



Navajo Nation Summer Council Session
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BIE Navajo Educational Goals and Priorities

BIE Navajo Report

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Our team at BIE Navajo strives for excellence in all we do. Safety is the cornerstone which all learning rests. When our students walk through our school doors, they should feel secure, protected, and free to focus on their education. The sense of security does not happen by accident – it is the direct result of dedicated professionals and countless others who work tirelessly behind the scenes. As we continue to face evolving challenges in school safety – from traditional security concerns to new digital threats, from mental health crises to emergency preparedness, our commitment and vigilance to a safe environment remain our greatest assets. The relationship we build, and the protocols we refine all contribute to safe schools for every child in our care.

We continue to develop deep expertise and proficiency that enables us to fulfill our mission. Our core values represent our foundation; it is the central values and principles that guide everything we do. Our core remains constant even as the surface may change with time and circumstance. We honor and integrate the rich heritage traditions in our approach toward teaching and learning for students, staff, and stakeholders.

Mission

In partnership with Tribal Nations, the BIE Promotes a culturally relevant based, holistic education that prepares and empowers students to be healthy and successful.

Vision

Excellence in Student-Centered Native Education

Core Values

Excellence

Integrity

Respect

Service

Partnership

We at BIE Navajo want to express our gratitude for the opportunities to provide the Navajo Nation Council with continued updates and information which are vital to our partnership with the nation while continuing to gesture clear and true transparency with all partners. I'd like to open this report to the Navajo Nation Council by stating our efforts remain focused on the delivery of equitable and diverse services to schools by tailoring support, promoting collaboration, and ensuring that resources and expertise are effectively directed towards addressing the unique needs of each school and its student population. The Bureau Funded Schools served by BIE Navajo are as follows:

32 Bureau Operated Schools (BOS) P.L 95-561 – Bureau-operated schools are directly supervised by Education Program Administrators (EPA).

28 Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS) P.L 100-297 – Self-governed by a local school board. Education Program Administrators (EPA) ensure schools are meeting fiscal management responsibilities and grant assurances for education programs along with providing support and technical assistance.

Five (5) Tribally Controlled Peripheral Dormitories (TCS) P.L. 100-297 – Self-governed by a local school board. Education Program Administrators (EPA) ensure the dormitories are meeting fiscal management responsibilities and grant assurances for programming along with providing support and technical assistance.

One (1) Contract School P.L 93-638 – School has the autonomy to contract outside of education and are governed by a local school board.

It is important to reference the 25CFR Part 39 to show how bureau-funded schools are funded. The regulation states “Indian School Equalization Formula (ISEF) – established to allocate Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP) funds. The office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) applies ISEF to determine funding allocations for Bureau Funded Schools. ISEF is applied uniformly to all Bureau funded schools.” The prime factor in the formula, which qualifies schools for specific allocations of funding, is based on qualified, eligible students, which determines how much funding schools qualify for.

Below are the certified numbers verified in our Native American Information System (NASIS) for this school 2024-2025. NASIS is BIE’s centralized data collection system. Upon completion of our annual reviews of all our schools, the final student count was certified on June 13, 2025.

Student Certification Count for ISEP 2024-2025

	ISEP	Residential	
Bureau Operated	5121	795	
Tribally Control	4413	1132	

GOALS

Enhance Student Achievement -Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum

Through our work with the Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Work Process, we discovered that a guaranteed & viable curriculum (GVC) is necessary. A guaranteed & viable curriculum (framework) ensures all students have access to the same essential content (standards) and learning experiences, regardless of teacher or classroom. A curriculum alignment team has been established to include teachers, principals, education specialist and district administration. We have had several work sessions and have identified the essential standards for K-8 in ELA and Math that are teachers will follow that are aligned to the BIE assessment.

Increasing our Graduation Rates

Although we have increased our graduation rate in comparison to the previous year for our high schools, we still have work to do. For SY 2023-2024 graduation cohort rate was 72.66% and our goal is to increase our graduation rate across all our high schools on Navajo. We are aware this will involve a multi-faceted approach that will include improving instruction, differentiated teaching methods, intervention for students “at risk”, tutoring sessions, monitoring career paths, personalized learning, academic counseling, parent engagement, study time, credit recovery opportunity, etc. We are re-examining our current strategies and will begin looking very closely as to how we can improve our rates and understand why the rate was low for the graduating cohort; did we properly code correctly for students who may have transferred, dropped out, or were dropped for excessive absences? Recently, our schools have been trained and instructed to begin tracking students, within NASIS, who may have dropped out, transferred to another school, or if they graduated from another high school. Based on this data, the goal is to improve the student graduation rate to 80% or better, as determined by NASIS.

