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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee addresses issues regarding Chilchinbeto Community School accreditation

MONUMENT VALLEY, Utah – On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report from the Chilchinbeto Community School Board and administration on issues regarding accreditation of the school and negative publicity.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta), who represents the community, said the accreditation of Chilchinbeto Community School is set to expire on January 31, 2017 and would not affect the operation of the school and its programs.

“Although the school was recommended to have its accreditation withdrawn, this does not affect the schools program and operations. There has been a rumor regarding the closure of the school, but that is simply not true,” said Delegate Brown. “The main thing we want to let everyone know is the accreditation issue did not affect funding of the school and will not affect it in the future.”

He added that because of the closure rumors, the enrollment of students at the school decreased dramatically from 160 students to 65 students.

The school’s accreditation is not required for K-8 classes, however, high schools are required to be accredited to assure colleges and universities that high school students who graduate have met all requirements to pursue higher education, said Delegate Brown.

According to the accrediting entity AdvancED, the Chilchinbeto Community School is able to reinstate its accreditation if the school submits a \$25,000 bond, or they may appeal the decision to be reinstated, which would cost approximately \$1,750.

Delegate Brown said that the Chilchinbeto Community School Board reassumed control of the school this year after the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education had taken over about two years ago and stated that DODE was the cause for the loss of accreditation due to poor management and the hiring of an unqualified program manager.

“I am grateful for the active school board members, because their intentions has always been for the good of the students at Chilchinbeto Community School. However, we need to hold DODE

accountable for the loss of accreditation and I recommend that they absorb the costs associated with reinstatement,” said Delegate Brown.

In addition to Delegate Brown’s recommendation, he also suggested a directive to committee members that a performance audit be carried out for the time that DODE was in control of the school, as well as to assess the school’s current administration to identify the issues from both standpoints.

EHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) said the elementary school deserved due process for the loss of its accreditation, and that the committee will aid the board in developing policies to address issues stemming from the proposed audits, and will continue to monitor the situation until it has been rectified.

EHSC members voted 2-0 with one directive to accept the report.

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