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To: Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs  
The Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
The Colorado State House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee  
The Colorado State Senate's Judiciary Committee  
The Joint Budget Committee of the General Assembly of Colorado  
The Office of Governor Jared Polis  
The Board of Trustees of Fort Lewis College  
History Colorado Board of Directors  
Representative Leslie Herod  
Representative Barbara McLachlan  
Senator Dominick Moreno

From: History Colorado  
Dawn DiPrince, President/CEO & State Historic Preservation Officer  
Dr. Holly Norton, State Archaeologist & Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Re: Federal Indian Boarding Schools in Colorado Executive Summary  
HB22-1327: The Native American Boarding School Research Program Act

Date: September 1, 2023

In May of 2022, Governor Jared Polis signed into law [House Bill 22-1327](#), the Native American Boarding School Research Program Act. In the preamble to the law, the Legislature took the unprecedented step in recognizing the harm generations of federal schooling policy has had on Native American individuals, families, and communities. Specifically the general assembly found and declared that:

*(a) Beginning with the federal "Indian Civilization Act" enacted in 1819, the United States enacted laws and implemented policies establishing and supporting federal Indian boarding schools across the nation. The purpose of federal Indian boarding schools was to culturally assimilate Native children by forcibly relocating them from their families and communities to distant residential facilities to suppress the children's identities, languages, and beliefs. For over 150 years, hundreds of thousands of Native children were taken from their communities. Over 350 federal Indian boarding schools existed in the United States. By 1926, nearly 83 percent of all Native children of school age were in boarding schools.<sup>1</sup>*

*(b) Children at these boarding schools were subjected to the loss of their cultural identities, physical and sexual abuse, and forced labor, and suffered the effects of*

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<sup>1</sup> The May 2022 Department of the Interior report on federal boarding schools identified 408 federal boarding schools between 1819 and 1969. This number is expected to increase as research continues.

*disease due to their confinement. Many children disappeared or lost their lives at these schools, and their bodies remain today in unmarked graves on the school grounds.*

*(c) The impact of the boarding schools on Native families has been immeasurable. Families lost their traditional language, parenting skills, and the ability to pass on Native culture and traditions.*

*(d) The trauma from federal Indian boarding schools crosses generational boundaries and the boarding school policy resulted in long-standing intergenerational trauma, cycles of violence and abuse, disappearance of Native people, premature deaths, mental health disorders, and substance abuse in Native communities;*

*(e) In Colorado, there were at least four federal Indian boarding schools: The Teller Indian School in Grand Junction, the Southern Ute Boarding School in Ignacio, a boarding school in Towaoc operated by the federal bureau of Indian affairs, and the original Fort Lewis Indian School in Hesperus, Colorado;*

*(f) The Teller Institute and Fort Lewis College are currently operated by the state of Colorado and it is understood that Native children may have died at these schools and were buried on the school grounds;*

*(g) In order to heal from the generational trauma, we must confront the past and shed light on the hidden cruelty; and*

*(h) Fort Lewis College has been taking steps to recognize its place in this history and to find opportunities to raise awareness about what actually occurred at federal Indian boarding schools and to begin the process of healing.*

*(2) The general assembly therefore declares that it is in the interest of the state and its citizens to better understand and acknowledge Colorado's history with federal Indian boarding schools and develop a roadmap for education and healing.*

HB22-1327 therefore directed History Colorado to undertake an intensive research program regarding the lived experiences of students at the one-time federal Native American boarding school in Hesperus, Colorado, also referred to as the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School; as well as to identify potential burial places of students who did not return home. The research was led by State Archaeologist, Dr. Holly Norton. This executive summary outlines the final report issued to the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA) on June 30, 2023, by History Colorado. As outlined in HB 22-1327, recommendations were identified and made in consultation with CCIA and Tribal Representatives.

In addition to the summary and recommendations required by [HB 22-1327](#), Dr. Norton provided the CCIA with progress reports on [September 8, 2022](#), [December 15, 2022](#), [March 16, 2023](#), and [June 1, 2023](#), summaries of which [can be found here](#). Tribal consultations were also held during this brief period, as were listening sessions with Fort Lewis students and community members, as outlined in Appendix A.

