



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Navajo Nation Speaker Johnny Naize commends Skandera decision

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation Speaker Johnny Naize commends New Mexico Secretary-Designate of Education Hanna Skandera on her decision to disapprove a request from the Gallup McKinley County School district to close three middle schools on the Navajo Nation.

“I am delighted to hear Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera has made a decision that thoughtfully and appropriately considered what is in the best interest of our Navajo students and their education,” Speaker Naize said.

Her decision greatly ensures that our children will continue onward to educational success on a stable and secure pathway, devoid of the many uncertainties and worries that would have resulted from the school closures. For that reason, she is to be commended.”

Secretary-designate Skandera issued her decision in a July 11 memorandum.

In her letter, Skandera stated that the GMCS district board request to close the middle schools in Tohatchi, Navajo, and Crownpoint, N.M. “does not set forth the expected educational benefits of the proposed school closures and corresponding reorganization of grade levels,” as required by the New Mexico Administrative Code.

Skandera was also concerned about the lack of community involvement concerning the GMCS proposal.

The district was encouraged to engage in meaningful discussions with the Navajo Nation and the members of the affected communities, an effort Speaker Naize wholeheartedly endorses.

On June 6, the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee passed a resolution (NABIJN-36-12) opposing the GMCS district decision to close the three reservation-based schools.

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