



Navajo Nation Public School Districts Visit DC to Advocate for Impact Aid



Pictured (left to right): Page Superintendent Bryce Anderson, Red Mesa School District; Pinon School Board Member Bessie Allen; Dorothy Yazzie; and Sofia Godoy, Legislative Assistant to Senator Ruben Gallego.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This week, the Navajo Nation Washington Office hosted Arizona public school representatives from the Ganado, Kayenta, Red Mesa, Page, and Pinon school districts to advocate for the Federal Impact Aid program. Their efforts were part of a broader push to ensure that public schools serving Native communities and other federally impacted areas receive the resources they need to provide quality education.

The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS), which represents about 1,100 districts nationwide, has long worked to highlight the unique challenges faced by schools located on or near nontaxable Federal Trust Lands. These areas also include military bases, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act lands, and national parks. Since local property taxes form the backbone of public-school funding across the country, the exemption of federal property from taxation leaves districts with a significant federal presence at a clear disadvantage.

Impact Aid promotes equity by reimbursing school districts for lost revenue and the added costs of serving these communities. For Tribal nations like the Navajo Nation, the program is

critical. Arizona has more schools receiving Impact Aid than any other state, including eight public school districts on the Navajo Nation that serve about 16,500 students each year. These schools are lifelines, providing education, meals, cultural programs, and essential services. Without Impact Aid, many would struggle to operate, retain teachers, and meet student needs.

By gathering in Washington, superintendents and school administrators underscored the need to maintain, forward fund, and fully fund Impact Aid. Their message was clear: the federal government must uphold its trust responsibility and ensure that every Native student, including those on the Navajo Nation, has access to a well-funded, high-quality education.