

President Begaye signs memorandum

WINDOW ROCK – On Feb. 27, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye signed the Memorandum of Agreement with the Grants-Cibola School District to teach the Diné language in the schools of the district.

“We are excited to know that the Navajo language will be taught at this school district. Our identity and language is directly tied into the land. The content of each word and philosophy is contained in one word. When you hear our language, you start to see the expression of our culture,” Begaye said.

The Navajo language encapsulates everything we are about within each of those words, this signing is significant for our Navajo children, he added.

“When we use our language, we rediscover ourselves, our identity and self-worth. Our children will develop as individuals and pursue their goals and aspirations with confidence knowing they know where they come from,” Begaye said.

“Thank you for to Superintendent Space and your district for taking the initiative to enact this MOA. To the Department of Diné Education, we applaud your efforts for the youth,” Vice President Jonathan Nez said.

We always tell our youth to learn their language. The work you do is important to ensuring a

bright future for our youth and Diné Bizáád, he added.

“It is a pleasure to offer the Navajo as a language course at the Grants-Cibola School District,” said Superintendent Marc Space. “We offer Keres and Spanish, with this MOA in place, we can now offer the Navajo Language to our students.”

The Grants-Cibola County School District covers all of Cibola County from the Baca-Prewitt Chapter to Bluewater. There are about 3,700 students in the district and 10 percent of those students are Navajo.

“The Grants-Cibola County School District took the initiative to integrate Diné Bizáád into their district. This memorandum of agreement is the same to that which was signed by the Gallup-McKinley School District. This effort is commendable. The Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education will provide technical support to the district,” said Dr. Tommy Lewis, Navajo Nation Superintendent of Schools.

The Department of Diné Education will also ensure that the Navajo teachers understand their role and the Navajo Language standards.

This is the fifth memorandum of agreement signed between the Navajo Nation and the public-school districts in New Mexico. The language program is currently in effect at the Los Alamitos middle school. The district fully intends on expanding the program to the other schools in the near future.