



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee designates Navajo Nation Board of Education as governing body for Navajo Head Start

WINDOW ROCK – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee met last Wednesday, to consider designating the Navajo Nation Board of Education as the new governing body for the Navajo Head Start program.

“This legislation addresses deficiencies within the Head Start program,” said legislation sponsor and HEHSC chairman Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels). “Later on down the road, I think Head Start will have to move outside of the Nation and fully function on its own.”

Legislation No. 0252-13 gives the Navajo Nation Board of Education the authority to serve as the governing body, which shall have the legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start agency.

The legislation outlines several of the responsibilities that NNBOE shall uphold as the governing body such as: ensuring compliance with federal laws, establishing criteria for enrollment of children, and reviewing and approving all major policies of the agency.

“This transfer of accord is not giving NNBOE sole power that you have as legislators. What this does is requiring them to carry out the work that is identified in the roles and responsibilities of the Head Start Act,” said Department of Diné Education principal education specialist Lamont Yazzie.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) said he would like for the legislation to explain the difference between the “governing body” and “legislative oversight”, which the HEHSC will maintain.

“In the future, we don’t want to have a discussion about the governing body versus legislative oversight,” said Delegate Phelps. “We’re the final committee to make this determination, but first we need some clarification.”

HEHSC member Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi) questioned if the committee could rescind governing body authority from NNBOE, if the HEHSC saw such action to be necessary in the future.

Acting chief legislative counsel Marianna Kahn, said that the legislation distinguished the role of the governing body and that at any time the committee could propose legislation to rescind the

governing body authority, unless in the future the Navajo Nation Council amended Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code.

The HEHSC voted 5-0 to approve Legislation No. 0252-13.

The HEHSC serves as the final authority for this legislation.

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