

25th Navajo Nation Council

October 13, 2025

TO: New Mexico Senate Indian, Rural & Cultural Affairs Committee
NM Senator Shannon Pinto

FROM: Vince R. James, Council Delegate and Chair of the Health, Education and Human Services Committee
25th Navajo Nation Council
Window Rock, Arizona

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the NACA Inspired Schools Network *Diné Bizaad Bee Na'nitin Yíhoo'aah* (Mentor + Apprentice Program)

Yá'át'ééh Honorable Chair and New Mexico Senate Indian Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the Health, Education and Human Services Standing Committee of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, I respectfully submit this letter of support for the **NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN) Diné Bizaad Bee Na'nitin Yíhoo'aah (Mentor + Apprentice Program)**, which directly strengthens Navajo language teacher development and aligns with the **State of New Mexico Public Education Department** on the **520 Native American Language and Culture Certification**.

This program ensures that Diné speakers and cultural knowledge holders serve as mentors to apprentices who are preparing to become certified Diné Bizaad teachers. Through this model, the Navajo Nation will expand the number of highly qualified and culturally grounded teachers, ensuring the continuation of our language, values, and teachings in both community and educational systems. Currently, we supported 20 Diné language teachers who obtain their 520 certification and majority of them are.

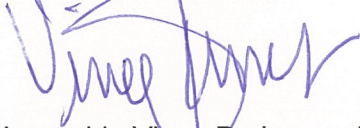
I also note that myself and Delegate Dr. Andy Nez have personally participated and presented in the **Information Session for Diné Language Teachers** held on **September 27, 2025** in Farmington, reaffirming our support for this initiative. Delegate Dr. Andy Nez's involvement in this effort extends back to **2024**, where he supported and advocated for the importance of training and certifying future Diné language teachers through the mentor-apprentice model.

The Navajo Nation's endorsement of this initiative is essential as the NISN program seeks continued funding and partnership with the **State of New Mexico and the New Mexico Indian Affairs Committee, under the leadership of Senator Shannon Pinto**.

On behalf of the Navajo Nation, the **Health, Education and Human Services Committee** joins this effort by issuing an official **Letter of Support** for the Diné Bizaad Bee Na'nitin Yíhoo'aah program. This will strengthen advocacy for program resources, teacher certification pathways, and sustain state funding dedicated to the preservation and teaching of the Diné Bizaad.

Ahxéhéé' for your attention and continued leadership on behalf of Diné language, education, and cultural survival.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vince R. James", is written over the typed name below.

Honorable Vince R. James, Navajo Nation Council Delegate and Chair,
Health, Education and Human Services Committee
25th Navajo Nation Council