one—the Baron Collier family of Florida. Between autumn 1987 and autumn 1988 the ITCA and other groups concerned with saving PIHS were involved in a flurry of

activity. Although the council still hoped that the school could remain open for approximately fifteen more years, being realistic, they focused much of their effort on getting a fair deal for Arizona's tribes. In May 1988 the ITCA sent a Mailgram to the House Interior Committee commenting on the bill introduced in the House by Congressman Udall that would permit the trade of PIHS land for Florida Everglades land. The council, pleased that the bill endorsed in principle the creation of a trust fund for Indian education, disliked the dollar amount (about \$33 million) which fell short of its request for an amount equal to 50 percent of the "fair market value" of the property. It also reiterated its desire for a provision that would "set aside at least five acres of land to serve as a site for any building which is determined to be preserved for its historic and cultural values." The following month the ITCA staged a last ditch effort to establish a new working group of tribal leaders charged with the task of developing alternatives for keeping PIHS land.⁴⁵

In support of the council's efforts, Reno Johnson, Sr., White Mountain Apache tribal chairman, sent a letter to Congressman Udall in July 1988 opposing the land exchange and urging that PIHS remain open until provisions were made "to meet the educational and social needs of Indian students in Arizona." He noted that only five Arizona reservations had high schools, and this, coupled with a 36 percent dropout rate among Indian youth, meant that PIHS was still a necessity, and shipping students to California was "simply preposterous." The strongly worded letter criticized the BIA for allowing the physical facilities at the school to deteriorate, supported the proposed trust fund and retention of some of the property for historic

preservation purposes, and questioned the decision to give the Veteran's Administration a portion of the land.⁴⁶

In late July 1988 the ITCA made its final appearance before a congressional committee to once more plead its case before a final vote on the land swap. Within days the bill cleared the House and, finally, in October, the Senate also approved the bill. Final approval for the land swap with the Colliers came in November 1988 when President Reagan signed a lands package that included the PIHS swap. The package had a \$35 million Indian-education trust fund, but not the five acres of land. It set a closure date of May 1990, which saddened many who had hoped the school would be able to celebrate its 100th birthday by remaining open until 1991. With the closing of the school a certainty, the ITCA channeled its efforts into ensuring that Arizona's tribes would continue to have input into the disposition process. Thereafter, most of its energies were expended on details concerning the trust fund.⁴⁷

One could argue that the council did not react soon enough to avert the school's closure. The ITCA did not form a committee to deal exclusively with PIHS until 1985 in spite of the announced closing in 1982. Even though there was a reprieve in 1985, one might have expected the council to have been more sensitive to the self-determination trend that had begun in earnest in the mid 1970s. This trend—for the federal government to get out of the Indian education business—was being embraced nationally by many tribes. One explanation for the slow reaction is that because so few Arizona tribes were still utilizing the school to any great degree, the ITCA was not being pressured by most tribes to put all its efforts into trying to keep the school open. Therefore, while much was done between 1985 and 1988, the ITCA

could have, if it had had nearly universal tribal backing, done more and done it sooner.

Notes to Chapter Three

¹“Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, Phoenix Indian School, Public Hearing in Washington, D.C., Testimony of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona,” 25 July 1988, 1–3. Copy in the possession of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona (hereafter referred to as ITCA files).

²“1992 Annual Report of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.” ITCA files, 1, 7.

³“A Look at Uncertain Future,” *Arizona Republic*, 28 March 1982, B-1.

⁴“Tribes, Faculty, Students Oppose Indian School Closure,” *Arizona Republic*, 24 March 1982, B-1.

⁵“A Report on Off-Reservation Boarding Schools Operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.” Prepared by the BIA’s Office of Indian Education Programs. April 1983, p. 1. ITCA files.

⁶*Ibid.*, 2–4.

⁷“Tribes Protest Plan to Close Indian School,” *Arizona Republic*, 2 April 1982, B-1.

⁸“A Report on Off-Reservation Boarding Schools,” 4, 7–9.

⁹ITCA, “Phoenix Indian High School Property,” December 1985, p. 1–2. ITCA files; ITCA to Congressman Morris K. Udall, 20 September 1985, *ibid.*; ITCA to David Eaton, President, Fairfield-Eaton, Inc., 14 March 1985, *ibid.*

The “Committee” or Working Group” was formally approved at a 16 May 1985 ITCA meeting, and included the following members: Donald Antone, Sr., Gila River Indian Community; David Ramirez, Pascua Yaqui Tribe; Edgar Walema, Clinton Pattea, Ft. McDowell Indian Community; Josiah Moore, Tohono O’odham Nation; Gerald Anton, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; Anthony Drennan, Colorado River Indian Tribe; Ned Anderson, San Carlos Apache Tribe.

¹⁰ITCA, “Phoenix Indian High School Property,” p. 2–3; Ned Anderson, president, ITCA to to Congressman John McCain, 17 April 1985, ITCA files; Josiah Moore to Vice Mayor Howard Adams, 19 September 1985, *ibid.* See also ITCA to Donald P. Hodel, Secretary, Department of the Interior, 17 April 1985, *ibid.*

¹¹ITCA, Minutes of meeting of Tribal Chairmen's Working Group on the Phoenix Indian High School, 3 October 1985, ITCA files. Individuals proposed to serve on the staff level task force included: Bruce Wright and Debbie Brokenrope, Congressman Morris K. Udall's office; Greg Houtz, Congressman John McCain's office; June Tracy, Senator Dennis DeConcini's office; Twinkle Thompson, Senator Barry Goldwater's office; staff from the Mayor's office, City of Phoenix; two staff level individuals from the ITCA (later determined to be John Lewis, ITCA director, and Alberta Tippeconnic, ITCA assistant director).

