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ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN NAVAJO EDUCATION DURING THE PETER MCDONALD ADMINISTRATIONS, 1970 TO 1982

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ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN NAVAJO EDUCATION DURING THE PETER MCDONALD ADMINISTRATIONS, 1970 TO 1982

by

Steven Andrew Pavlik

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the COMMITTEE ON AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS In the Graduate College THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1985
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below;

VINE DELORIA, JR.
Professor of Political Science

Date
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father, George and Ann; to my brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Judy, and to my nephew Steven. Without the love and support of these people, this effort would not have been possible.
PREFACE

A writer once asked "Is there any hope for Navajo education?" This question does seem to be a valid one considering the constant state of chaos and turmoil of most Navajo Reservation schools.

I entered this educational environment in 1976 when I accepted an American history teaching position at Chinle High School, a Public School located in the heart of the Navajo Reservation. The decision to accept this position, my first full-time teaching assignment, was a fortunate one which would change my life.

When I arrived in Chinle I was warned of the district's misadventures of the recent past, and particularly of the "Chinle Crisis" of 1975-76 when teachers went unpaid and the school district balanced on the very edge of financial collapse. I was told by "old hands" that Chinle was not a place for a young teacher to plan a career.

Nine years later I remain at Chinle. While the past years have often been frustrating, they have proved even more rewarding. I have also reached the conclusion that there is indeed hope for Navajo education.

I have also come to realize the impact that the past, and even the perception of the past, has on the present and future. Most of the information I received when I
first arrived in Chinle proved to be inaccurate and misleading. Few people to whom I spoke to understood the real dynamics of the Chinle situation or viewed it within the larger scope of the issues and developments in Navajo and Indian education. I believe that such an understanding is necessary to formulate intelligent educational policies and to provide students with the very best education possible.

The purpose of this paper is to provide such an overview of Navajo education from 1970 to 1982. Though far from complete in its coverage of this time period, it is my hope that this thesis will prove a valuable contribution in developing a body of well informed Navajo educators.

In writing this paper I have accumulated numerous debts. Special acknowledgements and gratitude must be extended to the distinguished faculty of the Indian Studies Program at the University of Arizona under whom I was fortunate to study during my years leave of absence from Chinle High School. Thanks to Vine Deloria, Jr., Chairman of my thesis committee, Thomas Holm and Robert K. Thomas who were my other committee members, and N. Scott Momaday. I also wish to thank Shirley Dickey, our secretary, as well as the other students of the American Indian Studies Program for their help, friendship and understanding.

I am also indebted to the many scholars and educators whose research and work paved the way for my own efforts, and particularly to those people who gave up their
valuable time to grant me personal interview. Among these, Robert A. Roessel and Eddie Biakeddy of the Navajo Division of Education deserve special recognition for going out of their way to provide me with valuable information and material.

Finally, I wish to thank my students at Chinle High School. They have been my greatest teachers and the source of inspiration for this paper.
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ABSTRACT

Since the establishment of the first reservation schools in the 1880's, the formal education of the Navajo has consisted of little more than a long series of experiments which have all ended in failure. The deplorable condition of Navajo education was well documented in the 1969 U.S. Senate report Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National Challenge.

In 1970, Peter McDonald defeated the incumbent Raymond Nakai to become tribal chairman, a position he would hold for twelve years, longer than any other chairman in tribal history. The McDonald administrations coincided with a new national movement to reform Indian education. The hallmark of this movement was Indian control. As the largest tribe in the United States, the Navajos assumed a natural leadership role.

This paper is an attempt to provide an analytical account of the issues and developments in Navajo education during the McDonald years. Five general topic areas are covered: Rough Rock and the other "demonstration" schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, Public Schools, Navajo Community College, and the tribal role. It is hoped that this paper will provide those involved in Navajo education with an insight and understanding of this important time period.
The Treaty of 1868 which ended the encarceration of the Navajo on the Bosque Redondo Reservation at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, included the following provision in regard to education:

In order to insure the civilization of the Indians entering into this treaty, the necessity of education is admitted, especially of such of them as may be settled on agricultural parts of this Reservation, and they therefore pledge themselves to compel their children, male and female, between the ages of six and sixteen years, to attend school; and it is hereby made the duty of the agent for said Indians to see this stipulation is strictly complied with; and the United States agrees that, for every thirty children between said ages who can be induced or compelled to attend school, a house shall be provided, and a teacher competent to teach the elementary branches of an English education shall be furnished, who will reside among said Indians, and faithfully discharge his or her duties as a teacher. The provisions of this article to continue for not less than ten years (Young 1961, p. 7).

The following year, a Miss Charity Gaston was sent by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to Fort Defiance to conduct the first classes for the Navajo. This earliest attempt to provide a formal American education ended in failure (Young 1961, p. 8).

On June 22, 1870, as part of President Ulysses S. Grant's "Quaker Policy" designed to promote civilization and
Christianity among the Indian tribes, the Board of Indian Commissioners assigned the responsibility for the religious and educational instruction of the Navajo to the Presbyterian Board of Missions. The decade that followed produced only additional failure and frustration as the Presbyterian Board attempted to operate a day school in an ancient adobe building at Fort Defiance. Those who were involved in this experiment, however, found it virtually impossible to induce or compel Navajo children to attend this school (Young 1961, pp. 7-8).

In 1880, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began construction of a boarding school at Fort Defiance, a project completed in 1883 and destined to become the first permanent school on the Navajo reservation. This school, originally designed to accommodate from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pupils, represented the true beginning of the federal-Navajo educational relationship (Young 1961, p. 8).

On November 20, 1880, the Presbyterian Board appointed Mr. J.D. Perkins as the first teacher in charge of the new Fort Defiance Boarding School. Only 20 pupils were enrolled in this first year of the school's operative history. Two years later, the enrollment had increased to only 24, and the following year, 1885, to only 33. Such poor attendance figures, though disappointing to the government and church officials involved with the Fort Defiance School, were understandable. Navajo parents remembered all
too well the traumatic suffering they had experienced at Fort Sumner. Frequently, parents hid their children or would voluntarily send off only the sickly and weak to school, retaining the healthy children at home. Nor, did the situation improve after 1887 when school attendance for school children became compulsory. The Navajo mistrust of the whiteman and his institutions often became reinforced when overzealous Indian agents attempted to fill the Fort Defiance school by force (Young 1961, pp. 8-11). In 1892, for example, the efforts of Agent Dana Shipley to secure students in such a manner, resulted in the famous "Trouble at Round Rock" affair in which Shipley barely escaped with his life after being besieged in a trading post by a force of Navajos led by the headman, Black Horse. The actions of Black Horse and his followers were precipitated by the reputation of the Fort Defiance School and particularly of its superintendent, Mr. Wadleigh, who was notorious for his mistreatment of the students (Young, Morgan 1952, pp. 11-12).

Despite the many problems, formal education gradually began to establish itself on the reservation. One reason was the support it received from influential headmen such as Manuelito and Chee Dodge, who saw the advantages of holding on to the old ways while at the same time accepting the new. Manuelito eloquently expressed this viewpoint in 1893 when he stated:
My grandchild, the whites have many things which we Navajos need. But we cannot get them. It is as though the whites were in a grassy canyon, and there they have wagons, plows and plenty of food. We Navajos are up on the dry mesa. We hear them talking, but we cannot get to them. My grandchild, education is the ladder. Tell our people to take it (Fuchs, Havighurst 1973, p. 39).

During the first decade of the 1900's, boarding schools were constructed at Tuba City, Leupp, Tohatchi, Shiprock and Chinle, and during the following decade at Crownpoint, Toadlena, and Fort Wingate. The same time period also produced another aspect of Navajo education, the enrollment of tribal members in off-reservation boarding schools, the most famous of these being the Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania, and the Sherman Institute in Oklahoma (Young 1961, p. 11).

Whether the school was located on or off the reservation, the ultimate goal remained the same, the assimilation of the Navajo into the lifestyle of the dominant culture. To accomplish this meant that the native culture must be destroyed. Such an attitude was well reflected by Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School, when he stated that his duty to a Carlisle student was to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man" (Pratt 1978, p. 261).

The 1920's witnessed larger school enrollments but little change in the quality of Navajo education. The emphasis remained on boarding schools and a curriculum which
had little relevance to the reality of Navajo Reservation life. The ability to read and write English, for example, meant nothing to a people who continued to live largely in an isolated and traditional society.

In 1928, the Institute for Government Research (now the Brookings Institution) issued a report entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration* which resulted in profound changes in Indian education. The Meriam Report, as it was more popularly known in recognition of its primary author, Lewis Meriam, severely criticized almost every aspect of the Indian educational system, and recommended that instead of trying to change the Indian student to fit the dominant educational system, a special program should be designed to meet the special qualities of the Indian child. The report particularly criticized the boarding school approach. At the time, eight boarding schools were in operation on the Navajo Reservation (Young 1961, p. 12).

The 1930's brought positive reform to Indian and Navajo education as the "New Deal" commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, and his Directors of Indian Education, Carson Ryan (1930-1935) and Willard Beatty (1936-1952), sought to implement the recommendations of the Meriam Report. Although the Navajo Tribe rejected the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, it none the less benefited from the Roosevelt administration's emphasis on tribal self-government and the desirability to preserve, rather
than destroy, native culture. Among the innovative programs introduced at this time, were bilingual and bicultural education, adult and higher education, and Navajo teacher training. In addition, many boarding schools were closed, and an additional 50 new day schools opened in the Navajo Reservation area (Young 1961, pp. 12-13). The passage of the Johnson-O'Malley Act in 1934, allowed the Secretary of the Interior to contract with the states for providing education to Indian students (Szasz 1977, pp. 91-92).

World War II had a major impact on Navajo education. Initially, the war served to almost destroy education on the reservation, as the reallocation of scarce resources and funding, forced the closing of many programs and schools. By 1946, 19 day schools had been closed, and due to the rationing of gasoline and tires, the school bus transportation system shut down completely. Emergency programs, such as the Community School Experiment in which those students who normally would have ridden a bus to school, lived at the school or with volunteer parents in the school community, came into being so at least some basic educational services continued during the war years (Thompson 1975, pp. 74-79).

The war, however, did have the positive effect of convincing many Navajo people of the need for education. At least eighty-eight percent of the Navajos tested for military service could neither read or write in English, and
many of those inducted were required to take lessons in these skills as part of their basic training (Thompson 1975, pp. 73-74). Many Navajo veterans who had felt the deficiencies of their own limited education, returned home to the reservation demanding more schools and a better education for their children. In 1946, a special council delegation to the federal government in Washington, declared formal education to be the primary need of the Navajo Tribe (Young 1961, pp. 13-14).

In 1947, a major study was released that described the state of Navajo education and made recommendations for change. This study, carried out by Dr. George Sanchez of the University of Texas, revealed that 66% of the Navajo population had no schooling whatsoever, and that the median number of school years among tribal members was less than one, compared to 5.7 for the total Indian population, and 8.4 for the national population (Young 1961, p. 14).

The findings and recommendations made by Dr. Sanchez were incorporated into the Krug Report of 1948, which in turn, influenced the passage and enactment of the Long-Range Rehabilitation Act of 1950. This act was designed to increase the number of school facilities on the reservation; bring education to the retarded and those who had not previously attended school; provide high school opportunities
on and off the reservation; and to transfer the responsibility for the education of Navajo children to the public school system as soon as possible (Young 1961, pp. 15-16).