The research methodologies for identifying and investigating the schools is consistent with the [criteria established by the Department of the Interior in 2022](#) to identify and clarify which institutions should be considered a federal Indian school, including:

- 1) Provided on-site housing or overnight lodging; and
- 2) Was described in records as providing formal or vocational training and instruction; and
- 3) Was described in records as receiving Federal Government funds or other support; and
- 4) Was operational before 1969

While a large amount of documentation exists from the boarding school era, it does not always record the information that contemporary people are seeking, nor is it intuitively organized, resulting in needing large amounts of time to identify, collect, and analyze the appropriate documentation. While there are occasionally copies of letters or other correspondence written by students, the information is largely from the perspective of the federal government and those operating the boarding schools, often obscuring the trauma caused by those schools. A team of researchers led by History Colorado traveled to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., as well as the local National Archives branch in Broomfield, Colorado. In addition to these repositories, researchers accessed state and local archives that had information pertinent to the research questions. The primary questions for this phase of the research revolved around identifying the students who were sent to the schools in Colorado, identifying students who died at the school, and finally ascertaining the relationship of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe to the federal boarding school policies during this era.

### **Summary of the Report “Federal Indian Schools in Colorado, 1880-1920”:**

The federal Indian education policies in the United States are as old as the Republic itself. The idea of assimilating Native people was a policy that existed alongside military programs of conquest and genocide. There were key moments with significant changes in policy that impacted Native peoples, including in 1879 the introduction of Henry’s Pratt philosophy of military style, immersion boarding schools that ushered in the off-reservation system that had such a drastic impact.

The report identifies nine institutions in Colorado that were financially supported by the federal government, specifically the agency today known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), during the period 1880-1920 (table 1). These schools were part of the system for varying periods of time, from as short as three years to as long as twenty-five years. These schools included on-reservation day schools, on-reservation boarding schools, and off-reservation boarding schools, all of which served different roles within the federal Indian education policy, but ultimately served the same goals of assimilation.

*Table 1. Federally Supported Schools for Native Youth in Colorado*

<b>School</b>	<b>Years in Operation/ Contracted</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Management</b>
Ignacio School	>1884–1890	On-reservation boarding school	BIA
Grand Junction Indian Boarding School	1886-1911	Off-reservation boarding school	BIA
State Industrial School for Boys	1890–1926<	Boarding and reform school	State of Colorado
Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School	1892–1909	Off-reservation boarding school	BIA
Good Shepherd Industrial School for Girls	1893-1895<	Boarding school	Catholic Church
Southern Ute Boarding School	1903–	On-reservation boarding school	BIA
Navajo Day School	1910–	On-reservation day school	BIA
Allen Day School	1912–	Off-reservation day school	BIA
Towaoc Day School	1916-	On-reservation day school	BIA

The main focus of the report was the off-reservation boarding schools, with some additional discussion around on-reservation and day schools. The first off-reservation boarding school that was established in Colorado was the Teller Institute in Grand Junction, Colorado, in 1886, established as an agricultural school. The Teller Institute was named for Colorado State Senator Henry Moor Teller, who also served as the Secretary of the Interior 1882-1885, then returned to the state senate in addition to having his own law firm. In all of these capacities Teller advocated for and worked towards having boarding schools for the Ute Tribes in Colorado. The Grand Junction Indian Boarding School struggled to maintain students throughout its existence, while also struggling with on-site issues such as sewage problems and poor agricultural land. The school closed in 1911.

The Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School was established in 1892 at the site of the former Fort Lewis military post in Hesperus, Colorado, and closed in 1911, after lying empty for two years. Just like Teller Institute, students at Fort Lewis were also subject to an agricultural labor school,

meaning large portions of their day were related to doing labor that kept the school fed and running, including agricultural work and “domestic chores” such as laundry.

Both schools also participated in the “outing system,” an informal program where students were placed with families over summer vacations or for the duration of an entire school year, to work for under-market wages as an agricultural or domestic laborer. Students were placed in Colorado homes, farms and ranches, where they lived with white families. Many of these places were near the schools, in Durango, Hesperus, and Grand Junction, but by 1909 there was an emphasis on sending students to places such as Rocky Ford as industries such as sugar beets ramped up production.

In many cases Tribal leaders and families from the Ute Tribes were able to resist compulsory school attendance. In the early 1900s, finally meeting treaty obligations, on-reservation boarding and day schools were established in Ignacio and Towaoc, Colorado. These schools gained prominence throughout the early twentieth century, at the same time that there were significant changes to BIA American Indian policy in general, and Indian education policy specifically.

In addition to the archival history, geophysical work has been undertaken to identify cemeteries and burial sites for children who died while attending the Fort Lewis Indian School and the Teller Institute. Geophysical investigations at the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School cemetery were completed in November 2022, and included ground penetrating radar (GPR); magnetometer; high-resolution photogrammetry, and lidar. The boundaries of the cemetery at the site of the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding school were determined.

