



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 23, 2013

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**Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives
report highlighting academic achievement among Navajo students**

WINDOW ROCK - On Wednesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report from the Central Consolidated School District concerning student testing data, and overall progress in their effort to improve academic success amongst their Native American student population.

Central Consolidated School District based in Shiprock, is a New Mexico state public school district serving 17 schools.

HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) said HEHSC members are eager to review positive student data that reflects the collaboration between the Department of Dine Education and CCSD.

"Central Consolidated [School District] has taken the lead role in improving the futures of our Navajo children," said Delegate Hale. "When we know that Navajo students' reading, math, and science scores are improving, this indicates we are each doing our job."

CCSD compliance & assessment coordinator of data James Lowe, said the entity serves the second highest Native American student population in the country.

"We are working to improve the educational quality for all of our students and we are seeing that with our methods and approach in education. We are making positives impacts for our Navajo students," said Lowe.

CCSD reported that Native American students have increased their proficiency percentages in mathematics by 10 percent, reading by 9 percent and science by 26 percent.

Nizhoni Elementary School, one of CCSD's nine elementary schools located in Shiprock, made monumental improvements in their overall school performance, going from an 'F' in 2012 to a 'B' in 2013.

Lowe also stated that Shiprock High School students performed at an 89 percent proficiency rate in the chemistry portion of the New Mexico ADC End of Course Exams.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) questioned how the district identifies student cohorts for data measurements.

"Student cohorts are identified by entry date. A cohort begins at the kindergarten level and is compared to two consecutive kindergarten cohorts," said Lowe. "At the high school level, students are tested at the tenth and eleventh grade [levels], and their scores are used in that state's comparative model."

HEHSC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) asked if the district was planning to support any congressional bills that would increase the funding for the district.

CCSD school board president Matthew Tso, said the district supports a bill that would prohibit the abolishment of federal Impact Aid, Johnson O'Malley, and Title Seven funding, noting that the district relies heavily on the various funds to provide special academic programs for its Native American students.

"That is good information for the Council to know. I believe there is a proposed senate education bill that would be more friendly to the school district," said Delegate Phelps. "The HEHSC is always interested in supporting congressional bills that will help improve education for Navajo students."

Following the report, Tso said the district will continue to work with the DODE to enhance their curriculum with Navajo cultural and language.

"We hope to continue to hear of the academic progress Navajo students are making in math, science, and reading," said Delegate Hale.

HEHSC members accepted the report with a vote of 3-0.

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