



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nmlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Olin Kieyoomia successfully advocates for five-year extension for Middle College High School



PHOTO: Council Delegate Olin Kieyoomia with Middle College High School CEO Dr. Robert Hunter and other school administrators in Santa Fe, N.M. on Dec. 12, 2018.

SANTA FE, N.M. – On Wednesday, Council Delegate Olin Kieyoomia (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') went before the New Mexico Public Education Commission to advocate for the continuation of Middle College High School, a charter school under the Gallup-McKinley County Schools, which is located on the University of New Mexico – Gallup Campus.

Middle College High School was established in 2002 and is one of New Mexico's first early college high school programs that allows high school students to simultaneously earn college credits while working toward their high school diplomas. Many students also attain an associate degree concurrently with their high school diploma, and prepares them to attend a four-year university or other college and vocational institutions.

Several months ago, the school was in jeopardy of closing due to several issues that included transportation and enrollment concerns. Administrators from the school ultimately reached out to Navajo Nation leadership for guidance to deter the school closure because nearly 50-percent of the student population is Native American, and mostly Navajo students. The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report in May from school administrators regarding the concerns.

During Wednesday's hearing, Delegate Kieyoomia was joined by parent representative for Middle College High School Sharlene Begay-Platero, in requesting the support of the commissioners to keep the school in operation for the benefit of many Navajo students.

On Sept. 13, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee unanimously passed a resolution supporting the continuation of Middle College High School. Delegate Kieyoomia submitted the resolution to the commission as part of his testimony.

The New Mexico Public Education Commission voted 8-0 on Wednesday to extend Middle College High School for five years.

"This is a new beginning for Middle College High School and an opportunity for Navajo students to take advantage of everything the school has to offer and to achieve their educational goals. As Navajo leaders, in collaboration with public schools, we need to provide every opportunity to our youth to succeed in life and give back to their communities," stated Delegate Kieyoomia.

He also thanked the parents of Middle College High School students for their support, as well as the school administrators, his Council colleagues, and the New Mexico Public Education Commissioners for acknowledging and recognizing the position of the Navajo Nation.

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