US Government, “Tribally Controlled Schools.” *Tribally-Controlled Schools | Bureau of Indian Education*, https://www.bie.edu/topic-page/tribally-controlled-schools.

SAMPLE RHETORICAL ANALYSIS:

The U.S Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Education official website formally lists programs, initiatives, and the mission of this organization. According to the website, “BIE’s mission is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a tribe’s needs for cultural and economic well-being. In keeping with the wide diversity of Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities further, the BIE is to manifest consideration of the whole person by taking into account the spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural aspects of the individual within his or her family and tribal or village context.” By starting off with references to Native American history and the mission of this Department, the official web page allows readers to understand the expected result of the Department’s actions, as well as their intent to address the ethical issues raised by historic mistreatment of Native Americans in reservation schools. Such a strong purpose statement uses pathos to convince the readers of the government’s good intent and trustworthiness. Specifically, highlighting the “spiritual, mental, physical, and cultural aspects of the individual” makes the Department seem like it is offering a safe space that wants the best for Native Americans, beyond merely their education.

The genre of the official government department website features established and formal policies designed to improve Native American education. The genre’s directness is beneficial, in that any citizen looking for policies can easily find them here. However, the fact that this program is only one sided may be a flaw. So far, I have seen only the intentions of the department, rather than examples of the actions that they have taken within the offices themselves. I believe adding specific examples would aid their argument of working to improve educational opportunities rather than just keeping it as listed policies. Circular arguments also appear throughout the site; phrases such as “empowered” and “improve” are used to convey the result of these policies, but they are more claims that are repeated rather than proved. I wonder about the results of government education, and whether they have harmed or helped trust between the government and indigenous people. The page states, “Providing proper educational facilities is not only essential to fulfilling the academic, social, and cultural needs of Native American children, but is also a matter of trust responsibility for the Federal Government, as well as treaty rights for many tribes. Satisfying these obligations involves attention to both the condition of the facilities and the quality of the educational experience.” In other words, to successfully improve the education of Native American children, the government must build trust and produce positive results for those receiving the education. However, leaving out the results suggests a bias in favor of the department. One cannot evaluate these policies unless the Department provides examples of them working effectively.