WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – Based on the ODY monthly report, Office of Dine’ Youth (ODY) is currently working on several initiatives including the formation of the Navajo Nation Youth Council, the prospect of partnering again with the Boys and Girls Club of America, and participating in the Communities of Hope concerning suicide prevention, and developing a Dine’ Language Initiative. ODY staff is developing policy documents on the overall role and responsibilities of the Navajo Nation Youth Council.

At the Crownpoint Youth facility, the Navajo Housing Authority Board approval is needed to continue with the construction of the Youth Complex. In January, a meeting was held between Dine’ Youth, Continental Divide Electric, and Navajo Tribal Utility Authority regarding easement approval for utility connection. “The Crownpoint Youth Center continues to meet with the Construction Team to complete the design of the new Youth Complex,” said Virginia I. Nelson,
communities throughout the Western Navajo Agency. “We are excited that fourteen acres of land is withdrawn for the youth center in Tuba City,” said Roy Williams, Program Supervisor. “The community is excited about the future youth center.” Tuba City ODY agency continues to lobby for funds to begin construction of a new Tuba City Youth Center.

Several staff at the Shiprock Youth Center recently completed the Navajo Wellness Model Training. Collaboration and partnerships continues with the Girls Scouts of America, Northern Dine’ Youth Committee, Restoring and Celebrating Family Wellness, HPDP, Partnership with Native Americans, Leadership San Juan, Art of the People, CCSD, and other local collaborating entities.

“The Chinle Youth Agency contacted the Chinle Chapter government about establishing a Chinle Race Park, a wellness and health project,” said Alvin Gee, Program Supervisor. “The Park will utilize the old non-use airport area to create a “Runners Course” for walkers, joggers, runners, and families.” The Many Farms Chapter Government supports the Many Farms Youth Center Extension Center. The Chinle Youth Agency has been addressing the construction, and the project is making progress toward completion by Feb. Community members in Many Farms are very excited about the extension and look forward to the operation of the Center.

Back in Window Rock, Jan. 15, the Office of Dine’ YOUTH administrative personnel, committee members, and agency ODY Counselors, converged to complete the review of the Spring 2016 Educational Financial Assistance for all five agencies (Chinle, Crownpoint, Ft. Defiance, Shiprock, and Tuba City). “One-hundred and forty-one (141) applications were determined eligible and were awarded financial assistance,” said Ronald D. Duncan, Department Manager. The Office of Dine’ YOUTH assisted in the creation of the Navajo Nation Youth Council pursuant to a directive by the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee. ODY task force continues to assist in this project with plans of initiating a Summer Youth Council Conference during the summer break when youth are available to attend.
AdvancED Navajo Nation staff recently attended the 2016 AdvancED Mountain Region Retreat in Tempe, Arizona, January 26-27, 2016. The AdvancED Mountain Region is Region 2 of the North American regions and consists of eight states: Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation Operation Office is the only tribally affiliated office, considered a state-level office.

Mountain Region staff, approximately 20 individuals, convened in Tempe, AZ, to take time away from their busy offices to ensure that all Operations Offices are functioning with the same information. In addition to Corporation and Special Purpose issues, an array of topics were discussed that included Digital Learning, Early Learning and STEM Certification. Concerns relative to field consultants and council member issues were also addressed. The work sessions last focus was on building capacity at the operations office level using the AdvancED Measurement of Operational Services (AMOS) as a guide.

State Offices highlighted what they do best, sharing ideas on how to be a more effective office. The Navajo Nation Operations Office presented a PowerPoint titled “The Best of the Navajo Nation.” Dr. Anselm Davis, Education Program Manager, Evelyn Tracey-Bahe, Principal Education Specialist, Loretta Draper, Principal Education Specialist, and Sonya Begay, Administrative Assistant, demonstrated how the organizational culture of AdvancED Navajo Nation utilizes the language and cultural experiences of the Navajo people to enhance its work at the local school level. They explained that the Navajo people believe the power of the world always works in circles. Accordingly, they took the graphic square representation of the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools and aligned it with the circular thinking of the Navajo people. The education community within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation relate to the circular model and are more quick to embrace and understand the five performance standards for quality schools.
**DR. TOMMY LEWIS ENDORSES ARIZONA PROPOSITION 123**


Dr. Tommy Lewis, Superintendent of Schools, endorses Arizona Proposition 123.

