



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council advances education governance reform through legislation reducing Board of Education membership



The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved Legislation No. 0253-25 to streamline education governance by reducing the size of the Navajo Nation Board of Education.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Thursday, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously pass Legislation No. 0253-25 to amend Title 10 of the Navajo Nation Code to reduce the size of the Navajo Nation Board of Education from 11 members to five, a measure aimed at strengthening accountability, improving efficiency, and aligning governance responsibilities with current administrative structures.

Sponsored by Council Delegate Vince R. James and co-sponsored by Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, the legislation proposes amending 10 N.N.C. § 106 following years of structural changes to Navajo Nation education oversight. In 2018, the Navajo Nation Council transferred a significant portion of administrative duties from the Board of Education to the Department of Diné Education, while the size of the Board remained unchanged. The legislation finds that a smaller board is now more appropriate given the Board's revised role and responsibilities.

"The goal of this legislation is to ensure the Board of Education is able to function effectively and consistently in carrying out its oversight responsibilities," said Council Delegate James. "Reducing the board to five elected members creates clearer accountability to the people and allows decisions to be made without repeated delays caused by attendance and quorum issues."

Under the proposed amendments, the Board would consist of one elected representative from each agency — Western, Chinle, Fort Defiance, Shiprock, and Eastern — each serving four-year terms. The legislation emphasizes that the streamlined structure will support more direct engagement with schools and communities while maintaining transparency through public meetings and reporting requirements established in Navajo Nation law.

Delegate Dr. Nez stated that the measure reflects long-standing concerns raised by educators and school leaders across the Navajo Nation.

“We constantly heard from our local grant and community schools that the current structure was not working as intended. This legislation responds directly to those concerns by refocusing on efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to students and communities. I trust that the revised Board will assume their elected positions with grit and commitment,” said Dr. Nez.

During the public review process, multiple education organizations and school boards submitted written comments in support of the legislation, citing chronic quorum challenges, limited progress under the larger board structure, and the need for a governance model that better reflects current operational realities. Supporters emphasized that a smaller, elected board would improve collaboration and oversight while keeping the focus on student outcomes and school performance.

Legislation No. 0253-25 passed on the consent agenda with a vote of 20 in favor and none opposed. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority.

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