



## The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Education Committee receive report on Sanostee Day School, new school construction to begin in August 2010**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Education Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council received a report from the Northern Agency Education Line Officer regarding their role in the construction of the proposed replacement building for Sanostee Day School.

After months of miscommunication and confusion experienced by school board members of Sanostee Day School with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BEI), the construction of the school will finally move forward. Recently, the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council passed legislation (Legislation No. 0122-10) to expedite the construction, but delays occurred from the federal end.

The BIA's Office of Facility Maintenance and Construction (OFMC) reported construction of the school would begin on Aug. 13 and it should be completed by Dec. 11, 2011. The OFMC also mentioned the new building will meet the rating system requirements established by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, which is an example of the federal government's initiative to green development.

Despite the good news, the committee expressed concern for the building's size, which only accommodates the current student population and ignoring future population growth.

Council Delegate Raymond Maxx (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) said, "The design is the biggest concern. If students want to see a new facility they will want to go there. There will be an increase in enrollment."

"The school board and Education Line Officer need to make sure the numbers of students are correct," said a staff member from the OFMC. "All we do is the construction. The committee needs to make sure that the school board and Education Line Officer present accurate numbers to Washington."

Council Delegate Leonard Anthony (Shiprock), sponsor of Legislation No. 0122-10, was concerned there was no support from the Education Line Officer on this project.

"You know the school board in Northern Agency looks to the Education Line Officers for support," Anthony said. "This didn't happen with Sanostee Day School. They didn't receive a report from you, Dr. Longie. From the very beginning, if you could have supported the process, we would have had a smoother ride to be here."

Council Delegate Ida Nelson (Red Rock) made a directive to have a letter sent to the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior and to the acting BIE Director from the Education

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Committee to express concern about the lack of communication and collaborative efforts regarding the school construction. She also added a request needed to be made for periodic update reports from all entities involved in the construction.

The members of the Education Committee also agree communication with the BIA and BIE is needed in order to further the committee and the Division of Diné Education's efforts to establish a state education agency, which will help streamline projects through the system.

Lena Nakai, school board member of Sanostee Day School, said, "The community will like the construction of the school. A lot of parents, staff and parents will want to be at school once it's built."

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