Consistent with government-to-government relationships with Tribal nations, full results of these investigations have been released to the Tribal nations who had students in attendance at these schools. The full results of these investigations will be publicly released on October 3, 2023, after the Tribal nations impacted by this history have had time to review, reflect, and process its contents.



Dawn DiPrince  
President/CEO  
State Historic Preservation Officer



Dr. Holly Norton  
State Archaeologist  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



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***Opportunities for Reconciliation:***  
**Recommendation to the Colorado General Assembly in regards to the findings of the  
Native American Boarding School Research Program Act, HB22-1327**

History Colorado  
September 1, 2023

As per the directive in the Native American Boarding School Research Program HB22-1327, required that recommendations be presented to the Colorado General Assembly to address the historical impacts of the federal education system in Colorado.

Current recommendations are centered almost entirely around a program of long-term commitment to Tribal and community consultation on this issue. More specific recommendations cannot be made until we have the opportunity to properly consult with affected communities. Expanded Tribal consultations will result in Tribally-informed recommendations for resolution and reconciliation.

- **Tribal consultation with representatives from 33 Tribal nations invited:** These consultations should be twice a year with at least one in-person consultation and inviting the 33 Tribes with students who attended federal Indian boarding schools in Colorado, as well as AI/AN organizations from across the state.
- **American Indian/ Alaska Native listening and learning sessions:** These meetings should allow for descendent communities in the urban Indian population to provide insights into future recommendations for reconciliation
- **Travel to reservations of affected Tribal nations:** It is also imperative that staff from History Colorado can travel to Tribal nations who may currently reside outside of Colorado to learn from their community members and more fully investigate their archives and other repositories to tell the full story of the impact of these schools.
- **Additional archival research:** We have heard from numerous groups and Tribal nations that they would like the research on this subject to continue, particularly in regards to federal, state, and local school policies post 1920. This will require more care to ensure that stories of direct ancestors—parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents—are not presented or investigated in a harmful way.
- **Full-time, term-limited Tribal Communications Specialist position at History Colorado:** This is a position that was established to ensure successful completion of HB 22-1327 and is imperative for continuing efforts. This position manages direct communication with Tribal representatives and descendant communities, while also assisting in the planning and logistics for consultations. Clear, open, and thorough communications ensure continuity and prevent misinformation.

- **Full-time, term-limited Research Assistant position at History Colorado:** Research to date was performed by History Colorado staff and contractors. This position would be a new position that allows for the continuation of the research, assists in organizing documentation, data entry, quality control, and assisting descendants and survivors to access information that has been collected by the state.
- **Oral Histories centering survivors and Indigenous narratives:** History Colorado solicited an Indigenous centered research from Living Heritage Anthropology for conducting trauma-informed oral histories of survivors of the federal boarding school system. The research design proposes a five year timeline that includes informed consent, engagement with tribal communities, travel to reservations and other locales to collect the oral histories.

Appendix C details Proposed Budget to support these recommendations.

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **Consultation History and Key Moments for the Boarding School Effort to Date**

List of consultations and meetings with Tribal representatives and community members  
*While HB22-1327 has a narrow scope and time frame, the boarding school effort predates the legislation. Many Tribal partners do not see an important distinction between what came before HB22-1327, so conversations and consultations related to the Teller Institute in Grand Junction are also included. Not listed are one-on-one communications with individual Tribal representatives.*

#### **January 2021- November 2021: Teller Institute Task Force**

Monthly meetings of the task force organized by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). The primary goal of the task force was to identify steps that CDHS should take in addressing the history of the boarding school prior to disposition of the property. The final task force meeting was in person site visit to the Grand Junction Regional Center, and included a ceremonial blessing of the grounds.

#### **December 2021: Task Force Issues Recommendations and Disbands**

There were three recommendations for the Executive Director of CDHS:

1. Multi-Nation consultations should be initiated between the State of Colorado and the Tribes who had students with documented attendance at the Teller Institute.
2. Perform on the ground work to help determine whether there were burials on the grounds of the Grand Junction Regional Center.
3. With the primary purpose of the task force being achieved, it was recommended that the task force disband.

#### **April 26, 2022: Consultation for the Teller Institute, led by CDHS**

Representatives from five Tribal nations, CDHS, the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA) and History Colorado as well as subject matter experts in the archival and geophysical investigations of the school

Key decisions and recommendations included identifying culturally sensitive methodologies for carrying out all aspects of the research, including what best practices should be in anticipation of additional historic boarding schools, including Fort Lewis, being investigated in Colorado.

