

BLACKWATER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

February 2, 2016

Response to the NRC Panel:

1. How does the current condition affect your ability to run a day-to-day education program? Items to address include: power outages; lack of internet access; adequate water; adequate utility systems.

Blackwater Community School was built in 1939 and was limited to a K-2 campus. For the majority of time, the campus enrollment was very small, less than 100 students. The campus consisted of a teachers' quarters and one block of rooms that included a cafeteria and classrooms. Many of the children who attend today had grandparents that attended this school. There were two teachers, one of whom was the principal. Today, the campus consists of the same original buildings that are 76 years old, as well as 8 modular classrooms, a modular cafeteria, and an Early Childhood Building. The modular classrooms were brought on line beginning in 2000. Based on this date, several of the modulars are reaching the maximum age and are very undersized for the current enrollment.

The most critical issue related to the current facility conditions is the lack of adequate space to conduct core education functions. The BIE recognized this issue in August 2007 after conducting a space analysis survey. The Bureau stated that "many classrooms were overcrowded and recommended classrooms, administrative and other education program space be designed into a multi-purpose room building (which BIE recommended be constructed on campus) in order to provide the school with adequate educational space". This report recognized the serious overcrowded conditions at the school that have become even worse since that report was issued. In 2007 the school was undersized by 13,000 square feet and now is undersized by more than 31,400 square feet due to increased enrollment. Kindergarten is undersized by more than 5440 square feet, first grade by 2880 square feet, and second grade by 2880 square feet. In addition to the portables not meeting current space guidelines, the culture/language program is housed in a condemned building (a non-BIA owned building) and the science and nurses office is housed in a structurally deficient building, with doors that cannot close due to structural deficiencies in the floor and foundation. A contractor's estimate to repair this structure is over \$160,000, more than the building is worth. One of the greatest and most serious challenges facing the school is the lack of a gymnasium.

It is an accepted fact that Gila River has the highest rate of diabetes among North American Indian tribes and one of the highest in the world. For 50% of the school year, students can't be outside because of the extreme heat advisories and in the summer mosquitoes. This restriction is even more serious because of the health statistics of the community. Within the past three years, the Gila River Health Program did a measurement on the Body Mass Index (BMI) of all enrolled students on the reservation and the children at Blackwater had the highest BMI index. This is a crisis for early diabetes and other health related issues. Without a gym children's long term health and life expectancy is jeopardized. The school's PE program continues to work with the School Nurse and Gila River Health Program staff to provide education classes in the classrooms to the children on nutrition and exercise. However, without the ability to participate in exercise it will continue to have minimal impact on the BMI index of the

students. It is critical that the proposed school includes a gym that will address the health crisis facing the community. It is significant to know our school is the only school on Gila River without a gymnasium.

The inadequate facilities don't provide space for the 23 children in the BIE approved gifted and talented program and the school lacks sufficient space for administration, library/media room, server room and technology office, special education assessment space and space for speech therapy and occupational therapy, reading intervention, and counseling. Counselors do not have office space to conduct private counseling sessions and often resort to working with students under trees or a corner of the building.

Another need of the school is provide art and music. Research has clearly demonstrated the powerful connection to learning when children are exposed to quality art and music classes. The school has not been able to provide these programs to the children because there are no classrooms for these programs.

The school's kitchen and cafeteria is housed in a portable structure and children eat in overcrowded conditions. We serve three shifts of students beginning at 10:30.

Overcrowding results in children being educated in hallways for tutorial help, children almost sitting on each other during group reading time and circle time, and teachers don't have space to work with groups of children needing enrichment. The school made a commitment to prepare all our teaching staff to prepare them for the common core standard. We have a weekly training session provided by an outside consulting firm but due to inadequate space large enough to accommodate all teaching staff, it is extremely difficult to provide professional development

The culture classroom does not have a restroom requiring students to walk to the administration building, approximately a 100-yard walk, to use those facilities. The classroom doesn't have a small kitchen facility to teach children how to prepare traditional foods which is an essential part of the curriculum.

The school has worked hard to address electrical, water and sewer infrastructure issues in order to be ready for permanent construction to alleviate the severe overcrowded issues that currently exist. The school upgraded its infrastructure beginning in 2009 to prepare for future expansion. The water, sewer, and electrical systems have been upgraded. Our campus is prepared for new school construction.

The school cannot address the severely overcrowded conditions. The facility does not meet the school's education program requirements based on the 2005 space guidelines. If these overcrowded conditions are allowed to continue the school is in danger of no longer being able to meet AYP as it cannot provide effective instruction or professional development in overcrowded buildings. There are more than 41 applications for new homes in our attendance area so the long-term outlook is for continued growth. The overcrowding will only become worse.