Although the Navajo were not one of the tribes scheduled for termination under House Concurrent Resolution 108 passed in 1953, Navajo education, as determined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, none the less followed the national trend in the 1950's toward termination and assimilation. The major problems facing Navajo education continued to be that of low enrollment and the lack of school facilities. In 1953, for example, of the 19,000 Indian children not in school, 14,000, or about three-fourths, were Navajo. For this reason, the Indian Bureau's Education Division under the leadership of Hildegaard Thompson who served as its director from 1952 to 1965, gave Navajo education first priority, putting into operation the Navajo Emergency Education Program (Szasz 1977, p. 125). This program utilized various approaches to reduce the number of Navajo children out of school, among these, the implementation of trailer schools, and the establishment of classroom and dormitory facilities in seven towns bordering the reservation. In 1954 the percentage of Navajo children enrolled in school increased to 81.9 percent, and by 1958, to 88.6 percent (Szasz 1977, p. 27 and Roessel 1979, p. 27).

By the end of the 1950s, a change not only in policy, but of attitude, became apparent. Up until this
time, it is doubtful that the BIA actually sought to provide Indians with an education that would enable them to be successful in the white man's world. Instead, federal Indian education simply sought to achieve a minimum degree of English competency so that whites and Indians could converse. By the beginning of the 1960s, however, both races began to conceive education as an economic ticket to the mainstream society. In what was reminiscent of the New Deal days of John Collier, both federal policy makers and Indians once again talked of self-determination with Indian control over Indian education. While the federal government tended to view this new movement only in economic terms, Indians demanded a cultural dimension. Thus, by the middle of the decade, bilingual and bicultural programs became an integral part of Indian education.

The creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964 provided a source of funding for experimentation in Indian controlled schools. The Navajo Tribe took the lead in this endeavor. In 1966, Rough Rock Demonstration School opened its doors as the first Indian-controlled school in the country. Two years later, in 1968, Navajo Community College became the nation's first Indian-controlled institution of higher learning (Szasz 1977, pp. 170-174, 176-180).
On November 3, 1969, the Special Subcommittee on Indian Education released its report *Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National Challenge*. The Kennedy Report, as it came to be called in honor of the subcommittee's chairman, Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, was the most comprehensive study ever made on the topic of Indian education. The subcommittee proclaimed Indian education as being "a stain on our national conscience," and concluded:

...our national policies for educating American Indians are a failure of major proportions. They have not offered Indian children - either in years past or today - an educational opportunity anywhere near equal to that offered the great bulk of American Children (U.S. Congress 1969, p. xi).

Navajo Reservation schools figured prominently in the Kennedy Report. In March 1968 hearings were held in Flagstaff, Arizona to give Navajo educators, parents and tribal officials an opportunity to express their concerns over issues effecting Navajo education. The Subcommittee Investigating Team, with Senators Kennedy and Paul J. Fannin of Arizona presiding, heard testimony after testimony describing the dismal educational environment on the Navajo Reservation. The finished report included the following notations taken from the Flagstaff hearings:

1. There are many severe problems among young Navajo adults - drunkenness, child neglect, drunken and
reckless driving. Alarming numbers of people have lapsed into an alienated, apathetic life marked by episodes of delinquency and irresponsibility (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 17).

2. Gross malnutrition occurs . . . particularly among the Navajos . . . Among the Navajos alone, for example, it is estimated that 12 percent of the infants hospitalized have anemia of the iron deficiency type (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 112).

3. An estimated 62 percent of the total labor force are unemployed . . . of these, sixty-three percent have less than a sixth grade education, forty-two percent cannot speak English, fifty percent cannot read or write English (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 89).

4. Navajo families and communities are never involved in the planning or site selection for new schools. They have objected vociferously on numerous occasions but have as yet to be listened to (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 70).

5. Over 7,000 Navajo children ages 9 and under are placed in elementary boarding schools which are emotionally and culturally destructive to both the children and their families (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 103).

6. Two young Navajo boys who froze to death while running away from a boarding school were trying to get to their homes - 50 miles away (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 67).

7. One school has been reported where children are beaten, pervasive attacks are made against their cultural
beliefs, and teachers advocate the free labor of Navajo girls in their homes, doing laundry, scrubbing floors, etc., to teach them the American way of house keeping (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 103).

8. Only 30 of the 160 guidance counselors in the BIA Navajo area school system were certified by the state (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 84).

9. The principal of a Chinle, Arizona public school ... told an OEO team that it was "not American" to help any "faction" perpetuate its way of life ... emphasis on Navajo culture was a "backward step" and that the country had never moved ahead by "catering" to ethnic groups (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 26).

10. The school superintendent in Chinle admitted his district has a policy of falsifying the Indian achievement test results. He told OEO evaluators that these children were so far behind national norms "that it just wouldn't look good. People who don't know conditions here just wouldn't understand" (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 26).

Such was the state of Navajo education in 1970 when the Navajo people elected Peter McDonald as their new tribal chairman. It is of interest to note that McDonald, then director of the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity (ONEO), had also testified at the Flagstaff hearings:

Although the Bureau, the public schools, and mission schools have made progress in the area of Indian education, Navajo education has not kept pace with
the need of the Navajo young people. What I mean here is that there is a need for total education of the young people. It is not good enough just to learn to read, to write, to speak English. This is not the end of education so far as the Navajo people are concerned. They want total education where the child has an experience of learning what life is, how to cope with life as it is today, and much of this education must and should come from the parents . . . And then the quality of education must be such that there is a progression in the area of professions that are needed on the reservation.

. . . Navajo people - if they are to become self-sufficient and self-determining then we must have the professionals and the technicians . . . What I am saying is that in order for us to be self-sufficient then we must have trained people (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 995).

McDonald's words reflected the time period. No longer would the Navajo people be content with having someone else determine their educational fate. The first one hundred years of formal American education had proven a dismal failure and the time for change, in the form of self-determination, and eventually tribal nationalism, had finally arrived. During the next twelve years the Navajos began to assume a greater measure of control over the educational process within the Bureau and Public School systems, as well as in higher education. The most radical innovation, however, was the development of community schools which were largely free of BIA influence. By the time McDonald assumed the office of tribal chairman, a number of these schools had come into existence, the first and most heralded being the Rough Rock Demonstration School.
CHAPTER 2

ROUGH ROCK DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL

The Birth of a School

The origin of Rough Rock can be traced to an earlier project at Lukachukai, Arizona, a small Navajo Reservation community located at the base of the Lukachukai Mountains. Although this earliest of experiments in Indian-controlled education ended in failure, the results were encouraging enough to provide an impetus for starting a similar school at Rough Rock.

In August, 1964, as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty," Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act, Title II, Section 207 of which, provided for the funding of demonstration projects in poverty areas. The field of Indian education proved perfect for such funding (Roessel 1977, p. 7).

That same year, Allen D. Yazzie, Chairman of the Navajo Tribal Education Committee, submitted a proposal to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the governing agency, created by the Economic Opportunity Act, for a three-year demonstration program in Indian-controlled education. The OEO accepted this proposal and granted the tribe
$214,300 for the first year of the project, July, 1965 to June, 1966. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, interested in trying new approaches to education, offered their school at Lukachukai as the site for the demonstration project (Roessel 1977, p. 7). Lukachukai had little chance of succeeding as a demonstration school. It soon became apparent that such a project could not be superimposed upon an existing system. The existence within the same school of two different sets of personnel directed by two different agencies, the OEO and the BIA, served to create an impossible situation. Under such circumstances, the school could never be a true community controlled institute as envisioned by the OEO and those responsible for the project. Consequently, the demonstration project left Lukachukai and the school reverted back to a straight BIA operation (Roessel 1977, p. 8).

Though the final result of the Lukachukai experiment proved a disappointment, it was a start, and the Navajo Tribe, OEO, and the BIA still believed that the concept of a demonstration school with the emphasis on community control was feasible. A number of individuals, including many of those who had been responsible for the Lukachukai school, began to combine their talents and efforts to achieve this goal. Among those most responsible for what would become the Rough Rock Demonstration School, were, Sargent Shriver, OEO director; Dr. Sanford Kravitz, director of the Office of
Research, Demonstration and Technical Assistance in the Community Program; Richard Boone, then director of the Navajo Area for the BIA; Dr. William J. Benham, assistant area director, in charge of education, for the BIA; Allen D. Yazzie, chairman of the Navajo Education Committee, and Dr. Robert A. Roessel Jr., the director of the Indian Education Center at Arizona State University (Roessel 1977, pp. 4-6).

In order to establish a new demonstration school, it was necessary that a legal entity existed with which the two primary participating agencies, the BIA and the OEO could enter into contractual agreements with. The possibilities of contracting with the Navajo Tribe, Arizona State University, or a local public school district were all considered and then rejected. In order to meet the rapidly approaching funding deadlines, and to increase the chances of creating a true "community school" that would be responsive to the local people, a decision was reached to create a special private, non-profit, tribally sponsored organization of Navajo leaders for the express purpose of receiving funds and providing general supervision for the new venture. The body that came into being, called itself DINE, Inc., an acronym for Demonstration in Navajo Education. Comprising this three-member Board of Directors were Allen D. Yazzie who served as its president, Ned Hatathli, then Resource Director for the Navajo Tribe, and Guy Gorman, a tribal
councilman and member of the Chinle Public School Board (Johnson 1968, pp. 21-24).

The BIA offered to turn over to DINE, a new $3 million school facility at Rough Rock, one of the most isolated and traditional areas on the reservation (Roessel 1977, p. 8).

Before DINE could proceed on with their plans of developing a new demonstration school at Rough Rock, it first had to ascertain if the community indeed wanted such an institution. The Board of Directors held a series of meetings with the community, the product of which proved to be a unanimous vote of approval, and the selection of a five-member, later increased to a seven-member, all-Navajo school board (Roessel 1977, p. 8). Rough Rock Demonstration School officially came into being on July 1, 1966 and held its first classes in September of that year.

At this point, rough Rock School received its funding, $329,000 from OEO, for the first year of operation. This money was to be spent for experimentation and demonstration in the following ten areas:

1. School-community relations and parental involvement.
2. Cultural identification.
3. Home and school visitation.
4. Language development and teaching English as a second language.
To guide the school through the early critical years, Rough Rock chose as its first director the outspoken and controversial Dr. Robert A. Roessel Jr. Roessel, who would become the foremost figure in Indian education during the seventies, brought to the position experience and dedication. His involvement in Navajo education went back to 1952 when he taught for the BIA at Round Rock, before moving on to become a teacher and principal at Low Mountain. At both schools, Roessel had sought to promote community involvement despite the lack of Bureau support for such an innovation. Leaving Low Mountain, Roessel went on to Arizona State University where he assumed the directorship of its Indian Education Center, a position he held until his move to Rough Rock (Szasz 1977, pp. 169-170).

Rough Rock's Structure

The 1970's were a time of growth and expansion for Rough Rock School. The original demonstration school served
only the elementary grades. Today, there are actually two schools at Rough Rock, an elementary school, and a secondary school. The elementary school is responsible for preschool through the sixth grade level. This school is individualized and ungraded. The secondary school, completed in 1974, comprises the seventh through the twelve grades. For a number of years Rough Rock operated a separate middle school in an old BIA building. This building, however, was condemned and evacuated in the fall of 1981. A new middle school is presently under construction and is scheduled to be in operation for the 1984-85 school term. This school will house grades six through eight. (Rough Rock Demonstration School, no date)

The stated philosophy, goals, and objectives of Rough Rock Demonstration School have changed little since its beginning. Ethelou Yazzie, then director, presented the following statement on the school's philosophy in the 1976-77 Staff Handbook:

Rough Rock Demonstration School is a complex serving the formal educational needs of children and youth of the Rough Rock Navajo Indian community under the aegis of the local community. A corporation: Rough Rock School Board, Inc., secures funds to operate the school each year from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other sources. The governing board of the corporation consists of six members of the greater Rough Rock community. The language of the school, in which all official business is conducted, is Navajo.