#### **July 1, 2022: Native American Boarding School Research Program Act, HB22-1327 goes into Effect**

#### **Sept 8, 2022: CCIA quarterly meeting**

First progress related to activities in HB22-1327: included information around contracting with outside vendors and the anticipated field and research schedule.

#### **August 2022: Geophysical Data was collected at the Grand Junction Regional Center**

Ceremonial blessings were performed.



**October 1, 2022: Orange Shirt Day**

History Colorado staff participated in a panel discussion on the boarding school history and current efforts with representatives from Native American Rights Fund and the Department of the Interior at the Denver Indian Family Resource Center

**October 11, 2022: Invited Lecture, “Federal Indian Boarding Schools in Colorado”**

Co-presented a talk on the history of boarding schools with Garret Briggs, Southern Ute THPO, for lecture sponsored jointly by the Colorado Archaeological Society and Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

**October 26, 2022: Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School Consultation**

Leadership and representatives of Tribes identified having students at FLIBS as of 10/2022 were invited, representatives from Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Tohono O’odham attended. The plan for geophysical investigations of the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School cemetery were approved.

**October 27, 2022: Teller Institute/Grand Junction Indian Boarding School Consultation**

Leadership and representatives of Tribes identified having students at GJIS as of 10/2022 were invited, representatives from Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Tohono O’odham attended. Next phase of geophysical investigations for the Grand Junction Regional Center were approved.

**October 27, 2022: Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School Site Visit**

Included representatives from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe, History Colorado, Fort Lewis College, and the geophysical experts and archaeologists from Statistical Research Inc. Specific on-the-ground conditions were discussed and investigations approved, ceremonial blessings were performed.

**October 28, 2022: Fort Lewis College Listening Sessions**

Two sessions, one centering students and the other Native faculty, to understand the concerns and perspectives of the FLC community, as well as answer questions related to the legislations and studies being conducted.

**November 2022- December 2022: Geophysical Data Collected at Fort Lewis Cemetery****December 15, 2022: CCIA quarterly meeting**

Second progress related to activities in HB22-1327: included information around contracting with outside vendors and the anticipated field and research schedule regarding archival research trip to Washington, D.C. and completed geophysical data collection. Updates related to the Teller Institute included the passage of a State Historical Fund grant to Colorado School of Mines to finalize geophysical investigations. CDHS had also created a protected website to share sensitive information with Tribal partners.

**January 23, 2023: Update with Ute Tribal Partners**

Updated representatives from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe on progress and answered questions specific to the research to date. Had separate but related telephone conversations with Ute Mountain Ute representatives.

**February 8, 2023: Fort Lewis College listening session** History Colorado and CCIA staff joined FLC Trustees in participation in round table discussions led by students outlining their desires and recommendations for future reconciliation efforts related to boarding school histories.

**February 10, 2013: Saving Places Conference, Boulder Colorado**

Dawn DiPrince led a panel discussion entitled “Are you a Good Ancestor? Preservation is Generational Work” which included conversations around the national Boarding School effort by staff from NARF.

**March 16, 2023: CCIA quarterly meeting**

Third progress report identifying the advancement of research, and final steps towards producing the final report, as well as any talks, lectures, or presentations related to the boarding school effort.

**April 5, 2023: Invited Lecture, Federal Indian Boarding Schools in Colorado**

Staff from History Colorado, CCIA, and Fort Lewis College participated in a panel discussion hosted by the Colorado Department of Healthcare Policy & Financing (HCPF).

**April 5, 2023: Invited Discussion, Public History and the Grand Junction Indian School**

Staff from History Colorado and Alpine Archaeological Services discussed the role of public historians and federal Indian education policy with class from Colorado Mesa University.

**May 2023: CDHS Hires Tribal Liaison**

CDHS Tribal Liaison begins intensive one-on-one conversations with Tribal representatives who had students who attended the Teller Institute.

**June 1, 2023: CCIA quarterly meeting**

Final progress report to the CCIA confirming that History Colorado was on track to present findings to the Commission at the end of the month.

**June 30, 2023: CCIA receives report of findings from History Colorado**

**August 16, 2023: Listening Session with leaders from AI/AN Community Organizations**

Staff from History Colorado, CCIA, and Fort Lewis College presented a broad overview of the boarding school effort to date and requested feedback for immediate next steps as well as long-term efforts to seek resolution on the impacts of federal Indian education policy.