In October 2015, by House Concurrent Resolution 2001, the Arizona Legislature (Senate and House of Representatives) approved Proposition 123 to increase school funds for the next ten years. However, Arizona Proposition 123 requires approval by Arizona voters in a special election set for May 17, 2016 (Tuesday).

On the Navajo Nation, there are 11 school districts with over 14,000 Navajo students attending Arizona state public schools on the Navajo Nation. With the approval of Proposition 123, these school districts stand to benefit from the increased school funds.

“I encourage everyone to support Proposition 123 and to vote ‘Yes’ on the ballot initiative at the May 17th, 2016, Arizona special election,’ said Dr. Lewis. “Arizona schools need to increase funds to improve the education system (K-12) including school districts on the Navajo Nation. Now is the time to have your voice heard on the Arizona school finance issue.”
In the Second Quarter of FY 2016, NNBOE held Board meetings dealing with Navajo Head Start, Reauthorization process and procedures, Grant/Contract Schools Annual Compliance Standards, and approved reports and related action that request approval by the Health, Education and Human Services Committee. Here are some highlights. Contact NNDODE Admin for copies of resolutions and minutes.

- Resolution to return full control and authority to the Rock Point Community School, Inc.
- Approved a resolution No. 317 for Diné YOUTH Supplemental Fund from the Navajo Nation.
- Annual Performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools.
- Resolution NNBEJA-318-2016: Accepting NHS Supplemental Appropriation request in the amount of $3,558,856.00 for the 20% match fund for FY 2016 Head Start and Early Head Start funding request from US. DHHS – OACF.
- Approve reauthorization of school for Dibe Yazhi Habit’iin Olta, Inc.
- Receive report on NNBEJA-317-2016 – Approving the Office of Diné YOUTH request for supplemental funding for $66,421.00 to integrate Diné language into ODY program and services.
- Receive report on ECD-12-10 regarding Grant conversion application procedure and amendment the current reauthorization resolution of Grantees under school leadership to align the school budget vision.
- Resolution to support school board reapportionment Option C and D.
- Resolution approving agreement between the University of Arizona Colleges of Medicine and the Navajo Nation.
- Approved an NNBOE work session on the Navajo Nation Accountability Workbook and strategic planning session.
Central Consolidated Schools graduation dates:
- Career Prep High School — May 18, 2016, at 7 PM.
- Newcomb High School — May 19, 2016, at 7 PM.
- Shiprock High School — May 20, 2016, at 7 PM.
- Kirtland Central High School — May 21, 2016, at 10 AM.

Chinle High School graduation is set for May 21, 2016, at 10 AM.

Dilcon Community School will have a Kindergarten and 8th grade promotion May 19th, 2016, at 9 AM and 1 PM respectively.

Dzliith-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community School will have an 8th grade promotion ceremony on Friday, May 20, 2016.

Flagstaff Unified School District #1 High School graduation dates:
- Summit High School — May 26, 2016, at 5:30 PM, at the Sinagua High School.
- Flagstaff High School — May 27, 2016, at 9 AM, at the NAU Dome.
- Coconino High School — May 27, 2016, at 3 PM, at the NAU Dome.

Gallup-McKinley County School graduation dates:
- Gallup High School — May 13, 2016, at 6 PM
- Thoreau High School — May 14, 2016, at 4 PM.
- Ramah High School — May 19, 2016, at 6 PM.
- Miyamura High School — May 20, 2016, at 6 PM.
- Gallup Central High School — May 21, 2016, at 4 PM.
- Crownpoint High School — May 14, 2016, at 11 AM.
- Navajo-Pine High School — May 19, 2016, at 6 PM.
- Tohatchi High School — May 20, 2016, at 6 PM.
- Tse Yi Gai high School — May 21, 2016, at 11 AM.

Ganado High School graduation at Ganado High School is set for May 20, 2016, at 4:00 PM.

Greasewood Springs Community School 8th grade promotion May 19, 2016.

Holbrook Unified School district #3 graduation is set for Friday, May 20, 2016.


Kin Dah Lichii’i Olt’a 6th-grade promotion at Kin Dah Lichii’i Olt’a is set for May 26, 2016.

Leupp Schools, Inc., graduation will be held May 19, 2016.

Navajo Preparatory School senior graduation is set for May 21, 2016, at 10 AM.