We require additional space that can only be provided by new school construction.

2. How does your school support the mission of BIE to manifest consideration of the whole person, taking into account the spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural aspects of the individual?

Blackwater Community School is committed to providing a quality education program for students who enroll in our school. Our mission is "Quality Education Begins Here"! Blackwater is a high performing early childhood through grade two school and has attained Adequate Yearly Progress since the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation in 2002.

Due to our commitment to high achievement for all students our school has become a

school of choice for parents in our attendance area. Our school was named an Exemplary Title 1 School for the state of Arizona and our past principal who retired last year was named the Distinguished Elementary Principal by the state of Arizona. Our FACE program has also been named the FACE program of the year by the BIE 2 times. Our school is committed to academic excellence.

Spiritual: The daily learning environment is focused on providing each child with a foundation in the cultural mores of the community. This is accomplished with the full time Culture/Language teacher who provides the link within the community to the elders and the historical significance of the Akimel O'Otham community. Within this context, the spiritual aspect of personal development is addressed within the legends that have been passed down through generations of relatives. These legends lay the groundwork for personal ethics and behavior and a connection to the spiritual power that guides all aspects of life and is symbolized by the Man in the Maze icon. Children are asked to reflect on their personal decision-making and how to address challenges facing them in their lives. This is especially critical because of the high incidents of alcohol and drug abuse within the community and the impact on children and families.

The school has a long history of a commitment to early childhood education. The FACE program has been in place for 24 years and has been recognized twice as the Outstanding Program of the year. Besides the center-base program, the home base program has provided the critical foundation for learning and early screening of children. In addition, the school has successfully operated a Title VII preschool program for 15 years and for five years a First Things First Quality First preschool program. The enrollment for all these programs is close to 60 children. All three programs have a parent involvement requirement with monthly meetings, field trips and special events on campus. Many of the FACE parents are full time employees and have completed GEDs as well as enrollment in higher education and employment in the community.

At the heart of this instructional model is data. Each week data is reviewed to determine individual student mastery and re-teaching referrals. No student is allowed to not master the required skills in the key content areas. This is also supported in the 21st Century Learning Community Grant program that offers tutoring and enrichment for all students in the after school program, intersession programs and summer school. Plus, the school has an Arizona State Department Education School Improvement Grant that provides on-going, intensive professional development offered by an Instructional Specialist and a team from Maricopa County Education Specialists. Furthermore, there are two Instructional Coaches that meet with the teachers weekly to discuss student data and instructional effectiveness. Collectively, the daily instructional practice is focused on student academic success.

Our school has a full time physical education teacher who works with all grades. This is especially important to the health of our students as it is well known the Gila River Indian Community has one of the world's highest documented incidence of type 2 diabetes mellitus and also have a high prevalence of obesity. However our commitment to our student's health is made more difficult because we lack a facility to conduct a physical education program and it is often impossible to conduct outdoor physical education activities due to extreme temperatures that exceed 105 degrees for three months of the school year.

Our school is committed to the well being of the whole student. Overall, Blackwater Community School has a demonstrated history of success in all aspects of a child's development. We have high expectations for students and staff and are committed to the integration of culture and language throughout all grade levels from early childhood through the FACE adult education program. Our school has won many prestigious honors over the years because of the leadership of the Board and Community Support.

The school clearly has the organizational strength, academic model, and commitment to the preservation of its spiritual and cultural tradition to meet the mission of the BIE.

3. Can you meet the post award requirements for Planning within the 18-month time frame? These requirements include: land availability; utility availability; geotechnical surveys can be completed and NEPA review can be completed.

We can meet the post award requirement since the site at BWCS is well prepared for the addition of permanent Classroom, Administration, Cafeteria and Multi-Purpose Space. The facilities constructed in 1939 and 1992 have been renovated and are fully serviceable. In 2009 the site utilities were upgraded to accommodate any future on site construction. Schematic plans and elevations have been developed. NEPA review of the school site was performed in 1998 and there were no findings that are environmentally damaging. The NEPA review was conducted by the Gila River Indian Community's Office of Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The findings of this report showed no significant environmental or cultural issues to prohibit construction on the school site. This report has been used each time the school has added a modular structure.

