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12 April 2021

Dear Tunica-Biloxi Families

I am writing in support of the Tunica-Biloxi Education Department (TBED) and the new ACE (Accessing Choices in Education) grant we were awarded as of October 2020. While we were limited by the assistance we could provide in our last grant, I am so excited that we are now able to provide educational services to students in grades K-12 no matter where they live. This is something that parents have requested for a number of years and we are now able to make a bigger investment in our children's future.

The Education Department staff has shown great commitment in helping our children in the past four years. Speaking from personal experience, my son, MJ, has benefitted from tutoring, ACT Prep, Career Prep, Leadership Training, Life & Social Skills, and the many college tours and enrichment trips with fellow students. The academic coaching and mentoring services helped MJ stay on track and succeed in school. I know it was the ongoing support and encouragement of the Education staff that made the difference.

The new ACE grant represents an opportunity to help our children who have challenges in school as well as those who are already good students. I've heard parents who say "our family has financial means, so we do not want to take away from families who need the help." The ACE grant comes with generous funding to help all Tunica-Biloxi children regardless of economic means. It requires that 80% of the grant MUST be spent on student services. Additionally, our Tribe can only maintain funding IF we spend the funds for the purposes it was awarded. IF we don't use it, funding will be reduced.

As an elected leader, I am always thinking about investments in our tribal community. These decisions do not always come easily. However, there is one thing I can be sure of and that is our investment in education and the future of our children. I ask that you register your children into the TBED today.

Shtamari (To be respectful),

Marshall Ray Sampson, Sr.
Vice Chairman

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