Northwest High School, Shiprock, New Mexico, graduation is set for May 21, 2016, at 6 PM.

Red Mesa Unified School District #27 graduation dates:
- Red Valley Cove High School Graduation - May 20, 2016, at Red Valley Cove High School
- Red Mesa High School Graduation - May 21, 2016, at Red Mesa School Campus.
- Red Mesa Junior High Promotion - May 23, 2016, at Red Mesa School Campus.

Richfield and South Sevier High Schools, in Utah, graduations set for both on May 27, 2016, 1 PM and 4 PM respectively.

Rock Point Community School:
- Kindergarten Promotion May 16, 2016, 5:30 PM.
6th Grade Rite of passage ceremony May 17, 2016, 1 PM.
8th Grade Promotion May 17, 2016, 4 PM.
High School Graduation set for May 18, 2016, 7 PM.

- Rough Rock Community High School graduation is on May 19, 2016, at 10 AM in the High School Gymnasium.

- Sanders Unified School District #18 graduation dates:
  - Valley High School — May 28, 2016
  - Sanders Middle School Promotion — May 27, 2016

- San Juan School District (Utah) graduation dates:
  - Monticello High School — May 25, 2016, at 7 PM.
  - San Juan High School — May 26, 2016, at 5 PM.
  - Monument Valley High School — May 27, 2016, at 12 PM.
  - Whitehorse High School — May 28, 2016, at 10 AM.
  - Navajo Mountain High School — May 28, 2016, at 2 PM.

- Shonto Preparatory School:
  - Kindergarten promotion — May 24, 2016, at 10 AM.
  - High School Graduation — May 25, 2016, at 6 PM.
  - 8th grade promotion — May 26, 2016, at 10 AM.

- Tohajiilee Community School:
  - TCS Senior Graduation at TCS Gymnasium – May 21, 2016.
  - 8th Grade Promotion at TCS Gymnasium – May 24, 2016, at 10 AM.
  - Kindergarten Promotion at TCS Gymnasium – May 24, 2016, at 2 PM.
  - To’ajíilee Early Childhood Program Promotion at TCS Gymnasium – May 24, 2016, at 6 PM.

- Window Rock Unified School District #8 graduations:
  - TMS Promotion date is Thursday, May 26, 2016, at 7 PM.
  - WRHS Graduation date is set for Friday, May 27, 2016, at 3 PM in the Fighting Scouts Events Center.

- Wingate High School graduation is set for May 13, 2016, at 11 AM.

- Winslow High School graduation is set for Wednesday, May 25th, 2016, 8 PM at the Emil Nasser Stadium.
NAVAJO NATION DEPARTMENT OF DINE EDUCATION KICKED-OFF THE 2016 NAVAJO NATION SCIENCE FAIR AT THE RED ROCK STATE PARK – GALLUP, NEW MEXICO

The Navajo Department of Diné Education (NNDODE) held the 2016 Navajo Nation Science Fair February 23—25, 2016, at the Red Rock State Park-Gallup, New Mexico. The Office of Diné School Improvement of the Navajo Department of Diné Education was excited about the positive responses with more participants. “This year over 750 entries were submitted from Kindergarten to 12th grades representing over 50 schools,” says Johanson Phillips, Principal Education Specialist at the office of Diné School Improvement, NNDODE. 40 judges have signed-up to evaluate and score science projects that included seven categories:

- Animal Sciences
- Behavior & Social Services
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Engineering & Computer Science
- Environment Sciences
- Physical Science

PeeWee Division (Grades K-4) Results for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th places are:

**Animal Science**
- Emily Platero
  Tsehootsoo Diné Bi’Olta’
- Nadine Day
  Hunters Point Boarding School
- Angelina Esquivel-Begay
  Greasewood Springs Community Sch.
- Erica Green
  Rock Point Community School
- Tama Tsinnijinnie
  Lukachukai Community School

**Behavioral & Social Sciences**
- Wayden Henry
  Rock Point Community School
- Liduvina Tolentino
  Tsehootsoo’ Intermediate Learning Ctr.
- Ceanna McCray
  Atsa Biyaazh Community School
- Jayden Begay
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Maria Yellowman
  Aneth Community School

**Biology**
- Mirar Bilagody
  Tuba City Primary School
- Autumn McKensley & Autumn Benally
  Mesa Elementary School
- Dashaudre Dodson
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Presley Hemstreet
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Lukus Janes
  Pinon Elementary School