The operation of the school complex is predicated upon the following principles:
The right and obligation to an education. All children and youth have the right, and obligation, to utilize educational institutions to help them be of service to themselves, their family, community, tribe, and nation. Rough Rock Demonstration School is predicated upon the fact that its services are available to all children and youth resident in the greater Rough Rock area without regard to race, sex, religion, or other circumstances in life.

Indian people can operate schools, now. For many years Indian people have had the goal held before them of the time they will become individuals capable of being entrusted with the education of their own children and youth. This presumably will take place at some indeterminate day in the future, when they are ready. In the meantime, while waiting for that protean "readiness," Indians in education have largely been relegated to jobs providing ancillary services and excluded from positions of particular influence in the lives of children and youth. Rough Rock Demonstration School is predicated upon the premise that Indian people are ready, now to undertake the administration and operation of schools for Indian children and youth and can gain nothing by deferring to entrenched interests, be they from whatever organization, which would reserve the field of Indian education for non-Indians who are all too often motivated by a supercilious condescension that plays havoc with the Indian spirit.

A sound self image is of the utmost importance. A sine qua non to "success," however it is defined, is sound acceptance of one's self without the debilitating denigration that has for so long been endemic among Indian peoples. Rough Rock Demonstration School is predicated upon the belief that the inculcation of a realistic, and positive, self image in each student is of vital importance in freeing said student to achieve optimally in school.

Bicultural and bilingual education is necessary. In order to function best in the world into which Indian students are born on the Navajo Indian Reservation, it is necessary for such students' schooling to equip them with the skills and attitudes to function well in either a predominately Indian or predominately non-Indian milieu. Such skills include not only facility in both the Indian tongue and in English, but an understanding of cultural nuances which so often influence interaction with other persons,
however subtly. Rough Rock Demonstration School is predicated upon the belief that the most demonstrable goal of its activities is a person whose proficiency in the Indian and non-Indian languages, and cultural skills, is self evident.

The goal of education at Rough Rock Demonstration School consists not only of the acquisition of skills and proficiency in school subjects commonly taught, and in concomitant learnings in the Navajo language and culture, but in assisting Navajo children and youth in their present lives to "become" in a manner that will allow them to be of maximum service to themselves and others throughout their lives. The school is not a place to prepare for life, it is life itself. The function then of school personnel in any capacity is to be of service to children, youth, and indeed the entire Rough Rock community as they utilize the school to take advantage of its opportunities rather than to be utilized by it (Roessel 1977, pp. 71-73).

It must also be said that the school was, and continues to be founded upon the principles of Navajo, and especially, community control and involvement. Rough Rock School was built to educate students from the area in and around the Rough Rock community. Most students live within a radius of fifteen miles of the school. Rough Rock School, then, differs from the public or BIA boarding schools on the reservation that serve a much large geographical area.

The question of who really controls Rough Rock School, the board or the director, has always been the focus for debate, and for both positive and negative publicity. Theoretically, the board by mandate of the community, controls and directs every facet of the schools operation. The role of the director, is to provide expert and technical assistance in helping the board reach its decisions.
The continued existence of Rough Rock as a demonstration school is based upon the premise that the Navajo people are capable of determining their own destiny through local control of the educational process. It is vital, then, that the board is representative of, and responsible to, the community which elects it. Rough Rock is a traditional community that has been relatively untouched by the American education process. The composition of the board reflects this. Much was made of the fact that of the original board, only one member possessed a formal education. One development in Rough Rock's evolution during the seventies is that board members tend to be slightly more educated. This is probably because the educational threshold of the community has risen accordingly over the years.

In order to remain responsive to the community, the board continues to hold weekly day-long meetings in which the public is encouraged to attend and participate. At least every two months the community is also invited to another mass meeting to discuss some aspect of the school's operation (Roessel 1977, pp. 71-73).

The chief architect of this concept of community involvement and control at Rough Rock was its first director, Robert Roessel Jr. Roessel describes his personal philosophy of Navajo control in writing:
Control means the responsibility to direct, to make decisions, to regulate and dominate. The key element lies in the authority to make decisions vested in that person, community, board, tribe, or what have you. The question is not whether a person or group of people will make good or bad decisions, not whether they will make right or wrong decisions, regardless of the results. In other words, control in this context means the right to be wrong (Roessel 1979, p. 287).

Ironically, Roessel, a long time advocate of Indian controlled education, received criticism during his tenure as Rough Rock's director for having too much influence, if not dominance, over the school board. This accusation came in a report based on an evaluation of the Rough Rock School by a team of outside educators headed by Donald A. Erickson, a professor at the University of Chicago. Erickson in a subsequent paper, labeled the community control of Rough Rock as being a "myth" and Roessel as being a "benevolent despot whose concepts were generally liberal and avant-garde." Furthermore, he found it "astonishing to be a national prototype for community control" (Erickson 1970, p. 82). A number of educators who had served as consultants for Erickson during his Rough Rock evaluation, disagreed with both his methodology and interpretation of the school's situation. In their dissenting position paper they wrote: "Our claim is that the rough Rock evaluators, unknown to themselves, were overwhelmed by the impact of the new school culture and that their report was written under severe
culture shock due to unfamiliarity with Navajo culture" (Bergman et al. 1969, p. 2).

As Roessel later wrote, "Rough Rock Demonstration School has been both blessed and cursed by evaluations" (Roessel 1977, p. 141).

Roessel left Rough Rock in the fall of 1968 to assume the presidency of Navajo Community College. Dillon Platero, former chairman of the Navajo Education Committee and the deputy director at Rough Rock the past year and a half, became the school's second director. By appointing Platero, a Navajo to the highest administrative position, the "Navajo people," Roessel wrote, "have taken the final step in achieving control and direction over their own education" (Roessel 1977, p. 12). The appointment of Platero did set a precedent since both subsequent directors, Ethelou Yazzie who served from 1973 to 1978 and Jimmie C. Begay who has been director since 1978, have been Navajo. Begay, the high school principal for the past four years, came from the nearby Black Mountain area and had received his education from the Bureau school system in Rough Rock (Roessel 1977, p. 94).

One positive characteristic of Rough Rock School throughout its history has been the outstanding leadership of its directors. From Roessel through Begay, the school has been fortunate to secure extremely dedicated and capable head administrators.
In addition to the position of director, other administrative and teaching positions have been filled by Navajo people. In 1976, of the 34 classroom teachers in the Rough Rock elementary, middle and high schools, 16 were Navajo. Of the top nine administrative positions, seven were held by Navajos (Roessel 1977, p. 74).

One unique aspect of Rough Rock has been its involvement in projects not generally associated with a school operation. Many of these programs are designed to benefit the Rough Rock Community in general, rather than the school and its students specifically. Among the community developments that Rough Rock School has embarked upon since its conception; road construction, agricultural programs including the experimentation with new plant varieties such as pistachios, a community laundromat, poultry project, a toy and furniture store, and various adult education and health care programs (Roessel 1977, pp. 15-17). Many of these programs, and plans for others like them, came to an end in the late 1970's due to cutbacks in federal funding.

One of the more controversial Rough Rock practices has been creation of employment opportunities for community people by paying them for their participation in school programs. From school board members who are paid a set rate for every meeting or function they attend, to other local people who are hired as dormitory parents, laundry workers, etc., the Rough Rock Demonstration School has from its
beginning, sought to provide an income for as many community members as possible. While such a goal is laudable, it also possesses a number of negative aspects. Charges of nepotism are common. The expense of providing employment for perhaps 75 percent of Rough Rock's families have proven to be considerable. Consequently, the amount of money actually spent per student is lower than at BIA schools though the overall school budget is much higher. Another factor is the question of priorities. The Erickson report stated that the primary concern of the school board was the development of the school as a means for economic improvement in the community, while at the same time, they virtually ignored the academic program (Erickson, Schwartz 1969). Clearly, the issue of community control and involvement at Rough Rock, has always been clouded in controversy.

The Navajo Emphasis at Rough Rock

The American educational system has had a long, sad history of trying to "white wash" Indian students and make them something they were not meant to be. In an effort to bring the Indian into the mainstream of American society, and to mold him into a good productive American citizen, schools have historically utilized every method at their disposal to strip him of his Indianness. The Indian's native language and culture were seen as being liabilities which impeded his progress. This mentality and philosophy
has formed the foundation of Indian education right into the 1960's, and remains prevalent even today in many reservation schools.

Rough Rock was one of the first schools in the country that sought to turn this philosophy of Indian education around. Recognizing that almost one hundred years of formal education on the Reservation had produced only failure, Rough Rock Demonstration School established an educational system based on the premise that elements of traditional Navajo society, including the native language, should be promoted rather than diminished or destroyed. This rationale for such an approach is well stated by the school's first director:

Educators, if they are desirous of maximum results, should inculcate or reinforce a sense of pride on the part of the Indian student in his own culture and heritage. Modern education will of necessity teach the Indian child the characteristics and the fundamentals of western civilization. It is equally important that these Indian students recognize the values and contributions that their culture has made, and may continue to make, in the growth and development of this nation. Too often we are concerned solely with making non-Indians out of Indians. In the process we may create more problems than we solve. We must always be careful not to break the mold in which the child was raised - because if we do, we may break or destroy the individual who was in the mold (Roessel 1962, p. 10).

A major element of Rough Rock's Navajo emphasis is native language. Not only is the Navajo language taught, but it is also used as a language of instruction, particularly in the lower grade levels with an increasing use
of English as the students progress. By the fifth grade level, English is the major language of instruction. In this manner, students whose primary language is Navajo, can use the language they are most familiar with to learn other school subjects. At the high school level, Navajo language is continued, 1½ credits being needed for graduation (Roessel 1977).

Several other programs are indicative of the Navajo emphasis at Rough Rock Demonstration School. In 1976, the school board established a Navajo Culture and Language Center, now called the Navajo Resource Center, to produce classroom teaching materials and to coordinate and oversee the various instruction in Navajo culture and language taking place throughout the Rough Rock School system (Roessel 1977, pp. 57-58).

An older program is the Navajo Curriculum Center. First established in 1966, the primary purpose of the center is to develop curriculum materials in the Navajo and English languages based on Navajo life, culture, and history. Throughout the seventies, the Navajo Curriculum Center published excellent, high quality publications, thus establishing a reputation of being one of the outstanding programs of its kind in the nation (Roessel 1977, pp. 56-57).

No program better illustrates Rough Rock's commitment to Navajo culture than does the Navajo Mental Health program, the primary function of which is to train Navajo
medicine men. This program, which began in 1967, is funded primarily by the National Institute for Mental Health.

Basically, the Navajo Mental Health Program operates by selecting a number of medicine men who then teach various ceremonies to apprentices. Both the medicine men and the trainees receive stipends. In 1976, when six medicine men and six trainees participated, the money per participant was $300 and $200 respectively. Through the fall of 1976, a period in which the program operated every year but one when no funding was available, six medicine men have graduated from the program (Roessel 1977, pp. 53-55).

**Rough Rock Enters the Eighties**

One historian has stated that "the early 1970's witnessed the maturation of Rough Rock" (Iverson 1981, p. 140). While this observation might be true, it should also be said then, that the mid and late 1970's were a time when the school also came to grip with reality.

