

October 20, 2021

The Honorable Patricia A. Lundstrom
New Mexico State Representative
Chair, Legislative Finance Committee
325 Don Gaspar Avenue, Suite 101
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Representative Lundstrom:

This letter is to inform you that the Indian Affairs Committee has heard testimony from the Navajo Preparatory School related to the school's academic performance and capital outlay priorities for the upcoming 2022 legislative session. The Navajo Preparatory School is requesting \$1 million in severance tax or general obligation bond funds to provide resources for planning, design and construction related to infrastructure and building renovations for its Building 32, which was constructed in 1932 and, when renovated, will provide classrooms and teaching space to enhance programming to address the key initiatives stemming from the *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico* case. The Navajo Nation and the federal Bureau of Indian Education will leverage additional funding to support this project.

On July 7, 2021, the Indian Affairs Committee participated in a presentation from and tour of the Navajo Preparatory School. During this meeting, Navajo Preparatory School representatives explained that the school is recognized as a statewide educational institution and that students who attend the school come from San Juan, McKinley, Bernalillo, Cibola, Rio Arriba and Sandoval counties. Students represent various Indian nations, tribes and pueblos within New Mexico. The committee has also come to understand that, unlike other entities such as higher education institutions, public schools and other statewide public facilities, the Navajo Preparatory School does not have any other avenue for presenting capital outlay requests at a formal capital outlay public hearing. Hence, the school is presenting its capital outlay priority to the Indian Affairs Committee.

The Indian Affairs Committee was particularly impressed with the academic performance of Navajo Preparatory School students and its graduation rates and

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curriculum. The school is educating a segment of New Mexico's student population that would otherwise be required to attend public schools where additional operating dollars would need to be allocated by the state to support those students.

The Indian Affairs Committee respectfully requests that the Legislative Finance Committee consider the Navajo Preparatory School's severance tax or general obligation bond capital outlay request for recommendation to the legislature and to the governor for funding as a statewide project.

Sincerely,

GEORGENE LOUIS
State Representative, District 26
Co-Chair, Indian Affairs Committee

SHANNON D. PINTO
State Senator, District 3
Co-Chair, Indian Affairs Committee

GL/SDP:ad

cc: Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
David Abbey, Director, Legislative Finance Committee
Senator George K. Munoz, Vice Chair, Legislative Finance Committee