



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2023

‘Road to 16’ ends with \$3M legislation signing for new residential building at Navajo Preparatory School



PHOTO: Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren as he signed Legislation No. 0231-23, appropriating \$3M for the construction of a new student residential building at Navajo Prep.

FARMINGTON, N.M. – On Thursday, Nov. 2, the “Road to 16” successfully concluded when members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren in signing Legislation No. 0231-23, appropriating \$3 million from the Síhasin Fund to contribute to the construction of a new student residential building at the Navajo Preparatory School campus located in Farmington, N.M.

The “Road to 16” is a phrase that was devised by Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) as he collaborated with Navajo Preparatory School and lobbied his fellow delegates to support Legislation No. 0231-23, which required 16 votes to pass in accordance with the Síhasin Fund policy.

“Students, faculty, colleagues, and esteemed guests, thank you for letting me work with you to make this happen,” Delegate Nez said. “Our greatest investment is in you, our students. On behalf of my colleagues, the signing of this legislation is one way we can share with you. It’s such a wonderful feeling.”

The Síhasin Fund was set aside to support educational opportunities, match funds, and for

residential purposes, and Navajo Prep did their due diligence to meet each criterion. The state of New Mexico provided matching funds in the amount of \$7 million, bringing the total to approximately \$10 million that has been allocated to the project.

At the signing ceremony, Navajo Preparatory Head of School, Shawna Allison Becenti thanked the 25th Navajo Nation Council Delegates for their support.

“There was a lot that went into making this happen. On our ‘Road to 16,’ we needed the support of our delegates, and we presented the legislation before the Health, Education, and Human Services and the Budget and Finance Committees,” she said. “We could not have done this without those who support the education of our students.”

Speaker Crystalyne Curley noted that this support was evident, when during the 2023 Fall Council Session, the legislation was approved with a unanimous vote of 17 in favor and zero opposed. She thanked the students and staff for attending the Fall Council Session to stand behind their funding request.

“These legislations bring our people and our leadership together. You all came to the Council Chamber and supported this legislation,” Speaker Curley said. “These legislations go through a lot of debate and this one made it to the finish line with unanimous support. I’d like to thank my colleagues for supporting the continued education of our Navajo students with this legislation.”

Before signing Legislation No. 0231-23, President Nygren reaffirmed the virtues of motivation, self-confidence, and self-worth to the Navajo Prep student body. He told the students that they are more than capable of succeeding in attaining their goals and that they have a bright future ahead of them.

He also thanked the 17 Council Delegates who voted in favor of the legislation and told the students that he was looking forward to the signing ceremony.

“I said that if that legislation comes before me, I will be more than happy to sign it. It’s exciting to sign legislations like this that build a strong foundation. No matter how rough this road gets, if you have a strong foundation, you can get through,” President Nygren said. “Never give up on yourself, there will be times when it’s only you and you’re more than capable.”

The signing took place at the Navajo Prep Gymnasium, known as the Eagle’s Nest, and was also attended by Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tse’alnaozt’i’i, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To’Koi), Curtis Yanito (Mexican Water, To’likan, Teenospos, Aneth, Red Mesa), and Shawna Ann Claw (Chinle).

The new residential facility will house approximately 32 more students from across the Navajo Nation. Navajo Prep and Jayne’s Construction broke ground on the project in June 2023 and plan to have construction finalized by May 2024.

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