When Rough Rock was established in 1966, it represented a great social experiment and a crown jewel in the War on Poverty. It was, and remains, the most radically innovative project in the history of Indian education. During the first eighteen months of its existence, 12,000 visitors from eight foreign countries, 42 states and 86 Indian tribes, made the pilgrimage to Rough Rock to see for
themselves the proposed model for the future of Indian education.

Once the novelty of Rough Rock, however, wore off, the number of visitors declined and so did the enthusiasm of many people for the school. Most importantly, the availability of funding declined. For Rough Rock, reality has, is, and will continue to be defined in terms of funding availability. This funding for the operation of the school is derived from a number of sources including the BIA, Title I, Title IV, and various other federal agencies and private foundations. The heart of Rough Rock funding, however, remains the BIA.

Several factors have contributed to the difficult funding situation at Rough Rock, one being the school's relationship to the BIA and the Navajo Tribal government. Although supportive of Rough Rock at the beginning, both of these entities soon became less than enthusiastic supporters of the school. More local control meant less Bureau and Tribal control, a condition both feared and resented. Tribal support for Rough Rock all but disappeared with the election of Peter McDonald, since the new chairman was not a strong advocate of bilingual, bicultural education. The passage of Public Law 93-638, The Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975, strengthened the Tribe's position by giving it the power to contract with the BIA and other governmental agencies. Designed to free the tribes from the bureaucracy
and paternalism of the federal government, the McDonald administration instead used the act to centralize authority in Window Rock. On November 24, 1976, the Tribal Council adopted a resolution which required all future contracting to be channeled through the tribe for approval (Roessel 1977, p. 37). Now having the power to hold up, or even to veto, funding proposals, the Tribe had established its power over contract schools such as Rough Rock. In 1976, Ethelou Yazzie, then Rough Rock director, testified before the Education Task Force of the American Indian Policy Review Commission. Her following statement beautifully summarizes the politics of American Indian education: "As things currently stand, contract school funding is a power game between the BIA, Public Health, Tribal authorities, state and local school systems, and HEW - and the children are the losers" (Roessel 1977, p. 121).

Another issue is the justification for funding. Rough Rock has been an expensive venture and often the school has not been able to produce tangible results for the large amount of money it has spent. An excellent example is the Navajo Mental Health Program. Although one of the most promising projects on the Reservation, it has produced only a handful of graduates despite substantial funding, $85,800 for the 1976-77 school year alone (Roessel 1977, p. 75). While one can rightfully argue that success for such a program cannot be measured only in terms of the number of
graduates, those agencies and foundations who award the money, in this case the National Institutes for Mental Health, must reach their decisions to refund a program based on a record of past success. Rough Rock has not been able to show this, and consequently, the Navajo Mental Health program, having suffered continued funding cuts, is currently being phased out (Begay 1984).

The Navajo Mental Health Program brings to mind another issue, whether programs of this type should even be associated with, thus in competition for funding with, a regular school program. In reviewing the Rough Rock literature it is clear that whenever the academic and the cultural components of the school come into conflict in regard to priority and emphasis, the academic inevitably comes out second. The Rough Rock School Board seems to have shown little real interest in upgrading the academic quality of their school. Roessel defends this neglect by stating: "This is not to say these academic subjects are not important, but evidently the Board felt they would be taken care of without the Board's intervention. Other areas, such as Navajo mental health, the Board knew that if they didn't take action no one would" (Roessel 1977, p. 55). Another former director, Ethelou Yazzie disagrees with the contention that the Board, at least during her tenure, ignored academics. Yazzie praises the Board and states that they placed a high priority on this area (Yazzie 1984). Little
evidence, however, exists to support this position, and the present situation brings to question the very feasibility and desirability of an educational system based on a total community concept.

**Other Contract Schools**

Whatever the criticisms of Rough Rock Demonstration School, the impact it has had on Indian education has been considerable. The best indication of this can be seen in the number of contract schools which came into existence after Rough Rock. A number of these came to be established on the Navajo Reservation: Rock Point Community School; Ramah (Pine Hill) Navajo School; Black Mesa School; Borrego Pass; and Little Singer School.

Rock Point stands out as perhaps the finest school on the Navajo Reservation. Under the leadership of Wayne Holm who came to Rock Point in 1958, the school went contract in 1972. Holm describes Rock Point as a very cognitive, very achievement minded school," which has "learned from Rough Rock, both the good and the bad (Holm 1984).

Whereas Rough Rock has engaged in a multitude of projects, often with limited success, Rock Point has limited its objects, and has consequently realized impressive results. Unlike Rough Rock, Rock Point has also sought to measure the academic progress of its students. Reviewing
the Continuous Testing of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores for 1982-83, one finds Rock Point students far surpassing other contract and Bureau schools. For example, the Total Battery Score (reading, grammar and mathematics) for Rock Point Seniors, is 12.9 compared to 6.4 for Rough Rock and 7.7 for Navajo Reservation Bureau schools. Rock Point student grade equivalency not only eclipses all reservation schools, but is in fact, often higher than both the state and national average (Navajo Division of Education 1982-83).

Rock point has also pioneered in the field of bilingual education. Students are first taught to read in Navajo and later, at the second grade level, taught to read in English. Like Rough Rock, Rock Point uses the Navajo language as a means of instruction and Navajo literacy is continued through the twelveth grade. Unlike Rough Rock, however, Rock Point places equal emphasis on English skills. By not playing one language against the other, Rock Point is more able to produce graduates who are truly bicultural and biliterate.

The keys to Rock Point's success have been leadership and structure. Holm, like Roessel, is married to a Navajo and is dedicated to the community. He maintains an excellent relationship with the board who, though largely traditional, uneducated, and monolingual Navajo speakers, insist on academic excellence. The Rock Point curriculum is highly structured and demanding. Whereas most reservation
schools require the minimum 20 Carnegie units for graduation with a great deal of flexibility in regard to what courses can be taken, Rock Point requires 25½ credits with few elective courses. The Rock Point experience proves that quality education can be realized in an Indian-controlled contract school under the right conditions.
CHAPTER 3

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS SCHOOLS

The BIA Under Attack

The early 1970s were a time of turmoil for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and consequently, its efforts in Indian education. The decade began with the Bureau seething over the stinging criticisms leveled against it by the Senate Subcommittee in the Kennedy Report of 1969.

The Subcommittee summarized the state of BIA education by making the following charges:
1. The education budget of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is grossly inadequate to provide an equal educational opportunity for its Indian students (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 100).
2. The academic performance of Indian students in Federal schools is seriously deficient (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 100).
3. Teachers and administrators in Federal schools still see their role as one of "civilizing the native" (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 100).
4. The quality and effectiveness of instruction in BIA schools is very unsatisfactory (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 101).
5. There are extremely serious deficiencies in the guidance and counseling programs in BIA schools (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 101).
6. The environment of BIA schools is sterile, impersonal, and rigid, with a major emphasis on discipline and punishment which is deeply resented by the students (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 101).

7. Indian parents and communities have practically no control over the BIA schools educating their students. The white man often sits in a compound completely alien to the community it supposedly serves. It does not serve as a community resource nor does it recognize community needs or desires (U.S. Congress 1969, pp. 101-102).

8. The present organization and administration of the BIA school system could hardly be worse (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 102).

9. The BIA personnel system has grave deficiencies which have contributed substantially to all of the inadequacies already cited (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 102).

10. Over 7,000 Navajo children ages 9 and under are placed in elementary boarding schools which are emotionally and culturally destructive for both the children and their families (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 102).

11. Most of the 19 off-reservation boarding schools have become "dumping ground" schools for Indian children with serious social and emotional problems. These problems are not understood by the personnel, and instead of diagnosis and therapy, the schools act as custodial institutions at
best, and repressive, penal institutions at worst (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 102).

12. The BIA has made only token attempts to deal with the need for adult education on Indian reservations (U.S. Congress 1969, p. 103).

Not everyone agreed with the subcommittee's indictment of Federal Indian education. L. Madison Coombs, a former deputy assistant commissioner for education, in an essay entitled "The Indian is Not the Low Man on the Totem Pole," charged that the subcommittee's findings were "overstated, slanted, and in some cases downright inaccurate" (Coombs 1970, p. 8). He also questioned the subcommittee's motivations and purpose:

...the Senate Subcommittee had in mind a definite goal when it began its life, in addition to any other beneficial objective it may have had on behalf of Indians. That goal was the dissolution of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or at least the reconstitution of the Federal effort in Indian education by transferring it to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Coombs 1970, p. 8).

Regardless of the intent or accuracy of the Kennedy Report, it was clear that the BIA was being called to task for the failure of Indian education. Few came to the defense of the BIA and attacks soon followed from other sources. Various private and public research reports, Congress, the OEO, and most notably Indian people themselves joined in on the assault against the Bureau. In the case of the latter group, Indians had long possessed a love-hate
relationship with the Bureau and had often been openly critical of its policies. Now it found popular support for its protests.

Faced with this barrage of criticism, the Bureau of Indian Affairs found that the status quo was no longer acceptable if it hoped to survive. Change was initiated. One area to be scrutinized was personnel. Whereas the Bureau had previously provided a haven for career civil service employees who did little and were accountable to no one, forces from within and outside the Bureau now demanded results. Rapid turnover of top educational administrators characterized this transition period, a condition which had both positive and negative sides. From 1930 to 1965, for example, only three people, Carson Ryan, Willard Beatty, and Hildegaard Thompson held the position of Assistant Commissioner of Education. From 1966 to 1976, however, five different people held that position. The education director, already forced to administer at the will of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior, and President, now found his power base even further undermined by the insecurity and confusion prevalent with the Bureau. In such an atmosphere even the most sincere, dedicated and talented people found themselves ineffective and frustrated. Consequently, most soon resigned or were forced out of office.
Despite such problems, the Bureau of Indian Affairs moved toward meaningful and positive educational reform in the seventies. In an address to Congress on July 8, 1970, President Richard Nixon had repudiated the previous disastrous policy of termination, and thus, officially ushered in the era of Indian self-determination. Nixon's address was also a message to the BIA that Federal Indian education was to take a dramatic change in direction with tribes playing a greater role, and the Bureau being more responsive to their needs and desires. Such a mandate naturally applied to Navajo education.

**Navajo Involvement in BIA Education**

One trend in Navajo BIA education throughout the seventies was the employment of increased numbers of Navajo school personnel through an Indian preference hiring policy. This included the hiring of Navajo teachers far more frequently than public schools. In addition, Bureau schools made extensive use of Navajo classroom aides, a particularly pressing need at the elementary level. Increasing numbers of Navajos also filled administrative positions within the Bureau educational system, several being appointed as agency directors.

In response to the Kennedy Report's criticism that the BIA had been particularly lax in involving participation of parents and communities in the educational process, the
Bureau created the Navajo Area School Board Association (N.A.S.B.A.). Established in 1969 and made operative in 1973 following a three year on-reservation training program, the basic goals and objectives of this board are:

1. To promote maximum involvement of the Navajo people in the education of their children.
2. To promote, develop, and encourage liaison and communications between parents of Navajo students and the administration of BIA Educational programs.
3. To secure parental participation in the development, operation, and evaluation of BIA educational programs.
4. To unite on common problems presented by local school boards, in order to seek common solutions.
5. To establish Navajo Area priorities on education after input has been considered from all agencies.
6. To promote and maintain an environment to encourage Navajo students to progress to their maximum levels of academic, social and vocational competence.
7. To establish leadership on a wider scope to promote the educational needs of the Navajo people.
8. To seek maximum efficiency of the BIA, Navajo Area, educational program (Roessel 1979, pp. 136-137).

