

THE NAVAJO NATION  
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH  
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION



LEGISLATION NO: \_0159-20\_\_

SPONSOR: Edmund Yazzie

**TITLE: An Action Relating to Health, Education and Human Services and Naabik'iyáti' Committees; Recommending that the State of New Mexico Public Education Department to Delay Plans and Decisions to Reopen Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year**

***Date posted: July 16, 2020 at 7:36PM***

Digital comments may be e-mailed to [comments@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:comments@navajo-nsn.gov)

Written comments may be mailed to:

Executive Director  
Office of Legislative Services  
P.O. Box 3390  
Window Rock, AZ 86515  
(928) 871-7586

Comments may be made in the form of chapter resolutions, letters, position papers, etc. Please include your name, position title, address for written comments; a valid e-mail address is required. Anonymous comments will not be included in the Legislation packet.

**Please note:** This digital copy is being provided for the benefit of the Navajo Nation chapters and public use. Any political use is prohibited. All written comments received become the property of the Navajo Nation and will be forwarded to the assigned Navajo Nation Council standing committee(s) and/or the Navajo Nation Council for review. Any tampering with public records are punishable by Navajo Nation law pursuant to 17 N.N.C. §374 *et. seq.*

## LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0159-20

**DATE:** July 1, 2020

**TITLE OF RESOLUTION:** AN ACTION RELATING TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES AND NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES; RECOMMENDING THAT THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO DELAY PLANS AND DECISIONS TO REOPEN SCHOOLS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

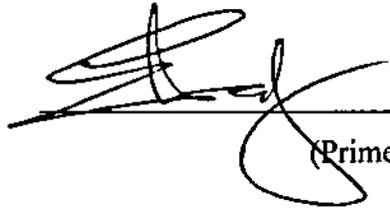
**PURPOSE:** This resolution, if adopted, would recommend that the State of New Mexico Public Education Department to delay plans and decisions to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

**This written summary does not address recommended amendments as may be provided by the standing committees. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each Council Delegate to review each proposed resolution in detail.**

5-DAY BILL/HOLD PERIOD: Johnson  
Website Posting Time/Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Posting End Date: 07-21-20  
Eligible for Action: 07-22-20

PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION  
24<sup>th</sup> NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL -- Second Year, 2020

INTRODUCED BY

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Prime Sponsor)

TRACKING NO. 0159-20

AN ACTION

RELATING TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES AND  
NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES; RECOMMENDING THAT THE STATE OF NEW  
MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO DELAY PLANS AND  
DECISIONS TO REOPEN SCHOOLS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

WHEREAS:

- A. The Health, Education and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council. It has the authority to review and recommend resolutions regarding certain matters, including health, education and social services. 2 N.N.C. §§ 164 (A)(9), 400 (A), 401 (B)(6)(a) (2012); *see also* CO-45-12.
- B. The Naabik'iyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council. It has the authority to "review and continually monitor the programs and activities of federal and state departments and to assist development of such programs designed to serve the Navajo People and the Navajo Nation through intergovernmental relationships between the Navajo Nation and such departments." 2 N.N.C. §701(A)(7).
- C. The Navajo Nation has children attending public schools in the state of New Mexico, including schools in McKinley and San Juan Counties.
- D. Due to coronavirus (COVID-19), Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, through executive order, closed New Mexico public schools for the period March 16, 2020 – April 3, 2020. *See, newmexico.gov.* On March 27, 2020, with 136 confirmed cases for COVID-

1 19 in the state, the March/April school closure was extended for the remaining school year.  
2 Gov. Luhan Grisham stated, “we’re working very hard to contain the virus, and we have  
3 to continue to take aggressive steps to mitigate spread and protect New Mexicans of every  
4 age all across the state. It is more important than ever that we make sure all New Mexicans  
5 are heeding the imperative to stay home.” She also stated, “keeping schools closed is one  
6 of the most important tools we have to support the social distancing that can help us reduce  
7 and mitigate the spread of the virus.” *See, newmexico.gov*. (March 27, 2020). Schools were  
8 directed to develop “continuous learning plans.” *Id.*

9 E. On June 20, 2020, the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), through  
10 its written *Reentry Guidance*, announced plans to reopen schools (K-12) beginning in  
11 August for school year 2020-2021. *See, newmexico.gov* and Exhibit A (an excerpt from  
12 June 20, 2020 NM PED *Reentry Guidance*)

13 E. COVID-19 cases continue to increase across the country at an alarming rate. For  
14 New Mexico, as of July 1, 2020, over 12,000 cases of Coronavirus were reported. Nearly  
15 500 deaths were reported as well. *See, cv.nmhealth.org* (NM Department of Health). And  
16 within the Navajo Nation, health officials have reported the highest per capita rate of  
17 infection for COVID-19 in the United States.

18 F. Statistics also provide that New Mexico “ranks second among states in percent of  
19 positive cases that are under 20 years of age. In New Mexico, 12% of positive cases have  
20 been children and adolescents; the national average is 3%.” *See, cv.nmhealth.org (FAQ)*.

21 G. Navajo children must be protected. In midst of the continuous rising cases of  
22 COVID-19 throughout the country, it is too early to reopen schools in the manner proposed  
23 by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

24  
25 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

26 The Navajo Nation strongly recommends that the state of New Mexico Public  
27 Education Department delay plans and decisions to reopen schools for the 2020-2021  
28 school year as proposed in its June 20, 2020 *Reentry Guidance*.