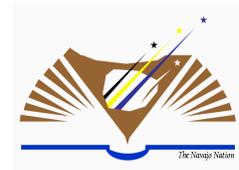




DEPARTMENT OF DINÉ EDUCATION THE NAVAJO NATION

P.O. Box 670 · Window Rock, Arizona 86515
PHONE (928) 871 – 7475 · FAX (928) 871 – 7474



Dr. Buu Nygren
President

Richelle Montoya
Vice President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 25, 2024

DINÉ EDUCATION DEPARTMENT URGES PUBLIC TO STAY VIGILANT WITH WAVE OF SCHOOL SAFETY THREATS

Hoax threats shared on social media among students

The Department of Diné Education, along with its regional school safety stakeholders, held a meeting Wednesday to discuss a wave of recent threats against schools on and near the Navajo Nation.

A press release from Navajo Nation Police Department states that numerous threats were made on social media and were part of a series of hoax threats that are being made in surrounding states. Navajo Police Commander Donnie Kee reported that several threats made against schools on the Navajo Nation have been investigated and determined to be part of these hoax threats.

While the threats were ultimately determined not to be credible, Chief Silversmith and Commander Kee both strongly emphasized that the Navajo Police Department takes all school security threats very seriously because the safety of our students and communities is of utmost importance. Commander Kee explained that the NPD works closely with tribal, state, and federal partners to investigate these threats and take the necessary actions to resolve them.

Acting Superintendent of DODE Roy Tracy makes this request of parents and guardians of all students attending schools on the Navajo Nation, as well as school officials, and community members: “Be alert in safeguarding our students’ health and safety. Be vigilant in protecting our students, teachers, educators and schools on the Navajo Nation. If you see or hear something that is wrong and could harm our students and schools, please immediately report this to law enforcement or school officials – remember, see something, say something.”

DODE will post a number of school community safety resources on its website and is planning to launch another website within the next few days that will be devoted to school community safety for the Navajo Nation, including communication practices and standard safety protocols and procedures. We will circulate this website address to all of our stakeholders and include a link on the DODE website as well.

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The department and its stakeholders appreciate the cooperation and coordination of the public and state and tribal entities.

The meeting was hosted by Dr. Ferlin Clark, chair of the Navajo Nation School Community Safety Task Force, which was created in April 2023 following a security threat in Kayenta, Arizona. Over the last year, the task force has convened with the Bureau of Indian Education; Navajo Head Start; public schools from Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah; Emergency Management and Health experts; Navajo and Arizona law enforcement officers; and health and safety experts to evaluate the safety of Navajo schools.

Their goal is to develop a school system per the National Incident Management System guidelines. They have collaborated with school safety advocates including the I Love U Guys Foundation from Utah.

SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING: The public, parents, guardians, and concerned individuals are urged to contact the following entities to report people making false threats or who are threatening students, school employees, and community members:

Navajo Nation Police:	(928)871-6111
Navajo Nation Fire Department:	(928)729-4062
Department of Emergency Management:	(928)871-6892
Department of Diné Education:	(928)871-7475
Department of Health Public Health Emergency Preparedness:	(928)871-6525
Bureau of Indian Education Safety Office:	(928)871-5930
Navajo Nation Head Start:	(928)871-6902