Composing the NASBA is the entire membership of each local BIA community school and school board, with the BIA Agency School Superintendent, Superintendent, and Navajo
Area Assistant Area Director for Education serving as ex-officio members. The functions of the NASBA are to study all problems and proposals and develop policy relating to education for Navajo children, youth and adults, as provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area Division of Education, Contract Schools, ONEO Pre-schools, referred to the association by local school committees; school boards, Tribal Chapters, District Councils, Agency Councils, Committees of the Tribal Council, Bureau of Indian Affairs Branches and Area Divisions, and Tribal Council delegates. It will collect all facts about each problem or proposal referred to it by interviewing students, parents, local school committees, school officials and other concerned program officials by various means such as reading and analyzing reports and by visiting schools as necessary. Based on such studies and investigations the Executive Committee will prepare a report on the facts regarding each problem or proposal and its recommendations on same for consideration and appropriate action by the Navajo Area School Board Association (Roessel 1979, p. 140).

While the creation of the N.A.S.B.A. did result in more parental and community involvement, and indeed, an effective voice in the BIA educational process, this involvement was of a limited nature. Since the board is only an advisory board, Navajo people continue to lack any real power. In hearings before the United States Commission
on Civil Rights in 1973, at least one board member testified that the N.A.S.B.A. had no authority whatsoever (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1975, p. 83). This seemed to be a particularly sensitive issue in regard to the hiring and firing of school personnel. A BIA official stated civil service procedures were followed on personnel matters with advisory board members conducting interviews and making recommendations which were usually accepted (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1975, pp. 82-83).

BIA Curriculum and Instruction

One of the strongest areas of BIA education, compared to the contract and public schools, has been its curriculum. This is especially true of the Navajo Reservation where BIA educators have access to a wide variety of materials created especially for use in Navajo schools. The development of these culture-materials started in the 1930s during the Collier administration. In the late 1940s and early 1950s this approach was abandoned as BIA sought to bring their schools more in line with the public schools. By the mid-1960s, the BIA again changed direction, adopting a philosophy that advocated respect for Indian culture. Consequently, the BIA curriculum once more emphasized the culture and heritage of the Indian student. This trend continued throughout the 1970s (Koessel 1979, p. 113).
It should be added, however, that while the BIA developed the best curriculum made available to Indian students, much of it was still of poor quality. In examining the material produced for BIA schools at this time, one finds a number of weaknesses. Everything, for example, seems geared for the lower level student with very little present to challenge the more gifted student. Considering the amount of resources available to the Bureau, and the amount of time and money spent, the product of their efforts often seem rather amateurish and disappointing.

Two specific curriculum programs have received a great deal of attention: The Navajo Social Studies Project, and the Navajo Area Language Arts Project (N.A.L.A.P.).

The Navajo Social Studies Project began in 1967 and continued into the 1970s. The purpose of this joint project between the University of New Mexico and the Division of Education, Navajo Area of the BIA, was "to develop a sequential series of social studies units based upon Navajo life and culture, for each grade level from beginners through twelve," and also" to organize and offer to a representative sampling of teachers a continuing program in the teaching of social studies across culture" (Navajo Social Studies Project 1970, Introduction). Le Roy Condie, a former BIA teacher on the Reservation, was director of this project.

The Navajo Social Studies Project is typical of BIA curriculum programs during this time in that much of the material
produced for this project was very good, some very bad. Perhaps due to this lack of consistency few schools actually used the materials.

The main objective of the N.A.L.A.P., in operation at the same time as the social studies project, was "to develop a sequence of the grammatical structures of the English language based upon the particular language needs of the Navajo children. In this way, the child could "internalize the structures of English by capitalizing on the thought process involved in language learning rather than rote drill and model-mimicry," (Thompson 1975, p. 174) he method commonly used by schools in the 1960s. The primary consultant for the N.A.L.A.P. was Dr. Robert Wilson of U.C.L.A.

Wilson, and his consultant firm C.I.T.E. (Consultants in Teaching English) were also employed by the Bureau in 1970 to help launch and operate a massive, reservation-wide English-as-a-second language program. The Bureau spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on this crash program, with C.I.T.E. responsible for holding workshops and preparing curricular materials (Roessel 1979, pp. 116-118).

The BIA also experimented in a number of other innovative educational approaches. By 1975, several Navajo area schools had gone to an ungraded method as a means of school organization. Some schools no longer gave letter grades, substituting instead such reporting devices as parent-teacher conferences and narrative reports to parents on the
progress of their children (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area 1975, p. 23).

Through the Navajo area educational system the Bureau emphasized team teaching, small group instruction and individualized instruction. Such experimental techniques were made possible by additional monies received by the BIA under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area 1975, p. 23).

The BIA also engaged in bilingual and bicultural education with Navajo students being taught initially in their own language at five reservation schools (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area 1975, p. 24). For the most part, however, the BIA continued its reluctance to include Navajo language and culture throughout all grades and greatly limited its efforts in these areas.

A final area which received added emphasis in the Navajo area was special education. In 1965 only four BIA classrooms were devoted to special education classes, the number increasing to 47 ten years later. The most notable Bureau program was established in 1970 at Leupp Boarding School in the Tuba City Agency to provide education for a group of students possessing a variety of multiple physical and mental handicaps (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area 1975, p. 29).
The Problems of BIA Navajo Education

The most serious issue facing BIA Navajo education in the seventies was that of declining enrollment. In 1950-51, BIA schools had accounted for 79% of the total Navajo school enrollment. In 1960-61 enrollment dropped to 62%. In 1970-71 the decline continued to 43%, and in 1975-76, the 46 boarding schools, 10 day schools, and 8 bordertown dormitories comprised only 33% of the Navajo student population (Roessel 1979, p. 97). This latter figure represents a 24% decline within a five year period.

Several factors contributed to this dramatic decrease in the BIA enrollment. Certainly one reason has to be the tarnished image of the BIA. Another reason was the growing popularity of the public schools which by 1975-76 accounted for approximately 60% of the total Navajo student population (Roessel 1979, p. 97). Contract and Mission schools also accounted for a substantial number of students.

Even while enrollment declined, facilities deteriorated. A study released in 1980 made the following evaluation:

Many of the BIA school facilities on the Navajo Nation presently suffer from chronic and severe conditions of disrepair. Lack of funds has often made it difficult for the Bureau to operate its educational facilities effectively. Authorization for repairs is often so delayed that the problem evolves from a minor repair to irreparable damage. ...The degraded physical environment of BIA schools creates serious problems in the conduct of educational programs and in providing a safe and comfortable home-living environment for children in the
dormitories. And, under the best possible maintenance schedules, many dormitories provide the harshest type of institutional environment with long rows of metal bunk beds, sterile walls and no provision for privacy. They appear to be designed primarily for custodial efficiency rather than for the comfort and welfare of the student (Resta, Kelly 1980, p. 12).

Faced with such conditions and problems, the future of BIA Navajo education seemed grim and many predicted its demise. The Bureau did close a number of schools, most notably Intermountain High School in Utah, a school with a high Navajo enrollment. Originally operated for the Navajo Tribe, the school was turned over from the tribe to the BIA in 1974 because the tribes educational needs were being met by on-reservation schools. Operated as a multitribal school since then, enrollment began to fall. In 1978-79, 898 students attended Intermountain; the following year the enrollment was down to 753. In addition, a 1979 architect and engineers review estimated that the cost to bring the total facility up to health and safety standards would be about $11.2 million. Thus, the decision was made to phase out Intermountain. No freshmen class was admitted for the 1982-83 school year, and by 1984, the school would completely close its doors (U.S. General Accounting Office 1983, pp. 35-39).

The problems faced by Intermountain High School were representative of many, if not most, Navajo area schools. Fortunately few of these schools shared Intermountains fate
and BIA education on the Navajo Reservation remains alive if not thriving. A major reason for the survival of Bureau schools is that the public schools have not demonstrated that they can provide a better education. Also, BIA schools continue to possess the most dependable and adequate source of funding and thus are able to offer a higher per capita expenditure per child than any other reservation school system. As Robert A. Roessel has concluded, BIA education will remain "a major system to contend with in the future." (Roessel 1979, pp. 90-91)
CHAPTER 4

NAVAJO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Enrollment and Funding

While the enrollment of BIA schools on the Navajo Reservation continued to decline during the seventies, that of the public schools increased dramatically. As noted in the previous chapter, by 1975-76, almost 60% of the Navajo students in school attended public institutions, whereas only 34% had attended public schools in 1960-61 (Roessel 1979, p. 97). This enrollment was brought on by a combination of factors including a growing disillusionment with BIA education, increased numbers of people moving to the urban centers on the reservation, and road improvement which resulted in the extension of school bus service. In 1975-76, 31,485 students attended 11 public school districts that were located completely or partly on the Navajo Reservation (Roessel 1979, p. 91). Five of these districts, Chinle, Ganado, Monument Valley, Tuba City, and Window Rock, were located in Arizona.

Larger enrollments translated to larger problems for the public school sector on the Navajo Reservation. Most, if not all, of these problems were intricately tied into the issue of funding, which even in the best of times, had been
wholly inadequate. In 1975, the Navajo Division of Education published a major report which outlined the tenuous state of Navajo public school education. Among its findings on key issues:

1. **Deficit spending.** Some districts already have cumulative deficits, while all but one are projected to be from $250,000 to $2,000,000 in deficit by the end of this school year (1974-75).

2. **Facilities.** School buildings fall far short of meeting needs, with large amounts of temporary and inadequate funding over the years.

3. **In-lieu funding.** JOM and P.L. 874 funding arrangements are being changed in ways which have created some budget deficits and threaten to further erode requisite basic support.

4. **Extraordinary costs.** Educational costs on the Reservation are much higher because of special learning needs, rural circumstances, and other unique aspects of education there. Although costs per pupil run generally high, much of these go to non-instructional items and a much lower percentage is extended for instruction than the Arizona average.

5. **Growth.** Most Reservation districts are both experiencing and projecting rapid growth. Funds are inadequate to keep up with these changes, particularly in the area of facilities.
6. **State vs Federal.** There is no clear understanding or agreement between governments as to a specific division of responsibility for funding Indian education.

7. **Funding uncertainties.** Far too often, notification and payment of special funds is ridiculously late. Halfway through the school year, only informal notification of JOM allocations has been received and no payments are anticipated for several weeks.

8. **Attitudes.** Some of the difficulty in obtaining requisite funding appears rooted in attitudes about non-taxable Indian trust lands and special learning needs, attitudes which seem often to be rooted in misconceptions and to be inconsistent with other actions (Navajo Division of Education 1975, pp. 3-4).

The stability of Navajo public education varied from district to district with those experiencing the highest degree of enrollment increase suffering the most. One problem-plagued district was Window Rock, which within a period of only a few years realized an enrollment growth of over 700 percent (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 19). Ganado, by the end of the 1973-74 school year, found itself over a million dollars in deficit (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 12). The largest geographical school district in the United States, Chinle, by 1975-76, all but ceased to exist due to lack of money and lawsuits brought against it by large corporations (Roessel 1979, p. 156). Chinle, the
poorest district in terms of assessed valuation, had attempted to raise taxes to a level which the major taxpayers, most notably El Paso Gas, Kerr McGee, and Arizona Public Service, claimed was confiscatory. In the end, the federal court in Phoenix agreed with the corporations. Robert A. Roessel, then Superintendent of the Chinle School District, later wrote:

It should be pointed out that at the time of these large corporations brought suit against the Chinle District, alleging a confiscatory tax levy, it was hoped by all parties that the real benefit of the trial would be a court determination as to whose responsibility was public education on an Indian reservation. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, this issue never reached the courts for decision. The major companies were content to show only that the rate was too high, and no substantial effort was made to address the real issue - financial responsibility (Roessel 1979, p. 175).

