



President Nygren Meets with Secretary Linda McMahon and Senior Leadership



President Nygren (right) and the Secretary of Education (left)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On September 10, 2025, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and the Navajo Nation Washington Office met with U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon in Washington, D.C. Although the meeting with Secretary McMahon was short, President Nygren discussed the importance of the federal government’s treaty and trust responsibilities to the Navajo Nation and all Native nations, especially in the area of education.

President Nygren expressed the Navajo Nation’s view that tribes are sovereign governments with a political relationship to the United States, not a part of federal DEI initiatives. He urged the Department of Education to continue honoring its obligations to Native students and communities by ensuring programs are protected and fully funded.

After the Secretary's departure, President Nygren and senior members of the Department's leadership team continued the conversation in greater depth. He raised issues that face Navajo schools, including the importance of continued support for language preservation programs to protect Diné Bizaad, as well as ongoing funding for Titles I–IV and other programs that directly serve Navajo students.

President Nygren expressed particular concern about recent changes to Pell Grant eligibility, which could exclude nearly 40 percent of Diné College's student body, who attend part-time. He emphasized that Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and Federal Work-Study programs remain indispensable for Navajo students to pursue higher education. He also raised the issue of the elimination of new subsidized loans for undergraduate students, effective July 2026, which would cause interest to accrue immediately on federal loans, making college more expensive for many families. He requested that the Department work with tribes to mitigate the impacts of these changes, whether through regulatory implementation or future congressional action.

Additionally, President Nygren requested updates from senior staff on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education and the Bureau of Indian Education, as well as on how tribal feedback from the July 1 consultation will be incorporated. He urged the Department to streamline the transfer of federal funds to BIE programs in a way that ensures efficiency and accountability and encouraged strong support for the recommendations of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

President Nygren thanked Secretary McMahon and her senior staff for their time and commitment to Native American education. He reaffirmed the Navajo Nation's readiness to partner closely with the Department to ensure Navajo students have every opportunity to thrive, both in their communities and across the country. As part of this partnership, President Nygren extended a personal invitation to Secretary McMahon and the Department's senior leadership to visit schools on the Navajo Nation, where they can see firsthand the resilience of Navajo students, the dedication of teachers, and the need for an increase in the building maintenance fund.