¹²Donald Paul Hodel to Morris K. Udall, (undated copy [October 1985]), ITCA files.

¹³ITCA, "Tribal Perspectives on the Functions and Needs for an Indian Boarding School," n.d. [early 1986], ITCA files; Levon French, "Team Evaluation: Phoenix Indian School: Phoenix Arizona," December 1985, p. 1, *ibid.* This document includes two cover memos: one, dated January 10, 1986, to the Education Program Administrator, Phoenix Area; the other, dated January 7, 1986, to Acting Director, Office of Indian Education Programs. French was BIA education specialist.

¹⁴"Tribal Perspectives," p. 10 and 7 January 1986 memo.

¹⁵Donald Antone to Henrietta Whiteman, 9 April 1986, ITCA files; Donald Antone et al. to ITCA Tribal Chairmen, 18 April 1986, *ibid.* Phoenix Indian High School's board had only existed autonomously since 1986. Prior to then the school had shared a board with Sherman Indian School.

¹⁶"Indian School Head is Reassigned by BIA after Parents' Gripes," *Arizona Republic*, 26 April 1986, B-4.

¹⁷ITCA, "Management Review, Phoenix Indian High School," June 1986, ITCA files.

¹⁸ITCA Special Meeting Summary, 3 June 1986, p. 1, ITCA files; ITCA press release, 21 May 1986, *ibid.*; "Land swap plan angers mayor, Indian leaders," *Phoenix Gazette*, 23 May 1986, B-1, 4.

¹⁹Ross O. Swimmer, assistant secretary for Indian Affairs, statement of 22 May 1986, ITCA files; "Official terms idea 'good concept'," *Phoenix Gazette*, 23 May 1986, B-1.

²⁰ITCA memo, May 23, 1986, ITCA files; ITCA Special Meeting Summary, 3 June 1986, p. 1–2, *ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*, 2–3.

²²ITCA testimony at Public Hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Interior Committee, Phoenix, Arizona, 13 February 1987, p. 3, ITCA files; ITCA Special Meeting Summary, p. 3.

²³ITCA, “Tribal Perspectives on the Needs for Off Reservation Boarding Schools,” 31 July 1986, p. 45, ITCA files.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 46–47.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 46–47.

²⁶Donald Antone to Dr. James Martin, assistant director, Office of Indian Education, 16 December 1986, ITCA files.

²⁷Josiah Moore to Dr. James Martin, 10 December 1986, ITCA files.

²⁸ITCA, Critique of “Review of Phoenix and Sherman Indian High School, Bureau of Indian Affairs Report,” 3 February, 1987, p. 2-3, ITCA files.

According to Peter Iverson at least one BIA high school was built during the 1960s–70s—Many Farms High School, built on the Navajo reservation in 1960.

²⁹Antone to Martin, 16 December 1986; ITCA, Critique, 1-2.

³⁰ITCA, Critique, 4-5.

³¹*Ibid.*, 4-5.

³²*Ibid.*, 5-6.

³³*Ibid.*, 7-8.

³⁴John R. Lewis, ITCA director, to Tribal leaders, 5 February 1987, from ITCA meeting minutes, 28 January 1987, p. 1-2, ITCA files. This document includes the third draft of the legislative proposal.

³⁵ITCA testimony at Interior Committee Public Hearing, 13 February 1987.

³⁶Ibid., 7–8.

³⁷Ibid., 9–10.

³⁸Donald Antone to Secretary of the Interior Donald Paul Hodel, 17 February 1987, ITCA files.

³⁹“Resolution of the White Mountain Apache Tribe of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation,” Resolution Number 86-151, 27 May 1986, ITCA files; “Resolution of the Tohono O’odham Legislative Council (Phoenix Indian High School),” Resolution Number 69–87, 2 March 1987, ITCA files.

⁴⁰“Selected Events and Actions of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona on the Phoenix Indian High School and Property,” Chronology, p. 2, ITCA files.

⁴¹ITCA Education Working Group, meeting summary, 14 April 1987, ITCA files.

⁴²“Comments of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Public Comment Meeting on the Historic and Cultural Values of the Phoenix Indian High School,” 22 July 1987, p. 1-2, ITCA files.

⁴³Ibid., 4; “Selected Events” Chronology, p. 1.

⁴⁴“House of Representatives Interior Committee Phoenix Indian School Public Hearing in Washington, D.C., Thursday, July 30, 1987. Testimony of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona,” ITCA files.

⁴⁵Buck Kitcheyan, ITCA president, mailgram to House Interior Committee, 9 May 1988, ITCA files; John R. Lewis, ITCA director, to tribal leaders, 15 June 1988, *ibid.*

Working Group members included Ivan Sidney, chairman; Gerald Anton, co-chair, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; Nora Garcia, Fort Mojave Tribal Council; Ted Smith, Camp Verce Yavapai-Apache Indian Community; Reno Johnson, Sr., White Mountain Apache Tribe; Jeri Johnson, Tonto Apache Tribe at Payson; Enos Francisco, Tohono O’odham Nation; William Rhodes, Gila River Indian Community.