The financial plight of Chinle and other reservation districts was a product many years in the making. Since the 1950's, most reservation public schools have relied heavily on Johnson O'Malley money (JOM) and Public Law 874 funding. A third source, Public Law 815, provides funding specifically for school construction. All of these funding sources were devised to deal with the lack of an adequate tax base on federal land, including Indian reservations.

Both JOM and PL 874, or "impact aide" funds are handled by the state which acts as a clearing house, receiving the federal money and turning it over to eligible schools on a pro-rated basis. Frequently, this money is
held up by the state for various reasons. When this happens, reservation schools are forced to issue warrants to continue operation, thus creating a deficit spending situation. Such was the case in the early seventies when most Navajo reservation schools found themselves on the brink of financial disaster. Permitted by State law to spend up the full amount of its approved budget even though the anticipated income was not received, districts did exactly that, in one case the interest alone threatening to exceed $150,000 (Navajo Division of Education 1975, pp. 12-13). Complicating this situation is the uncertainty of federal funding. It has been estimated that 75 percent of a schools operational budget might be committed in salaries and benefits before knowing how much is to be received (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 56). Since projected receipts seldom matched, and often far exceeded, actual receipts, the potential for over-spending was always present.

It should also be noted that the original intent of PL 874 and JOM was to help defray operational expenses, that is, to serve as supplemental, funding. However, most reservation school districts, lacking adequate regular funding sources, used such federal monies for general expenditures. To some, most notably urban Indian groups, this seemed an abuse. As one source has stated, "Both Johnson O'Malley and PL 874 were notorious for the freewheeling atmosphere in
which funds were guaranteed each year" (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 14 and Connell 1977, p. 186). In 1974 the government responded to such criticism by developing a set of regulations providing for a full review of JOM spending in order to assure that such money was spent only for supplemental purposes. Indians across the country generally welcomed this reform, but on the Navajo reservation, the new restrictions proved a hardship on schools that had grown accustomed to using the previous JOM flexibility to meet serious and legitimate needs (Roessel 1979, p. 152).

In regard to PL 815 funding for construction, it is clear that this source of money has never proven adequate in meeting the needs of public school districts on the Navajo reservation. The 1973 Navajo Division of Education report discussed earlier noted that the authorized amounts had not always been appropriated, and that the money which was appropriated, generally fell far short of their initial requests. In addition, by the time a project was approved and construction actually started, usually a three to five year period, costs and needs far exceeded the original estimates. The NDOE report also pointed out that Congress regularly appropriated large sums to the BIA for school construction but seemed to keep PL 815 appropriations for public school construction on Indian reservations at a "niggardly and very inadequate" level" (Navajo Division of
Education 1975, p. 14). Window Rock, for example, had received its last major federal funding for permanent facilities in 1962 (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 16).

Without federal funding available, public schools on the Navajo reservation turned to state money to construct desperately needed facilities. Arizona state law, however, does not permit the use of district capital outlay funds for building construction except for temporary, relocatable structures (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 18). Consequently, public schools on the reservation schools utilized exactly those types of structures. In Chinle, for example, 70% of the classrooms were in temporary facilities (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 17). To further illustrate the extent of this situation, one can note that the building value of the seven schools comprising the Chinle School District totaled only $7,465,000. In comparison, the building value of the Prescott School District, who also possessed seven buildings and a student population almost exactly that of Chinle's, was over $50,000,000 (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 18). The construction of such temporary and substandard buildings by reservation districts not only created both morale and safety problems, but also badly depleted district funds that should have been used for instructional purposes.

State funding for public school education on the Navajo reservation also proved to be a controversial issue
throughout the seventies. In 1973, the Arizona legislature passed a new school finance law that further undermined the funding of reservation schools. The law provided that if a district's per pupil expenditure was higher than the state average, the district would receive the state average in terms of state support. On the other hand, if the district's per pupil cost was less than the state average, they would receive the lower figure. The stated purpose of this law was to bring equity to state financing of public schools in Arizona by 1978-79. However, the law also included a provision which excluded the two largest sources of reservation school funds, PL 874 and JOM, when determining the per capita expenditures. Thus, in 1973-74, reservation schools, the poorest in the state, received less funding than in prior years (Roessel 1979, pp. 156-157).

In reality, the per pupil expenditures of Navajo Reservation schools were quite high compared to the State average. This fact had led to Chinle being labeled as a "gold-plated district" in its court appearance against the corporations discussed earlier (Roessel 1979, p. 176). However, it is misleading to look only at the total per-pupil expenditure since this figure includes many cost items that have little to do with the actual education of students. These are also cost items that non-reservation schools incur to a degree far less than reservation schools, if at all. Schools on the Navajo reservation, for example,
must provide housing for its administration, faculty and other staff. Few if any off-reservation districts must serve as landlords. The cost of providing and maintaining this housing is considerable. Rent is kept minimal so as to serve as a fringe benefit in attracting personnel to the often isolated environment of Navajo education. Usually, districts lose money on staff housing.

A second expenditure of extraordinary proportions is transportation. In 1976-77 for example, Chinle spent nearly four times more for transportation than the state average. The 7,700 square mile district operated a fleet of over seventy buses which traveled 859,425 miles (Roessel 1979, pp. 167-169).

Money spent on staff housing and transportation, while a necessary expenditure, contribute little toward a child's education. In terms of actual instructional money, reservation schools were forced to spend far less than off-reservation schools. Chinle, to use that district again as an example, in 1975-76, spent only 46 percent of its budget on instruction, compared to 69 percent for the state average (Roessel 1979, pp. 167-168).

Underlying this funding crisis were the more basic issues of confusion and attitude. It remained unclear exactly whose responsibility it was to provide educational services and monies for the Navajo tribe. The basic responsibility for the education of its citizens has always rested
with the state. In regard to Navajo education, however, the federal government assumed a degree of responsibility through the Treaty of 1868, and ultimately, through its role in the federal-Indian trust relationship. Consequently, both state and federal governments could, and did, claim that the primary responsibility for Navajo education belonged to the other. Those districts located within the state of Arizona were particularly vulnerable since, as Roessel points out, "The State of Arizona is notorious in terms of its poor track record toward adequate support of public schools on the Navajo Reservation" (Roessel 1979, p. 154). This state reluctance to provide adequate money for Navajo education can in part be traced to a resentment of the non-taxable status of Indian trust lands. The Navajo Division of Education report noted that "There are also those who charge that part of the problem is the willingness of Reservation school boards to spend excessively because the money they work with comes mostly from elsewhere, rather than being mostly raised locally" (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 59). While there is probably some truth to such an accusation, it does not justify the fact that students in Navajo Reservation public schools were being deprived of their constitutional right to an education comparable in quality to elsewhere in the state. At the height of the funding crisis in 1975, Roessel, the Superintendent of the Chinle School District, predicted that, "If the
current trends continue, in 3 to 5 years there will be no public schools on the Navajo Reservation" (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 9). While such a disheartening prediction did not materialize, public schools on the reservation continued to struggle throughout the seventies and remain even today grossly underfunded.

Public School Personnel Problems

The inadequate funding of public schools on the Navajo Reservation manifested itself in other areas, one being the inability to attract and retain quality personnel. This situation is well illustrated in the chart below which compares the number of individuals who held the positions of principal and superintendent on the Navajo Reservation from 1971-72 through 1980-81, with the number who held similar positions in the nearest off-reservation schools during the same ten-year time period (Arizona Department of Education 1971-72 - 1980-81).

Superintendents

(a) Off-reservation Bordertown School Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flagstaff School District</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holbrook School District</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph City School District</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page School District</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winslow School District</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Navajo Reservation School Districts

Chinle School District.......................... 5
Ganado School District.......................... 4
Kayenta School District.......................... 4
Tuba City School District.......................... 5
Window Rock School District.......................... 2

Total 20

Principals

(a) Off-reservation Bordertown Schools

Flagstaff High School.......................... 3
East Flagstaff Junior High School.......................... 3
Coconino High School.......................... 4
Flagstaff Junior High School.......................... 2
Page High School.......................... 3
Page Elementary School.......................... 2
Holbrook High School.......................... 2
Holbrook Junior High School.......................... 1
Woodruff School.......................... 3
Joseph City High School.......................... 2
Winslow High School.......................... 4
Winslow Junior High School.......................... 2
Bonnie Brenan School.......................... 1
Jefferson School.......................... 1
Washington-Lincoln School.......................... 1

Total 34

(b) Navajo Reservation Schools

Chinle High School.......................... 7
Chinle Junior High School.......................... 7
Chinle Elementary School.......................... 3
Red Mesa Elementary School.......................... 3
Ganado High School.......................... 6
Ganado Elementary School.......................... 4
Window Rock High School.......................... 5
Fort Defiance Junior High School.......................... 2
Window Rock School.......................... 2
Fort Defiance School.......................... 4
Tuba City High School.......................... 7
Tuba City Junior High School.......................... 4
Monument Valley High School.......................... 6
Kayenta School.......................... 6
Many Farms School.......................... 3

Total 69
Similar statistics could undoubtedly be produced in regard to faculty and other professional staff. In general, the turnover rate of all reservation school personnel is double that of the nearest off-reservation schools. This situation has been, and continues to be, brought on by a combination of factors.

One such factor is low pay. In 1974-75, the starting salary for beginning teachers in the Window Rock, Ganado, and Chinle School Districts was $7,400 compared to a state average of $8,100 (Navajo Division of Education 1975, p. 23). This, of course, was during the funding crisis of the early seventies. While reservation salaries came more in line with the state average by the early eighties, other factors still made it impossible for reservation schools to compete with off-reservation schools for the best personnel. Inferior facilities, inadequate supplies and materials, substandard housing, isolation, the financial instability of most reservation schools, and the fact that non-Navajos could not own property on the reservation, discouraged most educators from considering a career in Navajo education. Most of the teachers and administrators who did accept positions on the reservation, did so planning on only staying a year or two, then moving on to a more favorable educational environment. Thus, most reservation educators tended to be young and inexperienced, and the public schools on the reservation were in reality, little more than training
grounds and "stepping stones" for people who then took their talents to other schools throughout the state.

With perhaps 50 percent of the profession staff leaving at the end of each school year, public schools on the Navajo Reservation found themselves in a position of constant structural chaos. The absence of continuity made progress impossible, and consequently, the quality of education in Navajo schools was far inferior to that offered off the reservation.

The fact that most public school teachers and administrators were white and possessed no Navajo cultural background or experience, did not enhance the prospects of educational success. The shortage of Navajo teachers continued as a major issue throughout the seventies. In 1974-75, less than 12 percent of the certified teachers employed by public schools on the reservation were Navajo. The problem was particularly acute at the high school level where Navajos made up only 6.5 percent (Roessel 1979, p. 174) of the certified teaching staff. Navajo administrators were virtually nonexistent.

Public schools did little to address this problem. Some schools adopted Navajo preference hiring policies, but received few qualified applicants. Nor did public schools make any noticeable effort to encourage or offer support to teacher aides in seeking degrees. The Navajo Division of Education, and a number of educational institutions, most
notably Northern Arizona University, the University of Arizona, and the University of New Mexico, did initiate special Navajo teacher training programs. These programs, however, realized very little success.

**Curriculum and Control**

A major accomplishment of Navajo public school education in the seventies, was the assumption of control by Navajo people. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, public school boards on the reservation were dominated by traders and other whites. By 1978, however, 21 of the 25 board positions of schools located completely within the reservation in Arizona, were held by Navajos. Only the Kayenta School District continued under non-Navajo control (Roessel 1979, p. 177).

