



# THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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## Navajo President, Navajo Vice President meets with federal Education Deputy Assistant Secretary for Richard LaPointe

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., and Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly welcomed the U.S. Department of Education Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard LaPointe and his wife Ann to the Navajo capitol on Monday.

Among several topics discussed was President Shirley's desire to have Navajo elders record songs and stories for Navajo youth to learn in perpetuity.

"We'd like to get at the sacred stories and songs so that if you can learn it, you can continue to be Navajo," he told Dr. LaPointe.

Meeting with them was OPVP Executive Staff Assistant Leland Leonard who formerly served as director of the Navajo Division of Education. Dr. LaPointe inquired about how the Navajo Nation was faring with the "No Child Left Behind" law.

President Shirley and Mr. Leonard explained that the Navajo Nation is seeking data sharing with the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah to have accurate information about the federal law.

Mr. Leonard said only 20 percent of Navajo students are considered doing well in school, and that information about the reasons why are being researched by the University of Colorado.

"I think data sharing is so important because of the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation," he said.



*Navajo Vice President Ben Shelly and Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., welcome U.S. Department of Education Deputy Assistant Secretary Richard LaPointe to Navajoland on Monday.*

President Shirley said that some remote school districts on Navajoland have difficulty attracting teachers because of the lack of housing and other amenities.

"If more money could be put into programs for teacher housing, that could help make the program work," he said.

Dr. LaPointe also inquired about the popularity of Future Farmers of America programs on the Navajo Nation. He said FFA is one of the most popular high school programs operating in the country, with some of the largest chapters in New York, Chicago and Philadelphia.

He said the national FFA conference will attract as many as 54,000 high school students.

The President thanked Dr. LaPointe for his visit on behalf of the Navajo Nation and Navajo students.

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*Dr. and Mrs. Richard LaPointe visit the Navajo Nation on Monday. President Shirley met Dr. LaPointe last March in Washington, D.C.*

There are 179 schools on the Navajo Nation. In the past, 66 of them were operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and now 34 of those are community-run, he said.