

# San Carlos School District announces interim superintendent



San Carlos — San Carlos Unified School District #20 announces the new Interim Superintendent as Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. Dr. Jackson-Dennison and her husband Karl of 34 years, have 3 children, Kyle, Devyn, Kassidy and a grandchild, Kennedy. Her heritage is Scottish, (McPherson Clan) and the Kin'ya'anii (Towering House Clan).

Being in the educational field for the past 30 years, Dr. Jackson-Dennison's focus and passion for students encouraged her to seek new methods for quality learning and student achievement in schools with a high percentage of American Indian Students. She used her father's legacy as a guide to receive her doctorate degree in educational leadership and policies.

Dr. Jackson-Dennison has been instrumental to model research based reforms using her doctoral research titled, "Perceptions of Effectiveness in Navajo Nation Public High Schools and Student Achievement" as a model during her years in administrative leadership roles as superintendent at her alma mater, Window Rock Unified School district and Ganado Schools.

Dr. Jackson-Dennison has recognized and addressed the need for quality education for American Indian students by expressing her educational expertise through these words: "School reform of this nature in Indian country is extremely challenging given historical trauma imposed on our people through the goals and mere purpose of education. Although confronting these brutal facts are at times painful. Seeing our young people thrive both academically and personally in life as a result is an outcome that is far more rewarding."

Within the past two years, she has worked diligently to refine and develop a tool for instructional & organizational effectiveness and assessment model specifically for American Indian youth and other groups that through the past have been excluded with systematic developments and reforms. This in turned helped her to create the assessment model called, “Reconciliation of Knowledge & Wisdom” (RKW) which coincides with today’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). With this model, the dreams of allowing American Indian people to be proactive in branding and reclaiming the school system with a foundation for opportunity to the growth of student achievement.

A few highlights of Dr. Jackson-Dennison include her leadership as an Arizona school superintendent and leading the passage of AZ Education HB 2725. This bill protects federal Impact Aid funding sweeps as well as leading at the national level for the continued protection of Impact Aid from the federal budget cuts known as sequestration. Under her leadership and her research, the Education Reform Model, Window Rock School’s “Embracing Change for Student Learning” was selected for national recognition and profiled on The Discovery Channel by The Pat Summerall Education Station. Another highlight was the increase in student academic performance at Window Rock and Ganado schools.

In 2010, Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison was appointed by President Barack Obama to the National Advisory Board on Indian Education.(NACIE) and serves as chair of NACIE today. Other boards she has served on include National Association Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS), Nation Indian Impacted Schools Association (NIISA) and the Arizona State Impact Aid Association.

“I am deeply honored to have been selected by the San Carlos Unified School District Governing Board to serve as interim superintendent. Throughout my 30 years as an educator, my passion and focus has always been on finding ways to bring quality learning and student achievement to school systems that serve predominately American Indian students and society. I look forward to not only sharing my knowledge and expertise in Indian education reform with our school and community stakeholders here in San Carlos but just as importantly, I am very excited to learn from and include the wisdom of our Apache elders, people and leaders in working together to develop and implement a culturally response strategic plan focused on improving student learning for a stronger and more sustainable future.” -Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison.

Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison comes to us as a highly qualified individual with the experience to assist San Carlos Unified School District to better prepare our student’s academic performance with her years of experience and success in American Indian public schools.

San Carlos Unified School District is excited and honored to welcome Dr. Jackson-Dennison to our San Carlos community and to work with our Apache children.