



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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### Naabik'íyáti' Committee affirms Navajo Nation's position on federal education restructuring



Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez sponsored Legislation No. 0043-26 establishing the Navajo Nation's formal position in response to the U.S. Department of Education "Dear Tribal Leader" letter.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Thursday, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee convened in regular session and approved Legislation No. 0043-26, establishing the Navajo Nation's formal position in response to the United States Department of Education's January 9, 2026 "Dear Tribal Leader" letter and the proposed interagency agreement between the U.S. Departments of Education, Interior, and Labor.

Legislation 0043-26 responds directly to federal plans outlined in Executive Order 14242 and subsequent consultation notices regarding the transfer of more than 20 Native-serving education programs to other federal agencies. The measure affirms the Navajo Nation's treaty-based rights under the Treaty of 1868 and reiterates the federal government's trust responsibility to provide meaningful consultation before implementing policy changes that impact tribal education systems.

The legislation outlines concerns that restructuring federal education programs without formal tribal consultation and a comprehensive transition plan could disrupt funding stability, Title allocations, special education services, workforce development programs, and language revitalization efforts serving Navajo students across the US and in the southwest region of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

The legislation presents the Navajo Nation's formal position statement developed collaboratively with the Department of Diné Education, the Diné Bi Olta' School Board Association, and local educational agencies. The statement calls for readiness assessments, written transition plans, joint secretarial assurances, protection of statutory funding formulas, and co-developed performance measures that respect tribal data governance and sovereignty.

Sponsor Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez emphasized that the action reinforces the Navajo Nation's government-to-government relationship with the United States and ensures tribal leadership remains at the forefront of federal education policy decisions.

"This legislation is about safeguarding our students, our schools, and our sovereign authority. We are proactively asserting that any federal transition must uphold treaty and trust obligations, protect impacted student funding, and guarantee that Navajo students do not lose instructional time or essential services. Meaningful consultation is not optional, it is a legal and moral responsibility," said Delegate Dr. Nez.

Dr. Nez further stated that the Navajo Nation stands ready to engage in continued consultation but expects written assurances, coordinated oversight, and uninterrupted funding during any interagency transition.

"These expectations should be clearly identified and be illustrated to all tribal nations," said Delegate Dr. Nez.

The position highlights the scope of Navajo education systems, which include Bureau of Indian Education schools, tribally controlled grant schools, public and charter schools, early childhood programs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and workforce pathways serving more than 100,000 Navajo students among over 250 institutions.

Legislation 0043-26 formally requests that the U.S. Departments of Education, Interior, and Labor conduct meaningful tribal consultation on Navajo Nation lands and provide clear implementation guidance to avoid administrative confusion or funding disruptions.

The Naabik'íyáti' Committee serves as the final authority on the measure and approved Legislation 0043-26 on consent agenda with a vote of 17 in favor and one opposed.

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