There were at least three other viable land transfer proposals. In 1985 JDM Properties, Inc., a division of Fairfield Eaton, Inc., was formed for the purpose of becoming the sole developer of PIHS land. It proposed the land be conveyed to the tribes who in turn would lease it to JDM Properties. See *Arizona Republic*, 14 March 1985, A-14. A second proposal was made by

Arizona Governor Evan Mecham in late 1986. He proposed swapping PIHS for freeway loop land. The Salt River Indian Community would get an interest in the profits from the school's development. See *Arizona Republic*, 23 December 1986, A-1. Finally, in June 1987 the Phelps Dodge Development Corporation offered to trade 311,566 acres of environmentally sensitive land in Arizona and New Mexico, plus pay \$15 million for the school land. See *Arizona Republic*, 1 July 1987, B-6.

⁴⁶Reno Johnson, Sr., Tribal Chairman, White Mountain Apache Tribe, to Congressman Morris K. Udall, 7 July 1988, ITCA files. This letter includes copies of the two tribal resolutions.

⁴⁷"Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, Phoenix Indian School, Public Hearing in Washington, D.C., Testimony of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona," Monday, 25 July 1988, ITCA files; "President finally signs Indian School land bill," *Arizona Republic*, 19 November 1988, A-1.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROAD TO CLOSURE: PHOENIX INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL, 1972–1990

As Arizona's tribes became accustomed to the philosophy of self-determination, they worked to restructure their reservation schools. It was a slow process that required patience and support on the part of the federal government if Native Americans were to be successful. Coinciding with these efforts, the ITCA tried to keep PIHS open. The school's continued existence was considered vital at least until individual tribes could develop local alternatives. Although its existence had never been totally secure, the changing role of government involvement in Indian education, motivated by the social changes of the 1960s, made the PIHS's last eighteen years the least secure of its entire existence.

Information from government reports, newspapers, and interviews presents a sometimes sketchy view of how PIHS fared from 1972 until its close in 1990. Questions regarding funding, enrollment, student body composition, and student problems and achievements can be answered, and some conclusions drawn, from these sources.

The 1960s were a time of tremendous and traumatic social change in the United States. It was a stressful time for many, and the students, faculty, and staff were no exception. Before the 1960s few of the professional staff at the school were Indian, despite passage of the Indian Preference Act. This law was intended to give hiring preference to Indians, but like so many laws meant to assist special groups, it was for the most part ignored, until disenfranchised groups began demanding a greater share of power. Against this backdrop PIHS entered its ninth decade.¹

Although the federal government showed support for Indian educational self-determination through the passage of landmark legislation, the funding to support existing programs proved erratic. Figures available through 1976 show a steady increase in funding for boarding schools, but money problems remained. Former teacher Patricio Vela felt the school's deterioration coincided with the federal legislation and that budget cuts were the result. For example, by February 1973 a new gym for the school had been under discussion for six years, and although funds had been approved, budget cuts delayed construction until the new fiscal year (which began on 1 July). Then, in spring 1975, the BIA implemented a "reduction in force" (RIF), resulting in the loss of eight PIHS employees. (Ironically, that same year, funds of \$95,000 were made available to remodel the dining hall.) The Title I Program funds for the following year were cut from \$267,000 to \$199,619 in 1975. In January 1978 the BIA put a limit on energy use and one dorm was closed both for repairs and to lower energy consumption. Finally another RIF in 1979 "initiated the [school's] downward trend." Many program directors and decision makers left. This disrupted the "continuity in programming" and marked a beginning of the "passing parade" of principals and department heads.²

Throughout this period the school had little control over enrollment numbers. In 1975 students from twenty-nine tribes were registered. With many tribes in various stages of restructuring their education programs in response to the new laws, it was difficult for the school to predict enrollment. On the other hand, since over 80 percent of the students came from only four tribes, the school's administrators should have been able to follow major developments within these communities. According to school records, in

1975 PIHS enrollment stood at 877. This number is higher than figures found in newspaper sources because school records reflected the total number of students enrolled during the year rather than the actual number that completed the academic year. Consequently, the other sources reported much lower figures at three different points during the decade: 547 students in spring 1973; 525 in spring 1980; and 540 in spring 1982. The dramatic discrepancy between these numbers indicates a high dropout rate. A “student profile” for 1975 shows that 70 percent of the students had “home problem situations” and that 80 percent had dropped out of public schools and were admitted to PIHS “under social criteria.” The large number of students attending PIHS because they had dropped out of public schools strongly suggests a student body comprised mostly of “problem” students. This trend began to increase in the 1970s as the number of reservation schools increased. These schools focused on recruiting the best students. As the decade progressed, PIHS was beset with an increase in alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancies, and below standard academic performance. A government report and school newspapers attest to these problems. As new reservation schools caused PIHS’s enrollment to drop, many of the best students were siphoned off to these new institutions, leaving those with serious personal problems to be sent to Phoenix.³

The 1976 Report on Indian Education indicated that use of alcohol and drugs by students presented a serious problem at PIHS. A sampling of thirty-three issues of *The Redskin*, between February 1973 and February 1982, showed a steady increase in references to drugs and alcohol. Some students tried to curb the disturbing trend toward substance abuse. One student wrote an article urging other students to refrain from alcohol and marijuana,

indicating that alcohol use was the major reason for suspensions. Still others sought advice on how to help friends and relatives suffering from alcohol abuse. The most damning evidence of students' use of illegal substances appeared in a May 1980 issue of *The Redskin*, which published the results of a student survey covering a variety of topics. The survey reported that 87 percent of students admitted smoking marijuana, though only 34 percent felt it should be legalized; 75 percent felt that it affected the behavior of students; 96 percent thought its use would increase; and 81 percent said they had smoked it before coming to PIHS.⁴

