



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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April 16, 2008

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Education Committee prepares to present the Board of Education Amendments Act of 2008 during the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council spring session**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Education Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council met in a special meeting on April 16 at the Abandoned Mine Lands conference room in Window Rock to prepare for the Navajo Nation Council work session on the proposed Legislation No. 0190-08, sponsored by Andy R. Ayze, Willie Tracey, Jr., Ida M. Nelson, Elmer Milford, Bobby Robbins, Leonard Anthony, and David Tom. The work session is scheduled for Thursday, April 17.

This legislation relates to education by enacting the Board of Education Amendments Act of 2008 by amending Titles Two, Title Ten and Eleven of the Navajo Nation Code.

The Education Committee's general purpose is to oversee the educational development of the Navajo Nation. The committee met several times over the past several months to discuss the academic progress of Navajo children and the quality of the schools, teachers, and administrators.

As the oversight committee, there is growing concern about the role of the Board of Education in monitoring the operation of all schools serving the Navajo Nation, the lack of leadership and guidance, the lack of progress in the development of instructional content, academic standards, and the lack of communication with the schools and administrators.

The board is mandated to consolidate the cultural knowledge and Navajo language standards of the three states overlapping the Navajo Nation. The board has not acted to establish any of the standards, nor address any of the aforementioned duties and responsibilities as reported by the president of the board to the committee during a meeting on March 31.

According to a press release from the Navajo Board of Education, the Board of Education actually agrees that the expected progress has not occurred.

Certain mandates contained within Resolution CJY-37-05, are not being addressed adequately. After meeting with Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr. and Mr. Jimmy C. Begay, president of the Navajo Board of Education, the committee determined that an immediate action was needed to begin to resolve the educational crisis.

The legislation sponsored by the Education Committee was considered on March 31 and was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0.

The Education Committee is concerned and wants this crisis situation resolved immediately. The committee can not allow the board to continue to be deadlocked, while

failing to address educational matters. As a result, at the board's request, the committee intervened and introduced Legislation No. 0190-08.

The Education Committee will reassume certain duties and responsibilities that it had delegated to the Board of Education.

The intent of the legislation is to amend only those sections within Titles 2, 10 and 11 that are related to the duties and responsibilities of the Navajo Board of Education.

The intent of the Navajo Sovereignty in Education Act of 2005 remains the same. The proposed amendments will restore the authority of the Education Committee as the direct oversight over the Department of Dine Education, local community school boards, and the school board associations.

The board's role would become an advisory board comprised of seven, not 11 members. All board members will be appointed by the president of the Navajo Nation and confirmed by the Education Committee.

The seven member board will include one traditional person, one head start representative or Central Parent Policy Council member, one teacher, one researcher, one curriculum developer, one school administrator, and one parent.

The Superintendent of Schools will be appointed by the Navajo Nation President and would be subject to an annual performance evaluation conducted by both the President and the Education Committee.

The Education Committee believes that it is a Navajo Nation priority to ensure that each and every Navajo child receives an excellent and quality education.

However, the majority of Navajo schools, including public schools, are failing to make annual yearly progress (AYP), which creates an academic crisis at Navajo schools today.

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