

Department of Diné Education

THE DEPARTMENT

In 1971, the Navajo Nation Council established the “Navajo Division of Education” (renamed “Division of Diné Education” in 1995). The enactment of the “Sovereignty in Education Act” in July 2005 by the Navajo Nation Council amended Title 10 of the Navajo Nation Code to establish an 11-member Navajo Nation Board of Education (Board) and elevate the “Division” to a state-like Department of Education to oversee the operation of all schools on the Navajo Nation. The Department is the administrative agency within the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation Government with the authority and responsibility for enforcing and implementing the education laws of the Navajo Nation. The Department operates under the direction of a Board-appointed “Navajo Nation Superintendent of Schools.” The Education Committee of the Navajo Nation Council provides legislative oversight for the Department.

VISION

Diné Education is our strength to promote and foster lifelong learning.

MISSION

It is the educational mission of the Navajo Nation to promote and foster lifelong learning for the Navajo People, and to protect the cultural integrity and sovereignty of the Navajo Nation.

DEPARTMENT GOALS

- ◆ Serve as a voice for the Navajo Nation in addressing all education issues.
- ◆ Provide leadership by initiating and advancing improvements to Diné Education.
- ◆ Offer support to schools and other providers for exemplary performance.
- ◆ Ensure maximum academic and financial accountability.
- ◆ Deliver high quality customer service.

CORE VALUES

Values influence our worldview, attitudes and how we interact and communicate with one another and the larger community. We believe values are the foundation for improving the overall performance and capabilities of the Department. The following values will serve as guiding principles for the Department in serving the Navajo Nation:

- ◆ **Excellence:** We strive for excellence and continuous quality improvement.
- ◆ **Leadership:** We believe in leading with integrity and honor values and ethics as the core of our organization.
- ◆ **Knowledge:** We believe that both Diné traditional knowledge/teachings and Western education provides the means to advance our people.
- ◆ **Integrity:** We strive for the highest ethical standards of conduct.
- ◆ **Creativity:** We are constantly looking for ways to innovate for the benefit of the Department, our clients, and students.
- ◆ **Teamwork:** We understand the importance of teamwork, camaraderie, responsibility, meeting challenges and growth.
- ◆ **Communication:** We communicate actively and openly and work across departments and functions to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- ◆ **Achievement:** We are outcome driven and seek solutions that are meaningful and relevant. We value elegant simplicity in all our work.

CULTURAL VALUES

Diné Cultural values help to establish positive relationships and positive environments. The Department has identified the following cultural values to guide our interactions with others:

- ◆ **K'e:** The foundation of Diné self-identity. K'e establishes our relationship with others and serves as the basis for how we interact, communicate and show respect for others.
- ◆ **Respect:** Honoring and understanding others' point of reference and valuing individuals.
- ◆ **Dignity:** Honoring the worthiness of all individuals.
- ◆ **Individuality:** Belief in individuals and respect for their unique characteristics, values and knowledge.
- ◆ **Cultural Competency:** Knowing and keeping alive the culture, traditions, and beliefs of our ancestors and elders.

2007 STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Build the capacity of the Department in accordance with Title 10 of the Navajo Nation Code.
 - ◆ Establish human resources management functions for the Department.
 - ◆ Assure the ability of Department staff to carry out Department functions.
 - ◆ Build the Department's technological capacity to serve the needs of the Department and the Navajo Nation school system.
 - ◆ Assure comprehensive year-round financial planning and management for all Department programs.
 - ◆ Assure the integration of Navajo Language and Culture in all schools serving the Navajo Nation through the comprehensive and unified effort of all Department programs.
2. Maintain respectful working partnerships with and among school systems and officials on the Navajo Nation.
 - ◆ Secure participation of the Navajo Nation school system in the National Educational Information System (NEIS).
 - ◆ Develop and implement guidelines and protocols for appropriate departmental interactions with schools and school officials.
 - ◆ Work with all school districts, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded schools, and other education providers in complying with applicable compulsory attendance laws.
 - ◆ Develop and implement a process for public hearings and lobbying activities for State and Federal school funding, educational legislation and other critical issues.
3. Build the effectiveness of schools in enabling all Navajo students to meet grade level educational content standards.
 - ◆ Develop alternative educational content standards and test instruments.
 - ◆ Assist schools with parent involvement trainings to improve student classroom participation.
 - ◆ Assist schools in content areas (science, math, language, social studies, technology, etc.).
4. Integrate the Language and Culture of the Navajo People into school systems serving the Navajo Nation.
 - ◆ Revitalize basic Navajo knowledge and skills for positive character development of all Navajo students.
 - ◆ Initiate linguistic study of current on-reservation Navajo Language usage in public life.
 - ◆ Identify key Navajo cultural values for incorporation into school programs.
5. Foster eventual integration of all schools and educational programs serving the Navajo Nation into a coherent Navajo Nation educational system.
 - ◆ Institute an educational research program designed to facilitate the integrated planning and development of all aspects of a Navajo educational system.

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