**Chemistry**
- L.T. Tsinijinnie
  Ganado Elementary School
- Paige Williams
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Kirsten Honohni
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Joshua Lee
  Tsehootsoo’ Intermediate Learning Ctr.
- Leanna Tallboy
  Rock Point Community School

**Engineering & Computer Science**
- Jeffery Tsosie
  Tsehootsoo Diné Bi’Olta’
- Cody Jim
  Cove Day School
Takori Littlehat
Aneth Community School
Keira Allen
Hunters Point Boarding School
Kylene Benally
Aneth Community School
Haley Hardy
Hunters Point Boarding School
Environmental Sciences
Nevaughn Begay & Jude Begay
Mesa Elementary
Sheriden Ashley
Rock Point Community School
Elena Klopfenstein
Tuba City Boarding School
Cara Toledo
Na Neelzhin Ji Olta
Deizha Shirley
‘Tsehootsooi’ Intermediate Learning Ctr.
Physical Science
Anthony McClellan
St. Michael Indian School
Jayanna White
Ganado Elementary School
Audrey Tallsalt
Tuba City Primary School
Kamry Yazzie
Rock Point Community School
Animal Science
Kiley Scott
Aneth Community School
Alexandra Esquivel-Begay
Greasewood Springs Community School
Lillian Campbell
Lukachukai Community School
Brendon Teller
Ganado Middle School
Kaytee Trujillo
Tuba City Boarding School
Behavioral & Social Sciences
Aiyana Talas
Second Mesa Day School
Kaleigh Huma
Second Mesa Day School
Gwensheena Slim
Pinion Middle School
Leilani Benally
Ch’ooshgai Community School
Lyiasha Thompson
‘Tsehootsooi’ Intermediate Learning Ctr.
Chemistry
Erynn Montehlermoso
To’hajiilee Community School
Gaybert Mexicano
To’hajiilee Community School
Lauren Burns
Ganado Middle School
Kyler Begay
Ganado Middle School
So Diin Begay
Shonto Preparatory School
Engineering & Computer Science
Rope James
Ganado Middle School
Lia Wildord
Atsa Biyaazh Community School
Hilbert Lee
Pinion Middle School
Taylor Shorty
Tsehootsooi Diné Bi’Olta’
Carthania Yazzie
Aneth Community School
Shonowa Becenti
Ganado Elementary School
Elementary Division (Grades 5-6) Results for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th places, are:

Biology
D’Andre Harker
Ganado Middle School
Mega Miller
Atsa Biyaazh Community School
Tahe Johnson
Pine Hill Schools
Keala Smith
Atsa Biyaazh Community School
Mikaela Roanhorse
‘Tsehootsooi’ Intermediate Learning Ctr.
Environmental Sciences

- Jaycelyn Tallsalt
  Tuba City Primary School
- Kaden Begaye
  Tsehootsooi Diné Bi’Olta’
- Brianna Whitehorse
  Aneth Community School

Physical Science

- Jeremiah Walters
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Shawnee Williams
  Naatsisana Community School
- Caleb Etsitty
  Rock Point Community School
- Rosalia Tolentino
  Tsehootsoo’ Intermediate learning Ctr.
- Kaiden Etsitty
  Tuba City Boarding School

Junior High Division (Grades 7-8) Results for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th places are:

Environmental Sciences

- Jonah Holiday
  Tuba City Boarding School
- Hannah Dayzie
  Northwest Middle School
- Vanessa Gene
  Pinon Middle School

Biology

- Elena Hardy
  Red Mesa Unified School District
- Colton McClellan
  Tuba City Boarding School
- LaBelle LaFrance
  Ganado Middle School
- Jaydean Jordan
  Shonto Preparatory School
- Kamryn Shorty
  Tse Bit Ai Middle School

Chemistry

- Andrew McClellan
  St. Michael Indian School
- Johanna Tunney
  Shonto Preparatory School
- Jacob Harvey
  Tse Bit Ai Middle School
- Christion Secatero
  To’Hajiilee Community School
- Alvina Litzin
  Tse Bit Ai Middle School

Engineering & Computer Science

- Matthew Deschine
  Tsehootsooi Middle School
- Sylas Toledo
  Na Neelzhin Ji Olta
- Christian Bert
  Pinon Middle School
- Shawndiin McCray
  Ganado Middle School
- Sierra Hicks
  Shonto Preparatory School