In a letter sent to *The Redskin's* "Dear Gabby" column in March 1979, a student asked why nothing was being done on campus about drinking. The student felt "there should be no chances given once [offenders] are caught." Gabby's response was disturbing, but perhaps not surprising given that the use of alcohol was not considered a disease by many. She replied "There is not too much that can be done about the drinking. Just telling people to stop a **bad habit** [emphasis added] is not enough. Our primary purpose here is to help young people get an education, not to serve as a police force. It is very hard on a person to have to expel a good student for one bad habit." Although this suggests that the school was doing little to deal with student problems, the school was not totally passive on the issue. Beginning in 1968 a People Personnel Unit (PPU) operated at the school. According to Dr. Wayne Mitchell, former school social worker and member of the unit, this interdisciplinary counseling structure grew out of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society." Approximately ten people, each with at least a master's degree, comprised the unit. Many of the counselors were young, some very outspoken. They eventually irritated the conservative

administration and school board, and the PPU's structure was changed sometime around 1972 or 1973. The restructuring resulted in a unit less responsive to student needs, a fact that became painfully obvious by the end of the decade.⁵

The school tried other approaches. In January 1978 the Phoenix Police Department began a program called Police and Youth Schools (PAYS), in which PIHS participated. Once a week an officer was available on campus to consult with both teachers and students about issues such as alcohol, drugs, armed robbery, bicycle safety, and shoplifting. Also, in October 1979, *The Redskin's* "staff update" section announced the arrival of a "new counselor and instructor of the Alcohol and Drug class." The school was trying to help its students, if only in a band-aid fashion.⁶

The large number of pregnancies was another problem for the school. A poll conducted on campus in May 1980 revealed that 73 percent of students thought teen pregnancy was a serious problem; 72 percent felt pregnant girls should be allowed to attend school; 94 percent thought a child care center on campus would be helpful; and 68 percent felt the problem gave the school a bad image. Pregnant girls received some support from the Indian Health Service which operated on campus and employed a very good counselor.⁷

Below standard academic performance was also widespread at PIHS. In an effort to reduce the dropout rate, a General Education Development (G.E.D.) program commenced in January 1978. There were two types of G.E.D.: pre-G.E.D. for students eighteen and under preparing for the G.E.D., and for students eighteen and older who qualified and could graduate after passing the G.E.D. Initially, nineteen students enrolled in the programs. Twenty four students graduated with G.E.D.'s in 1978-79.⁸

The editorial section of the May 1980 issue of *The Redskin* featured staff and student responses to questions about the school's problems. Respondents felt PIHS needed to offer "more homework and challenging work" in order to help students academically. When asked what they would do to change PIHS, some students suggested a stricter environment. Most of the forty-nine students who transferred to PIHS from Stewart Indian School in fall 1980 indicated that PIHS was not strict enough.⁹

Although many of the students performed poorly in classes, there were exceptions. One of the school's many clubs was a chapter of the National Honor Society. On campus there was an honor dorm, Manataba. In addition, as of December 1978 ten to fifteen students were enrolled in the Upward Bound Program at Arizona State University. Meeting on a weekly basis, the program helped high school students prepare for college.¹⁰

A 1987 study, "Characteristics of Successful Indian Students," helps explain the dichotomy in academic performance at PIHS. The study surveyed successful students in urban and rural, and public and tribal schools in four northwestern states. The survey revealed that all the students liked and were participants in extracurricular activities, with sports and clubs the most popular choices. Many felt that they excelled in both extracurricular activities and coursework, although a majority (65 versus 53 percent) rated extracurricular activities their main strength. Additional factors included "liked school" (93 percent); "liked other students" (75 percent); and "liked teachers" (72 percent). These responses indicate that club activities contributed to academic success and this appeared true at PIHS.¹¹

The results of this study may help explain why PIHS exhibited extremes in academic achievement. The school offered a large selection of

clubs available to the student body throughout the 1970s, including the Rodeo, Papago, Indian, Hopi, Social Work, YMCA Youth & Government, Booster, and Free Enterprise clubs. The student band can also be included in this category; PIHS supported the only such all-Indian musical group at that time. As the availability of club activities shows, a climate for success existed for students, and a number of students took advantage of these opportunities. Nevertheless, as the student population declined, many of the clubs and other extracurricular outlets disbanded because there were not enough students to support them. A “critical mass” ceased to exist. According to former student and employee Geri Williams, by 1988 there was no more band. The Apache Club and a vocational club for girls interested in careers in the medical field represented the last remaining clubs on campus, along with the Miss Phoenix Indian High School Pageant which ran from 1972 to 1990.¹²

The sports program did not present as bright a picture. Only a handful of students excelled in sports during the 1970s, and it is remarkable that a sports program existed at all. In 1973 the wrestling team finished fourth in the state tournament; in December 1978, the Bravettes basketball team won PIHS’s first Invitational Basketball Tournament in a number of years. In 1979 Casaja Allen, Class A divisional and state women’s singles tennis champion, became the first girl in the history of the school to win an individual state championship; the girls’ cross country team won the Class A Central Division title; David Trujillo won the state cross country race for the second time; and the football season was one of the best in years. All this occurred despite the fact that only twenty or so years earlier there was no sports program at all.¹³

The evolution of the modern sports program began in 1955 when Joseph Famulatte was hired to coach and teach physical education classes. At

the time of his hire the school's population was primarily Navajo, enrolled in the "Navajo Special Program," which served students who had never been in school. Students in the program had not generally been involved in sports, primarily because of the intensive academic emphasis. Additionally, the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA)—to which all Arizona schools engaged in sports belonged—required birth certificates for all athletes, which were not readily available for many PIHS students. Famulatte spent many holidays driving to the Navajo reservation in order to get the documentation necessary for his students to play sports, and in the late 1950s the school was admitted to the AIA. It then took Famulatte about ten years to build up the football program, working seven-day weeks his first four years. Because of his schedule he lived in government housing on campus, coaching intramural sports on the weekends. The student response was tremendous: 125 students showed up for the first football tryouts.¹⁴

