



Dr. Veronica C. García  
Secretary of Education

New Mexico  
Public Education Department  
300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786  
[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

# NEWS RELEASE

Beverly Friedman  
Public Information Officer  
505.827.6661  
[Bev.Friedman@state.nm.us](mailto:Bev.Friedman@state.nm.us)

For Immediate Release: July 24, 2008

## New Mexico First State in the Nation to Adopt Navajo Language Textbook

By: Tina Deschenie, NMSU Doctoral Intern and editor of the *Tribal College Journal*

**(Santa Fe, NM)** – New Mexico will be the first state in the nation to adopt a Navajo language textbook when Secretary of Education Veronica Garcia formally adopts the texts list at the Instructional Materials Bureau Advisory Council meeting on Tuesday, July 29 at 9:30am in Mabry Hall at the Jerry Apodaca Building, 300 Don Gaspar, Santa Fe.

The textbook is *Dine Bizaad Binahoo'aah* (Rediscovering the Navajo Language), written by Dr. Evangeline Parsons Yazzie (Navajo), Professor of Navajo at Northern Arizona University, and Dr. Margaret Speas, Professor of Linguistics at University of Massachusetts.

The textbook will be used in ten school districts that provide Navajo language instruction and by Bureau of Indian Education schools. In 2006-07 seven Native American languages were taught in New Mexico public schools throughout the state. Navajo language classes served the highest number of Native language learners totaling 5,024 students in 2006-07.

The textbook will enhance Navajo language instruction and also support the 2007 Amended Indian Education Act which calls for ensuring culturally relevant instructional materials. The Navajo language is known as one of the world's most difficult languages to learn.

This year's adoption also includes 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade texts in 1) Language Arts/Reading; 2) Core Reading Interventions; and 3) Modern, Classical and Native Languages. All adopted titles are reviewed for content alignment and for culturally appropriate pedagogy. Titles that score at least 90% in the review process are adopted. From the adopted list, districts conduct their own reviews and make text selections for the 2009-2010 school year.

For further details, contact Sally Wilkinson, Director, Instructional Bureau, New Mexico Public Education Department, at 1-505-476-0315.

-30-