



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

MEDIA CONTACTS

Kolton Nephew, Legislative Staff Writer
Kyron Hardy, Public Information Officer
Phone: (928) 871-7160
E-mail: nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Department of Diné Education Works to Reauthorize Navajo Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 30, 2021

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Tuesday, the Health, Education and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council (NNC) received a report from the Office of Diné Accountability and Compliance (ODAC) of the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education (DODE) regarding reauthorization delays with tribally operated schools.

According to the report, there are currently twenty-six schools up for reauthorization with ten schools potentially able to be reauthorized by today, July 30, 2021. The reauthorizations are for a term of up to three-years, per school per calendar year.

“Ten schools are on the list for reauthorization that did not meet the June 30 deadline, realistically six may be completed by Friday,” said ODAC Education Program Manager, Darrick Franklin. “We are trying to make schools more accountable. Our office monitors the schools’ application requirements and provides technical assistance, and if needed, request to the Navajo Nation Board of Education for a month’s extension to allow additional time for submission of documents required.”

ODAC assists education institutions with compliance of Federal, state, and Navajo Nation laws through monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance.

The tribally operated schools on the Navajo Nation operate with grants from the Bureau of Indian Education. It is the responsibility of DODE to review all reauthorizations and standings. Upon approval, schools receive their federal grant funding for operational use.

“We need to be careful on details of these issues, we need to refrain from accusations for programs we have oversight, without being disrespectful to programs and staff,” stated Vice Chair Carl Slater (Round Rock, Rock Point, Tséché’izí, Lukachugai, Tsaile-Wheatfields). “We have to answer to federal laws on how education is organized on the Navajo Nation, not to mention the high turnover rate at our Navajo schools.”

DODE staff reported the Richfield Residential Hall in Utah and Tiisyaakin Residential Hall in Holbrook are in good standing with reauthorization and audit, and may soon seek services for new school facilities and/or replacement.

“I am inquiring on Kin Dah Łichí’í ‘Ólta’ update on reauthorization, and have heard Mr. Franklin’s update,” said Council Delegate Vince James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinłichii, Steamboat). “At this point, we need to act in kindness with remorse, and plead with our education staff to proceed with our schools, to keep moving forward for our children, parents, community involvement, in which I support and keep abreast of my assigned chapters.”

Indian Education sovereignty has become a critical issue in recent meetings and legal proceedings across Indian country. Creating a cohesive front with NNC, sanctions and adherence mandates for tribally operated schools could be implemented by DODE.

###