Famulatte felt that sports played an important part in the curriculum by bringing students together, breaking down tribal barriers, introducing them to non-Indian students, and helping them become more assertive and competitive. Indian students did especially well in basketball, cross country, and wrestling—less well in football, baseball, and track. Although there was never enough money allocated to sports (he fought for a new gym his entire twenty years) students were very involved in sports during Famulatte's tenure.¹⁵

In spite of these outstanding achievements, by the late 1970s the sports program began to deteriorate. In March 1980 the school canceled girls' softball because "the girls were not interested in participating and weren't dedicated to the school and the team." In May PIHS's administration announced that girls

cross country, junior varsity girls basketball, varsity girls softball, girls tennis, and boys and girls track would be canceled for the 1980–81 school year “due to the lack of participation and the shortage of money.” This announcement and a student survey in the same issue of *The Redskin*, showed that a full 82 percent of students believed that there had not been good participation in sports during the school year; 62 percent didn’t think PIHS needed sports; yet, ironically, 88 percent felt it unfair to leave out some sports due to a lack of funds. Finally, 58 percent agreed that it was wasteful to spend money on sports if students would not participate. By 1990 the football team had been disbanded, although both boys and girls basketball survived. According to Famulatte, basketball, the most popular of Indian sports, had been the favorite athletic activity on campus.¹⁶

The student survey results compared with information from the “Characteristics of Successful Indian Students” study help explain PIHS’s wide variance in academic achievement. Regardless of the school environment, some dedicated students will always be successful. Nevertheless, this study clearly validates the correlation between extracurricular activities and achievement. In PIHS’s last decade a reduction in these activities played a significant role in the decline of academic performance and the rise in bad behavior.¹⁷

A pattern of steady decline emerged as the school approached the end of the 1970s. What had previously been known by only a few people in the Phoenix area received citywide attention when the *New Times Weekly* ran an article, “Phoenix Indian School—The End of the Rope,” in January 1980, criticizing the segregated off-reservation boarding school system. The following excerpt sums up the alleged social problems at the school:

“Something is terribly wrong at racially segregated Phoenix Indian High School. Half the students drop out before graduation—a rate five times greater than the public schools. The government offers birth control devices on campus because of the number of pregnancies. Drunkenness is a major problem.” At least some of the allegations are presumed by at least one former employee, Patricio Vela, to have been biased due to their source: former PIHS employees, bitter due to their layoff in a major 1979 RIF.¹⁸

Although most Phoenix residents had been oblivious to the problems at PIHS, the federal government was not. Between 1972 and 1983 a number of reports dealing with Indian education were prepared by the General Accounting Office (GAO). In April 1972 “Opportunity to Improve Indian Education in Schools Operated by the Bureau” reported that the BIA needed to improve the quality of education in its schools. In a January 1977 report, “Concerted Effort Needed to Improve Indian Education,” the GAO determined that the bureau had not implemented the recommendations of the 1972 report and that little had been done to meet the educational needs of students. The GAO recommended to Congress that the BIA should be “intensively” monitored by congressional committees. If the bureau was unable to make “adequate progress,” then the congressional committees should “explore other alternatives such as transferring responsibilities for administering Indian education programs to another government agency.” Landmark legislation or not, the BIA’s inaction between 1972 and 1977 clearly impeded the progress of Indian self-determination education reforms. The GAO recommended that the bureau develop a comprehensive education program; then, as tribally run and operated programs increased, the “BIA’s role [would] focus on monitoring and evaluating.”¹⁹

Indian Education Task Force Five also prepared a major report. They had been directed by the American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC, appointed in 1975), to prepare a comprehensive report on the state of Indian education. The task force presented its findings to the AIPRC in September 1976, which then forwarded the report with its recommendations to Congress. The study found that between 1969 and 1976 the number of students (both elementary and secondary) attending off-reservation boarding schools dropped by approximately 50 percent, from over 12,000 to 6,776. The report found that students were “scattered in various schools,” concluding that the BIA’s “closest to home” policy was not being adhered to. Additionally, the report determined that tribes with a student population of 155 and above “could support a tribal educational facility,” eliminating the need to send their children off the reservation. Based on this criteria, sixteen of the tribes surveyed who had students attending off-reservation boarding schools could support a tribal educational facility. Four of those tribes were from Arizona: the Pima (with a student population of 548), Apache (433), Tohono O’odham (399), and Hopi (336). This and other information gathered by the task force showed that little progress had been made since 1969, when the Kennedy report had been filed. The task force found “gross neglect by both the executive and legislative branches of government” and believed that the time had come “to stop the expansion of all boarding facilities and to assess which of these are in excellent and usable condition.”²⁰

In August 1977 a United States Senate subcommittee, likely acting in response to the AIPRC report, directed the GAO to review several of the Department of Interior’s Indian programs. This review resulted in a number of reports, including one—“Bureau of Indian Affairs Not Operating Boarding

Schools Efficiently”—which, combined with self-determination legislation, signaled “the beginning of the end” for PIHS. The report stated that the bureau could both save money and operate boarding schools more efficiently if it consolidated schools to make greater use of space and equipment, established policies for the control of boarding school expenditures, and provided adequate staff and funds to maintain each school properly. At this time there were about fifteen off-reservation boarding schools. In preparing its report, the GAO visited six of these schools, one of which was PIHS.²¹