**August 17, 2023: Tribal Consultation**

Leadership and representatives of 33 Tribes identified having students at GJIS and FLIBS as of June 30, 2023 were invited. Staff from History Colorado, CCIA, and Fort Lewis College presented a broad overview of the boarding school effort to date and requested feedback for immediate next steps as well as long-term efforts to seek resolution on the impacts of federal Indian education policy.

**September 1, 2023: Executive summary and recommendations delivered by History Colorado per the terms of HB22-1327**

## **APPENDIX B: HB22-1327 Synopsis**

The Native American Boarding School Research Program, HB22-1327 directed History Colorado to perform a number of activities in order to understand the impacts of the federal Indian boarding schools, particularly the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School in Hesperus, Colorado. A summary of the work conducted to meet the directives as per the legislation is provided below. Each section has been expanded upon in subsequent chapters or sections of this report.

**Section 2(b)(I) THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MAY ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH A THIRD-PARTY RESEARCH ENTITY TO CONDUCT PARTS OF THE RESEARCH DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3).**

History Colorado entered into several third-party agreements in order to meet the requirements of the legislation, including agreements with Alpine Archaeological Consultants; Statistical Research, Inc; AECOM; Heritech Consulting Services; Living Heritage West, LLC; and Steve Grinstead Editing and Writing Services. These subject matter experts were procured using funding provided by the Colorado State Legislature in association with HB22-1327. In addition, the services of the Colorado School of Mines have been procured to conduct geophysical investigations at the Teller Institute, also known as the Grand Junction Indian Boarding School, in Grand Junction, Colorado. The Colorado School of Mines has applied for and been awarded State Historical Fund grants in order to complete this research.

**Section 2(II) IDENTIFY AND MAP GRAVES OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS BURIED AT THE FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL AT FORT LEWIS AND OFF-CAMPUS CEMETERIES BY USING RESEARCH METHODS DETERMINED DURING CONSULTATION WITH THE SOUTHERN UTE TRIBE AND THE UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE;**

The services of Dr. Jennie Sturm of Statistical Research, Inc. were procured to meet the requirements of identifying and mapping graves of students who were buried at the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School cemetery. Dr. Sturm used a suite of geophysical survey methods including drone-deployed LiDAR, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), Red-Green-Blue (RBG)/Near-Infrared (NIR) photography, and magnetic gradiometry. Given the tight deadlines associated with HB22-1327, as well as rigorous State procurement processes, standard methodologies for investigating unlocated graves were employed. These methods have been

determined to be “best practices”<sup>1</sup> in both the United States and Canada, and have been approved by Indigenous practitioners and scholars. These are also the methods being deployed at the Teller Institute by the Colorado School of Mines, and were determined appropriate by representatives of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe, and representatives of other tribal nations who were involved in the April 26, 2022, consultation on the Teller Institute in Grand Junction. Geophysical investigations were conducted in November and December of 2022.

(III) REVIEW EXISTING RESEARCH AND CONDUCT NEW RESEARCH AS NEEDED ON EXISTING RESOURCES AND MATERIALS TO REVEAL NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT VICTIMS AT THE FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL AT FORT LEWIS;

There has been extensive research conducted between July 1, 2022, when this bill went into effect, and today, June 30, 2023, when the final report is due. Archives at the federal, state, and local levels have been combed for information, and the methodology of that archival research is described in more detail in the report. In addition, the subject matter experts who have participated in this study have spoken to tribal members, survivors, descendants, local historians, cemetery operators, and others regarding the history of the federal Indian schools in this state, as well as engaging with the previously published scholarly literature on the subject.

(IV) REVIEW WRITTEN AND RECORDED HISTORY AND ORAL HISTORY DESCRIBING THE EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA OF STUDENTS ATTENDING THE FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL AT FORT LEWIS AND THEIR FAMILIES; AND (V) INTERVIEW THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXPERIENCES AND TRAUMA EXPERIENCED BY NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS ATTENDING THE FEDERAL INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL AT FORT LEWIS AND THE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA, OF THE STUDENTS' FAMILIES AND DESCENDANTS.