A major factor leading to this change was the issue of curriculum. With whites dominating school boards, the administration and faculty of Navajo Reservation public schools, the curriculum offered tended to possess a definite assimilationist bias. When in 1971, Window Rock parents and students protested against racist teachers and textbooks, one board member responded by saying that she would "rather have racism than communism" (Iverson 1981, p. 148). The following year, the Window Rock student body protested the suspension of a football player from the team for wearing long hair, by staging a "walkout". Such action succeeded in
drawing attention to the cultural insensitivity of the white-dominated school board. Within three months of the student walkout, an election was held and the old board replaced with five new members, all of them Navajo. The code was changed, a Navajo studies program instituted, and the new board made an effort to recruit Navajo and Indian personnel (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1975, pp. 87-88). This new board eventually appointed Dr. Kenneth Ross, a Sioux married to a Navajo, to the position of Superintendent. Ross, who would hold this position for seven years, the longest tenure of any Navajo reservation superintendent, was highly sympathetic to a bilingual and bicultural approach to education and encouraged greater parental involvement (Iverson 1981, pp. 148-149).

A similar movement occurred in the Chinle School District where the registration of new voters helped recall several non-Navajo school board members and eventually force the departure of superintendent Jody Matthews and other racist administrators. Three superintendents later, Robert A. Roessel was appointed to head the Chinle district (Iverson 1981, pp. 148-149). While Roessel’s tenure was brief and controversial due to the financial crisis, it also represented that district’s highest commitment to a culturally sensitive curriculum.
CHAPTER 5

NAVAJO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Origins

In the years following World War II, increasing numbers of Navajos left the Reservation to seek higher education, but few received their degrees. Strong family ties and a longing for their home-land, limited financial resources, inadequate academic preparation, and an alien, often seemingly hostile, off-reservation environment combined to destroy the dreams of most young Navajo who sought a college education. In examining this problem, a number of far-sighted tribal leaders began to believe that instead of sending their youth off the reservation to college and failure, the solution might be to bring a college to the student, on the reservation.

One of these leaders was Raymond Nakai who as early as 1952 advocated for the establishment of a Navajo college or academy. In 1959, Navajo Education Committee Chairman Dillon Platero added his support for the idea and suggested that a feasibility study be done (Iverson 1981, pp. 120-121).

The idea for a Navajo-controlled college, however, did not get off the ground until OEO became interested in
the project and provided the necessary funding. In 1965, OEO began a Community Action Project, under the leadership of Dr. Richard Boone, that led to a joint research effort by the Navajo Tribe and Arizona State University. Thereafter, the combined work of a number of dedicated individuals and organization made the proposed school a reality: The Tribal Education Committee headed by Allen D. Yazzie; Raymond Nakai, now tribal chairman; Graham Holmes, Navajo Area Director; Dr. Sanford Kravitz of the OEO; Congressman Wayne Aspinall, Chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and Robert and Ruth Roessel (Szasz 1977, pp. 176-177). It was no accident that most of these people were also responsible for the creation of Rough Rock Demonstration School.

Neither was the timing of Navajo Community College's birth an accident. As Roessel recalled, the "climate was ripe" for the establishment of an Indian college. "the Bureau," he added, has finally learned to listen to Indians" (Szasz 1977, pp. 176-177). Rough Rock Demonstration School had paved the way in proving that the Navajo people could establish and operate their own school, thereby determining their own educational destiny. As one writer states: "NCC was riding the crest of the wave of Indian self-determination and that the timing of its entrance into the education world was well gauged" (Szasz 1977, p. 177).
This did not mean, however, that Navajo Community College would ease into the academic world. Few new institutes of higher education faced a greater initial challenge:

As it opened its doors, Navajo Community College faced the responsibility of serving over one hundred and forty thousand Navajos spread over a land area of twenty-five thousand square miles. More than 70 percent of the adult population had no facility with the English language. The population was young, with more than 50 percent under the age of eighteen. Family income averaged under $800 annually. Reservation unemployment was over 60 percent. Ninety percent of the teachers of Navajo students were non-Navajos. There was no precedent for this new challenge. The Navajo Tribe was more than ten times larger than the next largest tribe in the United States. Forty-two percent of the total population 25 years and over had no school years completed (Navajo Community College 1976, p. 3).

NCC's Mission

Navajo Community College is a two-year liberal arts and vocational institution that awards Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Sciences degrees, and Certificates of Proficiency in various vocational studies. Throughout its history, eighty percent of the student body have been Navajo, ten percent other Indians, and ten percent non-Indians. This first Indian-controlled and Indian-directed college in the country was founded on July 1, 1968, and held its first classes on January 20, 1969. Initially lacking a physical plant, the school was forced to share facilities with the BIA boarding school at Many Farms, a location less than 20 miles for Rough Rock. In 1973, the college moved from these temporary facilities to a new permanent campus at
Tsaile, east of Canyon de Chelly and approximately 25 miles from Chinle. The Navajo Tribe donated the 2000 acre tract of land, as well as 500 additional acres at Many Farms for an agricultural program. Established to enable Navajos to understand their heritage, language, history and culture, and to transmit these values for the survival of Navajos as individuals and as a nation, the following philosophy was adopted by the all-Navajo Board of Regents during its first year of operation in 1968:

1. For any community or society to grown and prosper, it must have its own means for educating its citizens. It is essential that these educational systems be directed and controlled by the society they are intended to serve.

2. If a community or society is to continue to grow and prosper, each member of that society must be provided with an opportunity to acquire a positive self-image and a clear sense of identity. This can be achieved only when each individual's capacities are developed and used to the fullest extent possible. It is absolutely necessary for every individual to respect and understand his culture and his heritage, and he must have faith in the future of his society.

3. Members of different cultures must develop their abilities to operate effectively, not only in their own
immediate societies, but also in the complex of various cultures that make up the larger society of man.

4. In light of the difficulties experienced by traditional educational systems in meeting the needs of individuals and societies, it is important that Navajo Community College make every possible effort to search out and test new approaches to dealing with old problems.

5. To assure maximum development and success of individual students, the College accepts the responsibility to provide individualized programs and to assist students with their academic and social adjustment.

To carry out this philosophy, the Board of Regents went on to define its objectives:

1. To provide academic foundations for students who plan to transfer to a senior college or university.

2. To provide vocational-technical training programs for students.

3. To provide adult education courses for individuals who desire to further their education.

4. To provide a program of community service and community development.

5. To provide assistance and consultation, upon request, to public, church, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and other organizations and institutions in the area which Navajo Community College serves.
6. To foster in its Indian students the development and preservation of a healthy pride in their heritage.

7. To serve as a center for development of Indian cultures, with special emphasis on the Navajos (Navajo Community College 1977-78, pp. 11-12).

The creation of Navajo Community College was another major step in what was becoming a "Navajo National approach to education" (Iverson 1981, pp. 151-154). Rough Rock School and Navajo Community College were established educational institutions of, by, and for the people of the Navajo Nation. As the nation's most influential Indian tribe, the Navajos assumed the vanguard position in the larger movement for Indian self-determination. As other Indian contract schools across the country came into being by following the Rough Rock example, other Indian-controlled colleges emerged after NCC.

The Leadership Question

As pioneer institutions in Indian and Navajo education, Rough Rock and NCC have historically shared many of the same problems. In one area, however, NCC has far exceeded Rough Rock in regard to the degree of turmoil, this being leadership.

At the top of the hierarchy, and perhaps at the heart of most of NCC's problems, is the Board of Regents. This board is comprised of ten Navajos: one from each of
the five administrative areas of the reservation; two members at-large appointed by the tribal chairman; the chairman of the Navajo Education Committee; and the president of the college student body.

Originally, the five area representatives were to be elected, this however has not been done (Roessel 1979, p. 73). Instead, these members, like the two at large members, have been appointed by the tribal chairman. Thus, the chairman has assumed a great deal of control over the Board of Regents, and consequently, over the college. This proved to be a controversial issue during the McDonald years.

McDonald, as might be expected, was accused by his critics of making appointments based on political motives. Since a major responsibility of the Board of Regents is the selection of the college's administration, one is tempted to speculate as to the nature of the relationship between the tribal government in Window Rock, especially the Chairman, and the college.

The Board of Regents selected Robert Roessel as NCC's first president. Roessel's appointment was natural since no one had worked harder to make the college a reality. His role as head administrator at NCC proved much like it had at Rough Rock. Basically, he guided the school through its first year before stepping down from the presidency in the summer of 1969 to become chancellor of the college. The board, upon Roessel's recommendation, selected
Ned Hatathli as its second president. Hatathli, as executive vice-president under Roessel, was the logical choice for the position and provided strong leadership until his death in 1972. Perhaps in reaction to those who might question his close relationship to his predecessor, Hatathli in 1970 stated: "This is an Indian owned and an Indian operated institution, and we certainly don't want any people other than Indian dictate to us what is good for us" (Szasz 1977, pp. 177-178).

During the presidency of the popular Hatathli, Navajo Community College showed promise of becoming a quality institution. It had, as Robert Roessel concluded, "gone further and faster than anyone had a right to expect" (Szasz 1977, p. 179). Unfortunately, this progress was short-lived. In 1972, Ned Hatathli died in a tragic shooting accident. The Board of Regents appointed Thomas Atcitty, the college's (Navajo Community College 1972, p. 1) vice-president to succeed Hatathli. Atcitty had no experience in the field of education prior to his arrival at NCC, and the fact that he was Peter McDonald's cousin, certainly didn't weigh in his favor (Roessel 1979, p. 73).

By 1975 NCC had plunged into a period of turmoil from which it has never fully recovered.

Atcitty's problems began soon after he assumed office. Early in 1973, articles appeared in the Los Angeles Times severely criticizing almost every aspect of Navajo
Community College. The author of these articles, William Trombley, claimed that NCC lacked sufficient course offerings, facilities, discipline, and standards. He also questioned the quality of the students who attended the college and indicated that serious racial problems existed between Navajo and non-Na

The following month, the Gallup Independent published an article in which the Navajo Community College administration denied most of Trombley's accusations. "The writer of this article," Roessel claimed, "is either a liar or a damn fool" (Gallup Independent 1973).

NCC, however, would continue to receive bad press. The newspapers had much to write about in 1975 when Atcitty came under personal attack by both the faculty and the student body. In October, eleven Navajo students sent a letter to the Navajo Times charging that he should be replaced by someone who knew college problems and had the interest of the Navajo people at heart. Others argued that Atcitty and his vice-presidents, John Tippeconnic, a Comanche, and John Martin, a Navajo, knew nothing of Navajo culture and did not value it. The administration also received criticism for
moving their offices into the new Ned Hatathli Culture Center. Many felt this to be an inappropriate use of the center which was designed to serve as the spiritual and cultural heart of the institution and of the Navajo people (Iverson 1981, p. 201).

The situation became a crisis in January 1977 when the administration decided to eliminate Native Studies as an official department within the college. Many people saw this as a retreat from the very principles upon which the college was founded. As Navajo language instructor, Teddy Draper stated: "the heart and core of the college is dead . . . our college will be just another whiteman's junior college, not a Navajo college". When the Board of Regents dismissed popular Lawrence Issac, vice president for academic and student affairs, several days later, an estimated 80 to 90 percent of the faculty, staff and students of the college organized and called for Atcitty's resignation (Roessel 1979, p. 79).

On February 16, 1977, Thomas E. Atcitty resigned as president of Navajo Community College. He had weathered the storm as long as possible, but eventually had lost even Peter McDonald's support. His replacement, Donald A. McCabe, a Navajo who had completed all but his dissertation for a doctorate in education from Stanford University, and who had wide experience in Indian education, was an outsider who had not been tainted by past controversy. McCabe,
initially an interim president, was inaugurated officially as president in July 1977.