Compared with other boarding schools, PIHS compared favorably in cost effectiveness and overall utilization. The average combined per pupil cost for fiscal year 1978 for all schools was \$7,394; PIHS’s was \$4,608. However, with an average number of pupils per total staff at 2.7, PIHS recorded 4.0 (the highest). The segment dealing with underutilization did not mention PIHS by name but appears to have included all of the schools. At the time this study was prepared, the BIA had not yet established plans for consolidating these schools. They did, however, have plans for other schools.²²

The BIA wanted to construct thirty day schools as funding became available. The GAO reasoned that this would result in reduced enrollment at the boarding schools, since day schools would allow students to attend school while living at home. The survey team found that boarding schools had ignored the BIA policy that students should be educated “as close to home as possible” and attendance at off-reservation boarding schools should be limited to “students who reside within the boundaries of the area office in which the school is located.” The GAO concluded that “in general,” off-reservation per pupil cost and ratio of students to staff were higher than on-

reservation schools. One reason for this was the cost of transporting students between their homes and off-reservation schools.²³

For years the government, based on GAO reports, threatened to transfer the bureau's education programs to the Department of Education. In an April 1980 report, "Should the Bureau of Indian Affairs Continue to Provide Educational Services to Indian Children?" the GAO recommended that a transfer should not be considered for three to four years. This would give the BIA time to demonstrate whether the enactment of Title XI of the Education Amendments of 1978 would provide, as was intended, the necessary framework for correcting deficiencies. Title XI "addresses many of the recommendations in GAO reports. [It] requires the Bureau to entirely revamp its organizational structure and programs." One of the most important features was that Indians would participate in "the planning and implementation of a new system within the Bureau."²⁴

The 1982 announcement had less effect on day-to-day life at the school than one would expect. After all, it was not the first time the school had been threatened with closure. In 1947 Indian boarding schools were deliberately left out of the federal budget, although later restored, by a Congress grown "indifferent toward Indian assimilation programs." The school's last eight years witnessed a steady decline in student enrollment and BIA support. Uncertainty concerning the school's future caused many would-be students to choose other high schools because they wanted to be able to graduate from the school they started at. It became a vicious cycle since the BIA based its funding on enrollment numbers. By the mid 1980s after another *New Times* article criticized the school, PIHS had very little left with which to fight. Developers were at its gates deciding how best to turn a profit from the most valuable

piece of soon-to-be-available federal land. The *New Times* article prompted an investigation of the school in which the BIA and the ITCA became involved. The results were bleak.²⁵

Media coverage after the mid 1980s dealt almost exclusively with the disposition of the Indian school property. School activities, with the exception of one or two major events, received little coverage. The school paper *The Redskin* ceased publication in the early 1980s ending a good source of information. Student enrollment eroded from over 500 students in 1982 to less than 40 at its closing in May 1990.²⁶

As noted above, in spring of 1986, PIHS principal Richard Christman was suspended and reassigned to a BIA administrative position. The events surrounding his suspension led to a management review of the school. The school languished until the following spring when staff and students learned that the school would remain open for at least one more year. This reprieve gave the school a much needed lift. Faculty and staff renewed their efforts to improve the school. In March 1988 a new principal, Milford Sanderson, was hired. He would be the school's last principal.

In October 1988, Congress finally determined that the school would close in May 1990. Principal Sanderson was well liked and in a position where neither he nor the school had anything to lose. But he was not willing to maintain the status quo and insisted that students attend classes and not just bide their time until the school year was over. The school pulled out all stops and put forth its best effort during its last two years of operation. As so often happens during sad times, people band together, forgetting their differences at least for the time being. Such was the case at the PIHS. Staff and students alike (there were only 80 students left by August 1988) got along well at the end.

There were very few problems. Geri Williams remembers that during that time the cafeteria staff was able to have Sundays off to spend with their families. They would prepare Sunday meals ahead of time and deliver them to the dorm. Only one dorm remained in use by the last year.²⁷

Not one of the six persons interviewed thought the school should have closed. In spite of its problems and low enrollment they felt that it filled a void—it was the last chance for some students. During the last few years of operation, many of PIHS's students had been expelled from public schools nearer their homes, and a boarding school was their only option. All of the interviewees felt that PIHS facilities should have been utilized in some manner for Indian students. The most frequently mentioned choice was to turn the school into a vocational training facility for Indian youth. All interviewees were either saddened or angry, or both, that the land has remained vacant since its closing. All but three buildings—the band room, auditorium, and cafeteria—which have been saved for historic reasons—are now gone and the campus is deserted.²⁸

Janet Miller, who only taught during the school's last year, had these memories of its closing:

When the school closed, the celebrations that went on were just unbelievable. Every tribe that had ever sent students to the school was represented in the final ceremonies. And they assigned a different tribe every day to provide food and dancing and pow wows and all this celebration going on and the public was invited to that. It went on for ten days. . . . And the students were involved. Famous graduates of the school such as clothing designers from New York and Native American models, and Native American actors. . . . many famous people who over the years had graduated. . . . I mean there was just celebration, celebration of what the school was and what it meant, going on that whole last ten days. And to be a part of that, that was really . . . that kind of made up for . . . their sadness of saying goodbye,

and knowing that it was the last graduation. . . .The last graduation was very sad. They had a tribal leader from each tribe ever represented at the school spoke[sic] at the graduation ceremonies. . . . The celebrations were wonderful but when it was all over it was very sad.²⁹