Behavioral & Social Sciences

- Jeminica Yazzie
  Shonto Preparatory School
- Johnathan Hosteen
  Tse Bit Ai Middle School

Environmental Sciences

- Najhoshoni Ben
  Tse Bit Ai Middle School
- Angelica Enriquez
  Pinon Middle School
- Shannus Becenti
  Tse Bit Ai Middle School
- Beryl Maghinay
  Pinon Middle School
- Tori Hemstreet
  Tuba City Boarding School

Physical Science

- Pal’/Shaun Descheny
  Rock Point Community School
- Colby McNabb
  Ganado Middle School
- Ralson Descheny
  Rock Point Community School
Senior Division (Grades 9-12) Results for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th places are:

**Animal Science**
- Nizhonabah Davis
  - Ganado High School
- Nizhoni McCray
  - Ganado High School
- Alexus Knight
  - Greyhills Academy High School
- Matthew Tallman
  - Greyhills Academy High School
- Shanerille Warts
  - Rock Point Community School

**Behavioral & Social Sciences**
- Kellian Staggers
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Isaiah Vijil
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Isaac Salabye
  - Rock Point Community School
- Ashely Kee
  - Ganado High School
- Tashelle Morez
  - Ganado High School

**Chemistry**
- Alisha Nakai
  - Newcomb High School
- Alexix Maravilla
  - Pinon High School
- Alyssa Charley
  - Ganado High School
- Kyle Wilson
  - Greyhills Academy High School
- Lennox Locaspino
  - Ganado High School

**Environmental Sciences**
- Tyra Nicolay
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Jennifer Etcitty
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Aaliyah Blacksheep
  - Ganado High School
- Lorizen Santos
  - Pinon High School
- Lisa Robbins
  - Greyhills Academy High School

**Engineering & Computer Science**
- Kelly Charley
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Nizhonri Tallas
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Dionne Chief
  - Greyhills Academy High School
- Timothy Benally
  - Ganado High School
- Sharaya Edgewater
  - Ganado High School

**Biology**
- Leniah Yazzie
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Sunny Nez
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Chloe Beach
  - Rock Point Community School
- Roen Tsosie
  - Rock Point Community School
- Zjani Johnson
  - Newcomb High School
- Caitlin Whitesinger
  - Ganado High School

**Physical Science**
- Xander Jones
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Jonnie Woody
  - Navajo Preparatory School
- Cynthia Teller
  - Ganado High School
- Caleb Keams
  - Leupp Schools, Inc.
needs for the 96 Head Start Centers and regional sites. Managers now handle day-to-day administrative operations, including project planning for Navajo Head Start network infrastructure development and ancillary support for the Navajo Head Start accountability system.

The report mentions Navajo Head Start implemented property asset tracking and transportation to maintain and control of property assets.

The School Readiness coaches and School Readiness Manager are busy monitoring teaching staff, and providing professional development training to improve teaching method. NHS Director of Educational Services prepares observation reports to determine how well the children are learning the curriculum. Check points are used to develop a report on each child’s progress, as well as an overall report to determine the Center’s proficiency levels the report states.

Hard Rock Head Start had been rebuilt from the ground-up and passed final inspection. Hard Rock is scheduled for new playground and new classroom furniture and equipment. NHS is recruiting for highly qualified teachers, paraprofessional and a bus driver.

Iyanbito is in the preliminary planning for a new Head Start Center. A Land Tract has been issued for the new site which is located across from the new Navajo Housing Authority Housing area parallel to Interstate 40 east of Gallup, NM. Iyanbito is working with Community Development and have identified funds under Community Improvement Project to fund a new facility. Navajo Head Start will provide a floor plan for classrooms which is the blueprint to meet building guidelines and codes.

Chinle Head Start new replacement construction is 99% complete. The Center will have state-of-the art classrooms. The Center will have new playgrounds and new classroom furniture and equipment. NHS is recruiting for highly qualified teachers, paraprofessional and a bus driver. Once fully staffed, the Center will open its doors.

"Head Start is a very important part of a child’s education. Research shows that if children are taught the basic skills of life at an early age, they will progress through the K-12 grade level with more confidence and excitement about learning,” said Dr. Tommy Lewis, Superintendent of Schools. “It is important that we do the best we can at the head start level so our children will do well throughout their educational experience.”
In New Mexico, there are two school districts with over 6,900 Navajo students, in school year 2014-2015, attending New Mexico state public schools within the Navajo Nation.

