THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION

LEGISLATION NO: 0259-26 **SPONSOR: George H. Tolth**

TITLE: **An Action Relating to the Health, Education and Human Services Committee; Amending the 2010 Uniform Stipend Policy for Navajo Local Community School Boards**

***Date posted*: October 30, 2026 at 3:17 PM**

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET
Tracking No. 0259-26

DATE: October 30, 2026

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE; AMENDING THE 2010 UNIFORM STIPEND POLICY FOR NAVAJO LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS

PURPOSE: This legislation, if approved, would amend the 2010 Uniform Stipend Policy by increasing the stipend of school board members and adjust the mileage reimbursements.

FINAL AUTHORITY: Health, Education and Human Services Committee

VOTE REQUIRED: Simple Majority

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: [illegible]
Website Posting Time/Date:
Posting End Date: 11-04-26
Eligible for Action: 11-05-26

PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

25th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL – FOURTH YEAR, 2026

Introduced by:

_____

(Prime Sponsor)

Tracking No. 0259-26

AN ACTION

RELATING TO THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE; AMENDING THE 2010 UNIFORM STIPEND POLICY FOR NAVAJO LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS

BE IT ENACTED:

SECTION ONE. AUTHORITY

A. The Health, Education and Human Services Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council and has legislative oversight over the Navajo Nation Board of Education, Department of Dine Education, and over the implementation of education legislation, including Plans of Operation. 2 N.N.C. §§ 400(A), 401(C)(1), 10 N.N.C. § 1(B).

B. The Health, Education and Human Services Committee is authorized to establish Navajo Nation policy, and promulgate rules and regulations governing human services, education, and general government services of the Navajo Nation. 2 N.N.C. § 401(B)(1).

SECTION TWO. FINDINGS

A. 10 N.N.C. § 204 provides that "All local Navajo Community School Board members shall receive payment for discharging their duties at rates set by the Health,

Education and Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council in consultation with the school boards, in accordance with regulations developed pursuant to Public Law 95-561."

B. In 2010, the Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, now the Health, Education and Human Services Committee, adopted the Uniform Stipend Policy for Navajo Local Community School Boards ("Stipend Policy"), attached as **Exhibit A**.

C. Since the Stipend Policy was adopted sixteen (16) years ago, there have been substantial increases in the cost of living such as fuel, food, and vehicle maintenance due to inflation. The current Stipend Policy no longer reflects either the actual financial burden placed on school board members or the financial value of their services while performing their official duties.

D. The responsibilities of school board members have increased considerably over the years, school board members are expected to oversee school budgets, financial accountability, high-level employment matters, student achievement and academic performance, school safety and operations, strategic planning and long-term goals, and compliance with federal and tribal laws, including Title 10, P.L. 100-297, and 25 CFR requirements. These responsibilities require extensive time, knowledge, leadership, and commitment.

E. School board members play a vital role in establishing policies and providing oversight to improve student achievement and overall school performance. School board decisions directly impact educational quality, student opportunities, employee retention, and the efficient operation of the school system.

F. Many school board members travel long distances to attend monthly meetings, special board meetings, chapter meetings, parent meetings, trainings, and school events. The current Stipend Policy only allows mileage reimbursement if a member lives seventy-five (75) miles or more from the school. Rising fuel prices and vehicle maintenance costs continue to create financial hardship, especially for school board members serving rural communities.

G. Other tribal officials receive significantly higher stipends and mileage reimbursements than school board members. Continuing to maintain school boards

stipends based on the 2010 Stipend Policy place school board members at a disadvantage compared to other tribal officials and does not reflect current economic conditions.

H. Increasing school board stipends will help recruit and retain qualified and dedicated individuals who are willing to serve their schools and communities. Without reasonable compensation, it becomes increasingly difficult to attract individuals capable of managing the growing demands of school governance. Several schools are currently struggling to maintain a quorum, which negatively impacts school operations and decision-making.

I. The Navajo Nation established the Diné Bi Olta School Board Association ("DBOSBA") to represent local community school boards on the Navajo Nation. DBOSBA is the only school board association recognized by the Navajo Nation to represent local community school boards. 10 N.N.C. § 301(A).

J. DBOSBA is authorized to consider educational programs, problems and issues of a Navajo Nation-wide significance, and to make recommendations concerning all BIE-funded schools and local community school boards. 10 N.N.C. § 302.

K. In Resolution DBOSBA-2026-007, DBOSBA has recommended an increase in the stipends for local community school board members, and an adjustment in mileage reimbursements for travel by school board members, attached as **Exhibit B**.

L. Eleven (11) school boards and chapters have also passed resolutions supporting amendments to increase stipends for school board members and to adjust the mileage reimbursements, attached as **Exhibit C**.

M. Amending the Stipend Policy for local community school board members and to adjust their mileage reimbursements will benefit the Navajo Nation, the local Navajo community schools, and Navajo students and parents.

SECTION THREE. APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO THE 2010 UNIFORM STIPEND POLICY FOR NAVAJO LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS

The Health, Education and Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation hereby approves the following amendments to the 2010 School Board Payment Policies adopted by resolution ECD35-10, attached as **Exhibit D.**

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D. Stipends:

(1) School Board members shall be paid a flat stipend rate up to ~~$250.00~~ $500.00 for a duly called regular meeting. Members will be expected to attend no less than two-thirds of the meeting to be eligible for payment. The stipend amount of ~~$250.00~~ $500.00 shall be contingent upon the availability of funds distributed to the ~~BIA/~~BIE-funded school, as appropriately budgeted by the local school board. The local school board shall reserve the right to set stipend amounts less than ~~$250.00,~~ $500.00 but shall not exceed ~~$250.00~~ $500.00.

(2) School board members may be paid a flat stipend rate up to ~~$150.00~~ $250.00 for a duly called special meeting. The stipend amount of ~~$150.00~~ $250.00 shall be contingent upon the availability of funds distributed to the ~~BIA/~~BIE-funded school, as appropriately budgeted by the local school board. The local school board shall reserve the right to set stipend amounts less than ~~$150.00,~~ $250.00 but shall not exceed ~~$150.00~~ $250.00.

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(5) ~~Any member of an At-Large~~ School board members shall be compensated for mileage ~~provided that~~ from the board member's verified primary residence to attend official monthly School Board meetings and duly called special School Board meetings. Mileage shall be calculated based on the round-trip distance between the Board member's verified primary residence and the official meeting location. ~~is over seventy-five (75) one-way miles. "At-Large school board" is defined as a school board whose membership is composed of school board members elected from each of the of the six (6) Navajo Nation agencies.~~ Primary residence is defined as the residential location the board member resides day-to-day.

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F. Per Diem, Lodging and Mileage:

Board members are paid per diem, lodging and mileage for attendance at trainings, work/planning sessions, and professional education conferences at the following rates:

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(2) All mileage reimbursements for travel shall be paid for considering the most direct or shortest route. When calculating the miles traveled, the traveler shall use their exact start location and exact end location and are exempt from the Navajo Nation travel policies constraints. The traveler is responsible for any extra costs incurred by taking an indirect route, unless they can provide justification for taking the indirect route. ~~If travel by an indirect route, the extra expense shall be borne by the traveler.~~ When a privately owned and insured vehicle is utilized, reimbursement will be paid to the driver at the Navajo Nation mileage rate. When mileage is claimed in lieu of travel by a [school board member] the total mileage reimbursed cannot exceed the lowest roundtrip fare published by the common carrier.

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