The sequence to prepare documents to complete the project is as follows:

- A geotechnical report, topographic survey, programming of the space requirements and preliminary design will take approximately four (4) weeks, followed by Design Development Plans (75% complete) which would take about forty five (45) days to complete. Final construction documents will take approximately two (2) months.
- 100% completion for submittal to the BIA, GRIC, and State Fire Marshal is approximately six (6) months total.
- The time frame to complete the project (Classrooms, Administration, Cafeteria and Multi-Purpose space) would be approximately eighteen (18) months. This would include staging the Cafeteria and Multi-Purpose so that the existing Cafeteria can remain in use while the new Cafeteria is built.

Adding new facilities on an existing site that is operational does create some issues to consider. In the case of BWCS construction access can be accommodated from the East and the school personnel access from the West. The work site would be fenced and screened from the school campus keeping the students safe during the construction period.

The current condition of the site utilities will accommodate the new buildings. Outages would be minor. The current power service, internet access, water and sewer will have a short-term outage necessary to make the new connections. Any utilities that interfere with the footprint of the new construction will be rerouted and the service connections made when the school is not in session. We do not anticipate any of the services being interrupted for more than a 24 hour period and can be coordinated so as not to interfere with school activities.

The school has land on which to construct a new school. The new school will be constructed on land the school has occupied since 1939. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pima Agency, Sacaton, Arizona provided the school with a letter dated January 16, 2009 that provides the legal description of the land set aside for Blackwater. A plat document dated November 5, 1938 provided by the Commissioner's Office in Washington, D.C. also shows the same land set aside for Blackwater Community School. We will provide that information in a separate document for the panel to view, if they so wish. In short, the proposed construction will be located on the current campus of the Blackwater Community School. There are no significant issues with right of way as the electrical and water systems are already in place.



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
PIMA AGENCY
P.O. Box 8
Sacaton, Arizona 85247



IN REPLY REFER TO:
Branch of Real Estate Services

JAN 16 2009

Ms. Jacquelyn Power, Principal
Blackwater Community School
Route 1, Box 95
Coolidge, Arizona 85228

Dear Ms. Power:

This is in response to your letter dated January 9, 2009 requesting the 'legal description' for the Blackwater Community School located in District #1, Gila River Indian Community. After reviewing the Blackwater Community School file and the Trust Accounting Asset Management System (TAAMS), the legal land description we have for the Blackwater Community School is Section 36, Township 4 South, Range 7 East, Gila & Salt River Base and Meridian, Pinal County, Arizona. This information will be used to ensure your office has the most current legal land description on record with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

If you have any questions, or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the Acting Realty Officer or the Branch of Real Estate Services at (520) 562-3376.