PRIORITIES

Schools Safe and Secure Schools

Our priority is to enhance security practices by implementing evidence-based school safety initiatives and utilizing technology. Those practices include physical security of our buildings and schools, emergency preparedness, and promoting a safe and supportive climate. This is a collaborative effort that includes district, school, and community, such as Navajo Nation Police Department, Navajo Nation Fire and Rescue Services, Navajo Department of Health, Indian Health Services, 639 Healthcare Entities, and local Office of Emergency Management. Some strategies and practices we have started and will continue to strengthen are the following:

- Increasing safety awareness and security practices through safety training, practices, and technology.
- Monitoring our school kitchen inspections to ensure our kitchens meet all health environmental standards and requirements and are following the safe food handling processes.

- Providing guidance to schools in preparing them how to respond to emergencies and crises as outline in the Emergency Operations Plan and Continuity of Operation Plan.
- Highlighting school safety practices to prevent violence against students and staff.
- Participaing and or monitoring in school safety inspections to ensure compliance of building safety.

Behavioral Health & Wellness

As a priority, our efforts will continue to focus on behavioral health and wellness using a holistic approach (physical, mental, and social-emotional health) for the well-being of all students and staff in our schools. Partnerships will be sustained, and capacities will increase in the following:

- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Navajo Area Indian Health Service and BIE Navajo District. This MOA is a blanket service agreement to offer the following services: behavioral health, mobile nursing and crisis, and health promotion and prevention services between the five I.H.S. Service Units (Kayenta, AZ; Chinle, AZ; Shiprock, NM, Crownpoint, NM, and Gallup, NM) and 30 Bureau Operated Schools in AZ and NM. This MOA will asst in streamlining communication and coordination efforts.
- Supporting coalition of counselors across the 31 bureau-operated schools, while expanding to include tribally controlled schools. Monthly meetings with the coalition of counselors assist in building capacity, crisis support, professional training development, and coordination effort regarding student academic, behavioral health, and wellness needs.
- Coordinating with BIE Behavioral Health Wellness Program (BHWP) to increase access to virtual counseling beyond the current six Bureau Operated Schools. Tribally Controlled Schools and residential programs have been offered this opportunity as well and will continue to be pursued in the upcoming school year 2025-2026. Ongoing collaboration with BHWP has assisted in crisis support, professional development training, and virtual counseling services.
- Collaboration and coordination continue with pertinent stakeholders, which has also been crucial during crisis response and professional development events:
 - Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services
 - Navajo Nation Treatment Center for Navajo Children and their Families
 - Tsehootsoi Medical Center
 - Tuba City Regional Health Care
 - Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education

Inventory & Property

To increase our accountability for all “real” and “personal” property, a new process is being implemented. Examples of real property are buildings, quarters, garages, storage units, etc. Examples of personal property are laptops, IT servers, tractors, utility trailers, lawn mowers, ATV/UTV, etc. The new process requires the use of a committee with a chairperson, reviewing Report of Surveys schools submit, identifying real and personal property which may be missing, lost, or stolen. The new process is needed to increase property accountability and an increase for internal controls for all BIE bureau-funded organizations which include schools, education resource centers, facilities, etc. The process is important for the following reasons:

- Personal financial liability
- Reduce fraud, waste, and abuse
- Safe storage of property
- Accountability
- Requirements and obligations
- Life cycle management
- Support Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Closing Statement

In closing, it is the hope of BIE Navajo that the report has provided sufficient information regarding the goals and priorities our organization is placing emphasis on to ensure that our schools are not only safe and secure but provide a safe learning environment for the students who attend our schools. It is also essential to mention that we continue to uphold and support the recent Navajo Nation executive order which places heavy emphasis on retaining, strengthening, and using the Navajo language for all citizens of the Navajo Nation; this initiative is equally, if not more important as a prime focus for teaching our students to learn and use the language alongside the academic content teachers and school leaders are responsible for placing into action each academic school year. Michael Unger, Ph.D., wrote in an issue of Psychology Today, that “Research shows that our children, no matter what their age, ethnic background, or where they live, want to feel engaged at school. They want to feel like they belong and that what they do at school matters. Not just to themselves, but to their parents and teachers too.” This is what BIE Navajo is continually striving to work toward.