

G A O
Accountability • Integrity • Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-692](#), a report to Congressional Committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is responsible for providing over 48,000 children with a safe place to learn. In response to concerns that data in its old information system did not accurately reflect the condition of facilities, BIA acquired a new system, called the Facilities Management Information System (FMIS). GAO was asked to determine whether FMIS addresses the old system's weaknesses and meets BIA's management needs, whether BIA has finished validating the accuracy of data entered into FMIS from the old system, and how well the quality control measures are working for ensuring the accuracy of new data being entered into the system from individual schools.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that BIA establish better guidance and performance expectations for employees who are responsible for entering and reviewing the accuracy and completeness of FMIS data. GAO also recommends that BIA officials periodically analyze the extent and type of data errors being found during review in order to identify training needs and other strategies for addressing any continuing problems.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-692.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Marnie S. Shaul (202) 512-6778.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS SCHOOLS

New Facilities Management Information System Promising, but Improved Data Accuracy Needed

What GAO Found

FMIS is designed to address the previous data system's shortcomings and appears to have the capability to meet BIA's management needs if the data that are entered into FMIS are correct and timely. The old system was hard to use and did not readily provide data for maintenance and repair efforts. FMIS's design appears to overcome these weaknesses. For example, FMIS has features that help facility managers make data more consistent, as well as tools for helping managers develop cost estimates for maintenance and construction projects.

BIA's contractor has been correcting the data that were transferred to FMIS from the previous system, but issues such as software compatibility problems between the contractor's system and FMIS have delayed entry of some of the data for more than 1 year. BIA officials say that these problems are being addressed. They said the delay has not affected their ability to prioritize or fund repair and construction projects, and our review of the data indicated that most newly identified deficiencies will not need to be addressed for 2 to 5 years. Our review of data from 14 BIA schools and observations during site visits disclosed no instances in which these data problems resulted in an unsafe learning environment for children.

Most measures for controlling the quality of new data BIA employees are entering into the system for individual schools are not working well. BIA has established a multilevel review process and training programs to help ensure that such data entries are complete and accurate, but BIA's contractor, in reviewing data at the end of this process, continues to find that nearly half of the proposed data entries coming through the system are inaccurate and incomplete. Data entries from one-third of 102 schools that entered data show a 100-percent error rate. As a result, BIA officials continue to rely on their contractor to ensure that FMIS reflects accurate and complete data on the condition of BIA's facilities.

BIA School in South Dakota



Source: BIA.