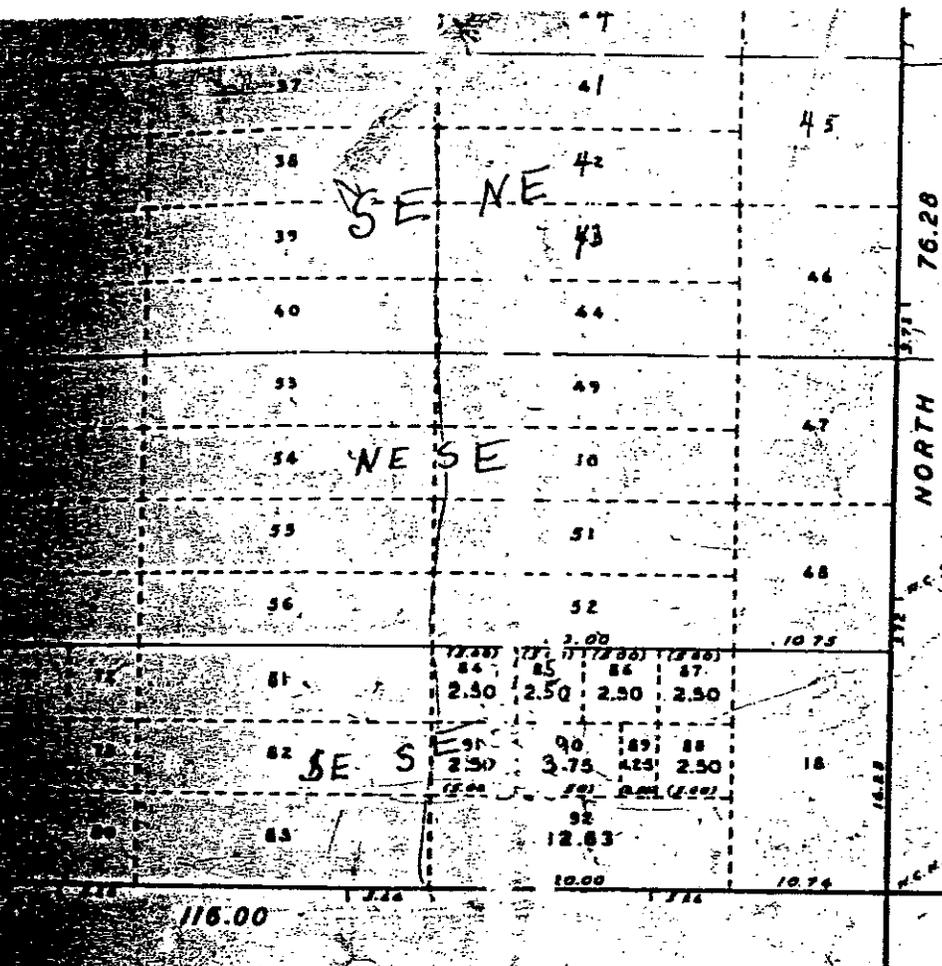
Sincerely,


Superintendent



1/13/2009

No warranty is made by the BLM for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.



SUPPLEMENTAL PLAT OF SEC 36, T4S, R7E

NOVEMBER 5, 1938

PLAT OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP NO. 4
 RANGE 7 EAST, OF THE GILA AND SALT RIVER
 AREA, BASED UPON THE PLATS
 APPROVED SEPTEMBER 25 AND 29,
 SUBDIVISION OF ORIGINAL
 GILA RIVER

United States
 Department of the Interior
 General Land Office,
 Washington, D.C., December 1, 1938

The amended lot areas represented by this supplemental plat having been made in accordance with the regulations of this office, the same is hereby approved.

COMMISSIONER'S
 OCTOBER 28, 1938

Autel...
 Assistant Commissioner

SHERMAN C. FISKE
 CADASTRAL ENGINEER

11/5/1938

Section 36 Township 4 South Range 7 East G&SHE&M, Arizona

845.51 Acres

1907 Daniel T. Lewis	2159 Andrew Jackson Prob	2154 Elena Thomas Lot 29	2194 Samuel Jones Prob	2277 Anna Malya Prob LOT 21 Pable	2278 George Pable
3268 Esther 03 Cemetery	2160 Jessie Jackson Prob	2153 John Thomas LOT 30	2195 Alice Jones Prob	2293 Lucy Nelson Prob	
Thomas Lewis 03	2160	2225 Susanna Jones Prob LOT 31	2196 Hiram Jones	2292 Eunice Anton Prob	2279 Grace Pable
2440 Margaret Lewis Prob	04 Catholic Church	3099 Peedlah Lah-Pai	2257B Johnson Miguel Prob	2291 James Fulton Prob	
2440	2135 Juan Eschief Prob	2223 Cyrus Jones Prob	2262 Jennie Miguel Prob LOT 37	3003 Philip Fulton	2273 Eugene Johnson
2441 Alice Lewis	2136 Anna Eschief Prob	2224 Lena Jones Prob	2263 Flora Miguel	3004 Sarah Fulton Prob	
2442 Samuel Lewis Stanley Ellis	2137 Anna Eschief Prob	2222A Josephine Jones Prob	2264 Ellen Miguel	3005 Nora Fulton	2274 Martha Johnson
2443 Thomas Lewis - 2005	2138 Walter Eschief Prob	1432 Chilito Juan Prob	2265 Albert Miguel Prob	3006 Mina Fulton Prob	LOT 46 Prob
2897 Lawrence Lewis Prob	2139 Albert Eschief Prob	2162 Jose Marie Prob Lot 52 Johnson	2258A Cyrus Miguel Prob LOT 53		
2045 Lulu Enes	2168 David Elsmere	2161 Antonio Jose Prob Jackson	2985A Andrew Kisto	2202 Susie Pable LOT 50	
2046 Mary Enes R.P. 5439-2010	2169 Jennie Elsmere	3123 Juan Reys	2984 Mollie Kisto Prob	2201A Jose Pable LOT 51	
2660 - Mary Enes R.P. 5439-2010	2170 John Morris	3124 Mary Lewis Reys Prob	2111A Mary Anton Church (Presby)		
2045 Jose Domingo R.P. 5439-2010	2171 John Morris	2122 Fred Johnson	2243 Juan A. Scott Prob	3103 Expired 194 Lot 124	3100A Carl Johnson
2014 John Enes R.P. 5439-2010	2133 Ellen Morris ALLEN ELLIS	2112 Paul Newman Lot 54, 75 & 76	2245 Laura Scott Prob	3203 Mary Prob/Pable	Prob Lot 18
2015 John Enes R.P. 5439-2010	2134 Simon Morris GR-5439-2010	2113 O. T. Scott Lot 18	2244 John Scott Prob	Blackwater Day School	