



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Health, Education, and Human Services Committee commends Navajo Head Start for passing federal review**

**WINDOW ROCK**— Health, Education, and Human Services Committee members on Monday, commended the Navajo Head Start program for successfully passing the comprehensive federal tribal Designated Renewal System. The announcement marks the first time in over 20 years that the program has passed the review process successfully.

HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) called the announcement a “remarkable accomplishment” for the program and the Navajo Nation, while also urging for the continued improvement of the program.

“Looking ahead, we must address systematic issues within our government and continue to develop solutions to maintain the Navajo Head Start program for future generations,” stated Delegate Hale.

The HEHSC serves as the oversight for the Navajo Head Start program.

In early May, NHS was monitored by a federal review team to assess management systems, policies and procedures, observations of instruction in the classrooms, and health and safety compliance

Following the review process, the Navajo Nation was notified by the Administration for Children and Families, under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, that the program is now in full-compliance with federal mandates, according to a press release from Navajo Head Start.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi) also expressed his appreciation for NHS staff and the program.

“This was well-received news by the Navajo Nation and I am very thankful the Nation was able to save a program that is vital to the needs of our young people. The program was at the verge of collapse and at risk was hundreds of millions of dollars being reverted back to the federal government. I commend Sharon Singer and her staff for doing what they needed to come into compliance. At the end of the day, we have to be reminded this program is for the children,” said Delegate Butler.

Assistant Superintendent Sharon Henderson Singer thanked HEHSC members, NHS leadership team, NHS staff, and the parent policy council for their guidance and continued support.

NHS will receive a five-year non-competitive grant award for approximately \$125 million, according to the NHS press release.

Additionally, NHS will be able to expand its services, educational opportunities, further develop and streamline its processes, and allows the program to become eligible for additional funding to benefit Navajo children, according to Henderson Singer.

EHSC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsiidi To ii) also commended the staff and its program for its continued progress.

“It is encouraging to see Head Start making progress, although these might appear incremental, they are no doubt significant,” Delegate Phelps stated.

Dr. Lamont Yazzie, Director of Educational Services stated, “In passing the review and securing funding for the next five years, we can now concentrate our efforts on training staff, building instructional leaders, and building capacity in carrying out the important work of educating children and empowering families across the Navajo Nation.”

Delegate Hale the EHSC will request a report from Navajo Head Start in the near future.

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