This particular directive has been more challenging to achieve than the directives listed above. Much of the recorded history of the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School was not recorded by the students or their families, and instead we have had to rely primarily on government reports or

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Archaeological Association (2021), *Recommended Pathway for Locating Unmarked Graves Around Residential Schools*. Guidance Document; Hamilton (2021), *Where Are the Children Buried? A Report Prepared for the National Center of Truth and Reconciliation*, University of Manitoba, Manitoba, Canada; (2018), NCHRP 25-25, Task 98, *Practical Guide for Developing Effective Scopes of Work for the Geophysical Investigations of Cemeteries*. Manuscript prepared by WSP, Inc., and New South Associates, Inc., for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO); Small et al. (2021), *Native American and Indigenous Protocols for Surveying Indian Boarding School Burial Sites*. Unpublished Manuscript.

newspaper accounts of the lived experiences of the students. When we have been able to, we have accessed the few accounts that do exist.

Oral histories were not collected during this past year. Given the short time frame for the implementation of HB22-1327, and the need to intentionally approach oral history interviews from a perspective grounded in knowledge of the history of schools in Colorado, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed approaches, it was not a directive that could be accomplished responsibly this State fiscal year.

While the directive to conduct oral histories arose from good intentions, I would ask that we as a State government identify the purposes of oral histories. It cannot be simply a performative action. The first logistical issue is that the off-reservation boarding schools, Fort Lewis and Grand Junction, both closed by 1911, so there are few, if any, living survivors of these specific schools. Many people note that their parents and grandparents did not speak at great length about their experiences. Oral histories should be firsthand accounts of survivors of these institutions. I would caution that oral histories must serve a greater purpose than simply recording the trauma of already victimized people, who do not owe the State their emotions or stories. If in the process of the State seeking reconciliation with tribal communities oral histories are recorded, then we must also carefully consider the storage, access, and use of those oral histories. The recording of oral histories must serve a purpose identified by the victimized community and be put to their sole use alone.

It is my belief that individual oral histories will not provide any additional information about the experiences of Native people in boarding schools that would change either our historical understanding of the system or the impact of that system on tribes and families. If conducted appropriately, however, these oral histories can be a valuable resource for families and descendants. These oral histories may also prove to be therapeutic for survivors of boarding schools, and could potentially provide explanations and greater context for their own experiences. So when oral histories are conducted, they should be approached as a resource for individuals and for tribes.

Some important aspects to consider as the State ponders collecting oral histories are questions around ownership and access. It may not be appropriate for some or any future oral histories to be publicly accessible, and it is appropriate to consider that such recordings, even if paid for and collected by the State of Colorado, should belong to individual families and descendants, or to Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, leaving tribes with the discretion of when and how to share them.

To better inform the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs and the Colorado State Legislature on how to collect these sensitive oral histories, History Colorado

commissioned Living Heritage Anthropology, a cultural resource firm that specializes in ethnographic and tribal consultation services, to produce a robust research design for an oral history project. The research design, with greater detail regarding best practices, is available upon request.

The inquiry related to the boarding schools in Colorado predates HB22-1327. Fort Lewis College had acknowledged the history of the Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School and has been working towards understanding the implications of that history and creating programs of reconciliation for both the college and the wider Durango community. Similarly, the Colorado Department of Human Services has been involved in a complementary, but different, investigation of the boarding school that operated on what is today the Grand Junction Regional Center since early 2021, although some efforts go back to 2017. We were fortunate that when HB22-1327 passed, there had already been a multi-nation consultation specifically about the Teller Institute in Grand Junction but that also included conversations regarding appropriate methods of investigations, tribal ceremonies, and other matters relevant to both of the off-reservation boarding schools in Colorado.

**APPENDIX C:  
Proposed Budget for HB22-1327 Recommendations**

<b>Task/Item</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Tribal Consultation with two reps from 33 Tribes	One annual in person meeting for three years, supplemented with virtual meetings	\$110,000 to \$130,000 annually for one, in-person consultation with two representatives each of 33 Tribes	\$390,000
AI/AN Listening & Learning Sessions	Twice a year for three years	\$5,000 per session/ \$10,000 year	\$30,000
Travel to Tribal Nations	On-going, 2-3 staff members		\$150,000
Additional Archival Research	One research trip per year for 5-7 days for 2-3 staff members	Flight, per diem, lodging, transportation 3 staff: \$8,049 annually	\$24,147
Tribal Communications Specialist term-limited FTE	Three years	Salary: \$60,000 Benefits: \$22,500 Other: \$2,735	\$259,200
Research Assistant term-limited FTE	Three Years	Salary: \$55,000 Benefits: \$21,000 Other: \$2,735	\$237,950
Oral histories centering survivors and Indigenous narratives	Five Years		\$118,242
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$1,209,539</b>