



25th Navajo Nation Council acknowledges National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools



Sewing class, Albuquerque Indian School, Albuquerque, New Mexico, ca. 1910. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs photograph, courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, ARC 292877

WINDOW ROCK, A.Z. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council recognizes the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools, honoring the children who were taken from their homes and communities, many of whom never returned. On this solemn day, we reflect on the painful history of federal assimilation policies and the lasting impact they have had on Diné families.

Between 1819 and 1969, the U.S. federal government established or supported at least 417 Indian boarding schools across 37 states and territories.

For generations, Navajo children were among those forcibly removed from their homes and placed in government and church-run boarding schools. Many endured physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse. They were punished for speaking their language, denied their cultural teachings, and forced to assimilate into Western and Christian practices.

According to a 2024 Interior Department investigation, at least 973 students enrolled in the federal Indian boarding school system died during this period. Marked and unmarked graves have been found at 65 of these schools, representing at least 74 burial sites.

The Navajo Nation Council acknowledges the deep generational trauma caused by the boarding school era, which continues to affect Navajo families today.

The Navajo Nation Council remains committed to healing, restoring, and protecting Diné identity for future generations. On this day of remembrance, we honor the resilience of our ancestors, reaffirm our responsibility to our children, and stand united in advancing healing, cultural preservation, and justice for all tribal nations.

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