Notes to Chapter Four

¹Oral interviews were conducted by the author with six former PIHS employees: Joseph Famulatte (P.E. coach and teacher, 1955–75), Phoenix, Arizona, 15 July 1994; Wayne Mitchell (social worker, 1970–77), Phoenix, Arizona, 3 August 1994; Patricio Vela (math teacher, 1972–89), Glendale, Arizona, 9 July 1994; Geri Williams (purchasing agent, 1972–90), Phoenix, Arizona, 16 August 1994; Janet Miller (Chapter 1 coordinator, and language arts and computer lab teacher, 1989–90), Scottsdale, Arizona, 24 June 1994; and an employee who wishes to remain anonymous (teacher / counselor, 1950s to 1980s). Three interviewees, Wayne Mitchell, Geri Williams, and “Anonymous” are Native American; Geri Williams also attended PIHS as a student from 1962–1966. Audio recordings of these interviews, except for Anonymous, are in the oral history collection, Arizona Historical Society, Tempe, Arizona.

²Task Force Five on Indian Education, *Report on Indian Education*, presented to the American Indian Policy Review Commission (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), Appendix M, p. 335; Patricio Vela interview; *The Redskin*, 2 February 1973, 17 October 1975, 14 September 1976, 13 January 1978; Anonymous interview.

³*Report on Indian Education*, Appendix S, p. 342; *The Redskin*, 2 February 1973; Tom Kuhn, “Phoenix Indian School—The End of the Rope,” *New Times Weekly*, January 2-8, 1980; *The Arizona Republic*, 23 March 1982, p. A-1; *Report on Indian Education*, Table 3, p. 247. Both Wayne Mitchell and Anonymous spoke about the loss of “good” students to new reservation schools. Patricio Vela felt that PIHS had less problem kids than other schools. He bases this assessment on his teaching experience in Texas schools. He currently teaches at Adobe Mountain correctional facility north of Phoenix. This may explain why his views differ from the majority view.

⁴*Report on Indian Education*, Table 3, p. 247; *The Redskin*, 24 September 1976, 14 December 1977, 13 January 1978, 16 November 1978, 21 December 1978, 18 January 1979, 1 March 1979, 22 May 1979, 14 November 1979, 21 May 1980.

⁵*The Redskin*, 1 March 1979; Mitchell and Anonymous interviews.

⁶*The Redskin*, 13 January 1978, 19 October 1979.

⁷*The Redskin*, 21 May 1980; Kuhn, “Phoenix Indian School—The End of the Rope,” p. 3; Mitchell interview.

⁸*The Redskin*, 14 December 1977, 13 January 1978, 22 May 1979.

⁹*The Redskin*, 21 May 1980.

¹⁰*The Redskin*, 1 March 1979, 18 January 1979, 7 December 1978, 21 May 1980, 24 October 1980.

¹¹"Characteristics of Successful Indian Students," Study conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Research and Development Programs for Indian Education, based in Portland, Oregon, 1978. 571 surveys were sent out in 1987 to high school graduates in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington; 133 (over 23%) were returned; 40% responding were male, 60% female.

¹²"Characteristics of Successful Indian Students"; *The Redskin*, 1 March 1973, 2 February 1973, 21 December 1978; Geri Williams interview.

¹³*The Redskin*, 21 December 1978, 22 May 1979, 14 November 1979, 12 December 1979.

¹⁴There was an active sports program in the 1920s and 1930s but it "became a casualty of the falling enrollment, increased budget cuts, and another change of school administrators. Dorothy R. Parker, *Phoenix Indian High School: The Second Half-Century*, 12–14; Joseph Famulatte interview. Anonymous said that the school was in transition in the late 1950s, and that the Navajo Special Program was being eliminated.

¹⁵Famulatte interview.

¹⁶*The Redskin*, 30 March 1980, 21 May 1980; Famulatte interview.

¹⁷"Characteristics of Successful Indian Students."

¹⁸Kuhn, "Phoenix Indian School—The End of the Rope," p. 3, 10, 11; Vela interview.

¹⁹GAO, "Questionable Need for All Schools Planned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Indian Affairs Not Operating Boarding Schools Efficiently," 15 February 1978; Idem, "Should the Bureau of Indian Affairs Continue to Provide Educational Services to Indian Children?" 23 April 1980; Idem, "Opportunity to Improve Indian Education in Schools Operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs," 27 April 1972; Idem, "Concerted Effort Needed to

Improve Indian Education,” 17 January 1977, 20, 23; Idem, “Bureau of Indian Affairs Plans to Consolidate Off-Reservation Indian Boarding Schools,” 12 September 1983.

²⁰Congress created the American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC)—an 11-member commission consisting of three senators, three representatives, and five Indians. They were to undertake a comprehensive study of the conduct of Indian Affairs. The commission was to expire six months after submission of its final report to Congress, but no later than June 30, 1977. S J Res 133 authorized \$2.5 million for the study. (Background on Indian policy Congress and the Nation, Vol. I, p. 1096); *Report on Indian Education*, 241, 243, 253, 255.

²¹“Bureau of Indian Affairs Not Operating Boarding Schools Efficiently,” cover page. The figures in this report are limited to the six schools visited.

²²*Ibid.*, 10-12, 16.

²³*Ibid.*, 17, 21.

²⁴“Should the Bureau of Indian Affairs Continue to Provide Educational Services to Indian Children?” cover page, p. i.

²⁵*Arizona Republic* 19 May 1988; “Handcuffs and Too Little Hope: Atypical education at the Phoenix Indian School,” *New Times*, November 28–December 4, 1984, p. 4. The Phoenix media widely reported that PIHS land was the most valuable piece of “surplus” federal property.