With the approval of New Mexico House Bill 127, it will become mandatory that all public school employees have background checks before starting or continuing to work in public schools. The important thing about HB 127 is that it’s about protecting all school children in New Mexico public schools. All students deserve to be safe on school premises.

“I strongly support any legislations or policies that protect school children,” said Dr. Lewis. “It maintains an ideal school where school environment and class rooms have safe and secure school environments. School security is very important and we all have a responsibility to make sure our children are safe every day at school.”
By Eleanor Thomas, Program Manager

Feb. 25, 2016, Gallup, NM — The Navajo Nation Johnson-O’Malley Program held a successful Subcontractor Regional Conference. The Conference was held at the school board room at the Gallup-McKinley County School facility, Gallup, New Mexico. Over 100 participants attended this important conference. Ms. Eleanor Thomas, NNJOM Program Manager, opened the session with an introduction on the purpose of the conference. Following the welcome address by Mr. Frank Chiapetti, Superintendent of Gallup McKinley County School, Christopher Roanhorse gave an excellent overview of the Navajo Nation 164-Review Process. After which, the conference went into a work session and extensively discussed various mandatory requirements of the 2016-2017 Johnson-O’Malley Grant Proposal, items such as: Needs assessments, Education plan, and Budget formulation. Toward the end of the conference, Ms. Monica Yazzie, Gallup Indian Education Committee, provided the IEC Roles and Responsibilities.
April 26. Albuquerque, NM—the banquet honoring Native American Seniors in Albuquerque, NM.

April 2016—Standing with Dr. Lewis is Representative Ann Kirkpatrick (First Congressional District Arizona).

December 2016—NNDODE held the Navajo Nation Education Summit at the High Country Conference Center, Flagstaff, AZ. The theme of the Summit was “Influencing Education Policy through Partnership, Participation, and Leadership”.

April 26. Albuquerque, NM—Vice President Jonathan Nez and Dr. Lewis at the banquet honoring Native American Seniors in Albuquerque, NM.
LEUPP SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES
REORGANIZATION PLAN

Window Rock, Feb. 17, -. Dr. Tommy Lewis, Superintendent of Schools, Department of Diné Education, concerned about the management and operation of Leupp School. In past years the school, which is a P.L. 100-297 Grant School (k-12 grade), experienced financial problems due to the nonpayment of federal taxes and related matters. “We became aware of the financial problems at the Leupp School, Inc., back in August 2015,” said Dr. Lewis.

In addition to Dr. Lewis, community members are also very concerned about the future prospect of the overall school. Since November 2015, community members have on several occasions met with Dr. Lewis to raise their concerns that Leupp school board members are not addressing the problems.

In response to the community concerns and Nov. 23, 2015, Dr. Lewis and the Office of Accountability and Compliance of the Department of Diné Education (DODE) met with the school board regarding the school’s financial problems and parents’ concerns. “We assisted in outlining a plan on how the school could declare a reorganization and possibly a reduction-in-force so the school would have funds to the end of the school year. The projection at the time was that if a reorganization was not declared by the board right away, the school could possibly run out of money by March 2016. I also proposed to the school board that we sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) so there is a written commitment on how we will address this major problem,” stated Dr. Lewis.

Jan. 21, 2016, Dr. Lewis and DODE met with over 100 concerned parents. The meeting was held at the Bird Springs Chapter house. Leupp School Board members were also in attendance. The Board had not signed the MOA. I expressed my concern that without a written plan or commitment it would make it difficult on how we address the problems, said Dr. Lewis.

In order to effectively address the school financial problems, the school board must approve a reorganization plan that incorporates a reduction-in-force (RIF) of 21 employees. “The School administrative team and the school board developed the RIF Action Plan,” said Darrick Franklin, Senior education specialist at the Office of Diné Accountability and Compliance. To make sure it is legally sufficient, the school attorney drafted the RIF letters.

The current financial problems at the school started years ago because of neglect, mismanagement, bad decisions and errors. Today, the school board is moving forward by addressing the financial problems and parents’ concerns. This is a positive step in the right direction. “We will continue to monitor the school to make sure student safety and learning is not interrupted,” said Dr. Lewis.