²⁶*Arizona Republic*, 19 May 1988, 24 May 1990. Janet Miller noted that 167 students from 9 tribes attended in the last year of the school’s operation. This is twice the number mentioned anywhere else. This may be the total number of students who enrolled at one time or another during the school year, with only about eighty finishing the school year.

²⁷Parker, 59–61; *Arizona Republic*, 4 August 1988; Williams interview.

²⁸This information was gleaned from the six interviews conducted with former staff. Geri Williams deviated from the majority view and thought that either the BIA or General Services Administration should have taken over the property, then rented it out to the various Indian agencies in the Phoenix area so they could be together.

²⁹Janet Miller interview.

CONCLUSION

The philosophies governing Indian education policies in the United States since colonial times have been varied—ranging from cultural annihilation at one end to celebrating cultural differences at the other. The most recent significant event in this evolution was the federal self-determination legislation of the 1970s. After its passage many of Arizona's tribes clamored to gain control over and responsibility for their children's educations. By the 1980s tribal efforts were successful enough that the federal government began to question the usefulness of the off-reservation boarding school system. In 1982 it was announced that PIHS would be closing—but its demise was postponed due to a major uproar of Arizona tribal leaders. The federal government then postponed the closing until 1985. Feeling that this slight reprieve was not enough the ITCA became actively involved in trying to keep the school open indefinitely—at least until the tribes had alternatives to PIHS. The fight continued until 1988 when a final closure date of spring 1990 was announced. Before the ITCA became involved in the PIHS fight, the school had already begun to deteriorate. Self determination meant more tribes built schools on their reservations and fewer students needed to leave home. Less students meant less money for operating the school and a loss of “critical mass” to fuel extracurricular activities and clubs. It became common to send “problem” students—those thrown out of other schools—to PIHS. By the late 1980s the school's fate had been sealed, ultimately because of greed. The fact that the school was located in a major urban center with rapidly rising real estate prices made it the most valuable piece of “available” federal property in the country.

The value of the property was the final factor determining the school's demise, but the school's fate was initially sealed when federal self-determination legislation became law in the mid 1970s. This legislation is a good example of an action disguised as a magnanimous gesture by one side which in fact benefits both parties. Under the Republican administration, self-determination legislation was signed into law in the 1970s. Then in the 1980s the Republicans, this time under President Reagan, accelerated efforts begun in the previous decade to rid itself of off-reservation Indian boarding schools. While Indians were happy to finally be "set free," the ends did not justify the means. The bottom line was the motivating factor. Indian control over their own education was a side benefit.

Tribes who for so long had been subject to BIA-run schools now had the opportunity to establish their own schools. If possible they preferred keeping their young people close to home, so that boarding schools—especially off-reservation boarding schools—became the least desired type of school. But the tribes still found some value in these schools because they could offer things reservation schools did not. Phoenix Indian High School and the other boarding schools were the last hope for troubled students kicked out of other schools. Additionally, PIHS had some special programs that were not always available, usually because of funding, at reservation schools. So because of these special-needs students many of the tribes did not want PIHS to close. They wanted more time to establish special-needs programs at their own schools. This helps explain why, even though more reservation schools were being built during this time, tribes were so passionate about keeping the school open.

Documenting the efforts of some of Arizona's tribes to "take control" of the education of their tribal members aids our understanding of the tribal outcry that occurred when the school's closure was announced. Understanding what was occurring at the tribal level in the late 1970s and early 1980s helps us appreciate that tribes had a long way to go before the BIA could start closing all their boarding schools. Examining this exercise at the state level gives us a taste of what was occurring throughout the United States, especially in the West, where, because of more large, rural reservations, Native Americans had less access to existing off-reservation public schools. But at times this fact seemed lost on the BIA. They vigorously pursued, without much thought as to the consequences, the federal government's goal of getting out of the Indian education business. But the tribes had a right to expect the old system to remain in place until they could develop programs of their own. After all, it was unfair to expect a population who had been dependent for over 100 years on the federal government for their educational needs to develop their own programs virtually overnight. Some tribes, in addition to program development, were also in need of school buildings, and federal building funds were often slow in coming.

Aside from the issue of an unfair timetable in making the transition from "dependence" to "responsibility" for educating their tribal members, in the final analysis the issue of "control" must be addressed. Did the ITCA and the tribes really want to hold onto PIHS, or was this all they had to bargain with? Given that fewer and fewer tribes were utilizing the school, as self-determination legislation began to make progress, was the ITCA, and in turn many of the tribes, actually trying to achieve another goal? Perhaps money for education rather than the PIHS buildings and grounds? Their efforts did

eventually net a sizeable trust fund. Or were their actions a maneuver to garner the attention of the public in order to promote the needs of Arizona's Indian tribes? These are difficult questions to answer. Undoubtedly, each tribe had its own agenda for education and PIHS may have figured differently in each of these plans. What is important to keep in mind is that there are many ways to view the process and consequences of the school's closing. While it is accurate to say that most Indians did not want to see PIHS close, why they did not has many answers.

In spite of its less-than-glorious ending, a number of students felt fortunate to have attended PIHS. For those from rural areas, it gave them a chance to experience living in a large city. Still others enjoyed meeting students from other tribes. Their feelings help us to understand why the decision to close off-reservation boarding schools was not unanimously applauded. Although the U.S. government and Native Americans seem finally to be in agreement about this facet of Indian education, the issue clearly cannot be viewed as black and white.

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- 16 May ITCA meeting minutes
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