One year later, in July 1978, McCabe resigned. His departure he contended, was brought about by the Board of Regents continued interference with his administration (Iverson 1981, p. 201). In addition, McCabe had continued the unpopular policy of fragmenting the Navajo and Indian Studies program (Roessel 1979, p. 80). In December 1977, McCabe also announced his intent to pursue a policy of restricting the college's enrollment to the most promising students (Roessel 1979, p. 81). Thus, to many, it must have appeared that little difference existed between McCabe and his predecessor, and consequently, the new president soon lost much of his early support. Following his resignation, McCabe's vice president, assumed the duty of interim president until the appointment of Dean Jackson as the new president in 1979 (Iverson 1981, p. 201).

Navajo-Based Curriculum

Navajo Community College was established to serve primarily as a vocational-technical institution to train the vast human resource pool of Navajo people so that they could provide the skilled manpower needed for the growth and development of the Navajo Reservation. Consequently, the college in its early years devoted three-fourths of its curriculum to vocational-technical courses such as nursing,
auto mechanics, welding, commercial art, drafting, design, and secretarial studies. Due to the low educational level of the Navajo population, and the nature and goals of the curriculum, NCC adopted a no-tuition, open-door admission policy for Navajo students. In addition, the college also utilizes a non-graded evaluative approach in which no student can receive a failing grade (Fuchs 1972, pp. 58-62).

It soon became apparent that the academic transfer program, not the terminal vocational program, attracted the majority of the full-time NCC students. A major trend of the college as it progressed through the 1970s has been its increased emphasis on providing introductory training in education, social work, medicine and other professions.

But the heart of the college curriculum remains the Navajo and Indian studies program. The aim of this program is to foster a sense of self-pride in the students' native culture and heritage so that they might not suffer an identity crisis when confronting the outside world. For this reason, it was felt that those students who would transfer from NCC to four-year institutions off the reservation, were particularly in need of such a confidence-building program. Ruth Roessel, the architect of the Navajo and Indian Studies program, and its director until 1978, provided the following rationale:

If the Navajo loses or ignores his own culture he stands weaker and more vulnerable. If he understands and respects his culture he stands
strong and tall. Perhaps our Navajo Studies Program can help some Navajos to stand taller and help them to realize the dignity and value of Navajo culture - so that, together, as Americans, we can walk forward with confidence, ready to help each other and to respect each other (Roessel, Ruth 1973, p. 5).

The program itself consists of courses in Navajo and Indian history and culture, language, literature, arts and crafts, law, education, philosophy and a wide variety of other native studies offerings. Despite the turmoil during the Atcitty and McCabe administrations over the program's departmental status, Navajo and Indian Studies has retained its importance at NCC. In 1981-82, all degree students still were required to take nine units from the program, the same requirement as ten years earlier. Students can also still fulfill their six unit Communication and English requirement for an Associate degree at NCC, through a Navajo Language Option. The catalog, however, warns transfer students that this option will not satisfy the English language requirements at any four-year institution.

Another important aspect of the Navajo Community College's emphasis on Navajo studies has been the Navajo Community College Press. Established in 1969 with Broderick H. Johnson as its director, the press has since that time pioneered in producing Navajo-based and originated materials to compliment the Navajo Studies Program. Ruth Roessel stated that:

The primary purpose of the Press is to publish books dealing essentially with the Navajos and which have
been written by the Navajos. It is meaningless to discuss a strong and viable Navajo Studies Program unless there are adequate curriculum materials available for use by the students. Any program gains in significance and usefulness when there is available adequate curriculum materials such as books photographs and so forth (Roessel, Ruth 1973, p. 18).

Roessel herself has published a number of books which are representative of the type of material produced by the Navajo Community College Press. Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period (1973), and Navajo Livestock Reduction: A National Disgrace (1974), both edited by Mrs. Roessel, are collections of narratives which provide Navajo accounts of the two most traumatic events in that tribes history. Throughout the 1970s, the Navajo Community College Press, with grant money provided largely by different foundations, continued to publish important material in the field of Navajo Studies.

In 1978, Ruth Roessel, disillusioned over what she perceived to be a retreat on the part of the College in regard to Navajo Studies emphasis, left Navajo Community College to accept a position at Rough Rock Demonstration School.

The very physical layout of the 17 million dollar Tsaile campus reflects the native-emphasis of Navajo Community College. Medicinemen worked cooperatively with professional architects to design a campus in harmony with traditional Navajo philosophy:
Because important Navajo activities are conducted within a circle, the central campus entrance is marked by the imposing Ned A. Hatathli Culture Center with faces the rising sun in the east, and as does the hogan, to greet the new day. Learning activities take place along the sought side of the hogan, so the general and specialized classrooms are on the southern section of the campus. Dormitories are located on the west side of the campus, corresponding to the sleeping in the hogan. The kitchen and dining facilities are located at the center of the campus, as they are in traditional hogans, where the fireplace is located and cooking is done. Games and recreation take place in the northern portion of the hogan; therefore, the Gymnasium and Student Union Building are on the north side of the campus circle. The library is located where the medicine bundle would rest in the hogan during a ceremony (Navajo Community College 1982-83, p. 8).

The focal point of the entire campus is the Ned A. Hatathli Culture Center, a six story octogonal reflective glass building patterned after the Navajo hogan. Two floors of the four million dollar center serve as Navajo and all-Indian Museums, while other space is devoted to offices, classrooms and a depository for cultural materials. In regard to this last function, one of the most important missions of Navajo Community College is to preserve elements of tribal culture. One cultural project has been the taping and transcribing of Navajo legends and history passed down orally through generations, recorded by NCC through tribal elders and religious leaders.

Navajo Community College has also established one of the finest Indian Studies libraries in the country. This
facility, constructed at the cost of $835,000 is also the only major library on the Navajo Reservation.

Funding and Enrollment

Funding has always been a problem for Navajo Community College. In its first year of operation, 1968-69, the college received $450,000 (to be given annually for three years) from OEO; $250,000 from the Navajo Tribe; and $60,000 from the Donner Foundation, with the promise of $100,000 for the following year (Szasz 1977, p. 177). In its second year, NCC received more than $1 million dollars from three private foundations (Szasz 1977, p. 167). Thus, OEO and foundation funding made it possible for the college to begin operation. This early funding, however, was not adequate to permit expansion. The solution to this problem seemed to materialize in December 1971 with the passage of Public Law 92-189, the Navajo Community College Act.

This bill guaranteed the largest single addition to the school's financial sources. It provided that the Indian Bureau would allocate funds to NCC equivalent to Bureau funding for Indian students in Bureau post-high school programs such as Haskell Indian Junior College. Since this amount alone would provide 65 percent of the total budget for NCC, it was essential to assured growth. With the passage of this legislation, NCC was able to begin the first phase of construction, a $5.3 million project that would provide facilities for the initial stage of 500 students (Szasz 1977, p. 179).

Still, money from the Navajo Community College Act proved to be inadequate for the type of expansion planned for the college. Construction costs from 1969 to 1976
totalled approximately $14.6 million, of which $6.5 was federal government grant money, the balance being generated through various loans and gifts (Navajo Community College 1976, p. 10). In 1976, tribal and college officials requested that Congress pass a "Navajo Community College Assistance Act" to provide the money needed for expansion.

To provide a means of determining the annual appropriation of funds to NCC and other tribally controlled community colleges, Congress passed Public Law 95-471, The Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (TCCCAA). Title II of this Act reconstituted the earlier Navajo Community College Act of 1971 into new legislation entitled the Navajo Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (Olivas 1978, p. 238). This Act provided for an amount equal to $4000 per full time equivalent student be awarded annually for operation and maintenance of the college (Szasz 1977, p. 179). Such a funding level is inadequate, if, as one source reports, the per pupil cost at Navajo Community College is approximately $10,000 (Roessel 1979, p. 70).

It is also interesting to note NCC's increasing dependence on federal funding. In the first three years of the college's existence, federal support amounted to approximately 60 percent of the total income. By 1978, about 95 percent of the total income of NCC came from federal sources (Roessel 1979, p. 71).
A major issue at Navajo Community College throughout the 1970s, and one which is intricately tied to the school's funding situation, is the matter of enrollment. The 1978-79 Report of the President issued the following statistics on the college's enrollment since first opening:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SPRING</th>
<th>SUMMER</th>
<th>FALL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>1,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>1,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>1,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>2,419</td>
<td>1,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>2,211</td>
<td>1,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>2,662</td>
<td>1,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>2,744</td>
<td>1,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,972</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>(Hanley 1979, p. 11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these figures reflect an impressive increase in enrollment at Navajo Community College, they are probably not accurate. In examining enrollment statistics released by the college, one finds a number of alarming discrepancies. For example, the college has given at least three different figures for the 1976-77 school year FTE. Roessel notes that the tendency has been "to publish enrollment figures that look extremely favorable in terms of present compared with past enrollments" (Roessel 1979, p. 70).
Such varying figures may be accounted for by using different formulas. This, however, does not always seem to be the case. Whatever the reasons, such confusing and misleading enrollment figures do little to give the college credibility, and may, as Roessel also suggests, have a negative impact on Congress in regard to future funding (Roessel 1979, p. 71).

In reality, Navajo Community College seems to have shown little substantial increase in enrollment. A number of factors have contributed to this problem, one being NCC's failure to establish a "real college" image. Because Navajo Community College held its early classes on a high school campus, offered a curriculum unlike any other school in the country, required no entrance credentials or tuition, did not achieve accreditation until 1976, and experienced more than its share of student and faculty unrest, as well as almost constant administrative and financial turmoil, many have found it difficult to regard the school seriously. Consequently, most Navajo high school graduates, particularly the more gifted ones, have avoided NCC. In a 1978 survey of 1,119 Navajo high school students who hoped to attend a vocational-technical school or junior college, only 145 indicated a preference for NCC. The College of Ganado, a private Presbyterian church-related community college on the reservation, and Northland Pioneer College, a two-year
institution in Holbrook, were more popular choices (Navajo Higher Education Department 1978).

The Future of NCC

Navajo Community College has reached a point in its history where simply continuing is not enough. Although having acquired what should be permanent accreditation, and a degree of administrative stability, NCC still faces an uncertain future in its quest to become a quality institution of higher learning.

While inadequate funding remains, and will remain, a critical issue, the most pressing problem faced by Navajo Community College is the school's image and consequent low enrollment. NCC cannot continue to be rejected by the very people it was created to serve.

Until the creation of NCC, the Navajo Reservation had been the largest contiguous area in the continental United States without an institute of higher learning. This is no longer true. In addition to NCC, the reservation now has the College of Ganado, a two-year private Presbyterian church-related community college established in 1970. Chartered by both the Navajo and Hopi tribes, the College of Ganado made an impressive showing in its first decade of existence. With a per-pupil cost approximately one-fourth that of Navajo Community College, the College of Ganado's enrollment increased from 58 in 1975, to 538 in 1978. The
success realized by the COG, in contrast to the problems faced by NCC, can be attributed largely to the outstanding leadership provided by president Dr. Thomas Jackson.

The competition provided by the COG need not have an adverse effect on NCC. Navajo Community College possesses a special attraction to three types of students: those whose desire both a higher education and the opportunity to be close to their homes and people; those who desire a higher education but cannot attend college due to financial or academic limitations; and those who desire a higher education and at the same time want to learn Navajo and Indian culture. The key to maintaining a stable enrollment at NCC is to design a quality program of substance for these types of students.

Navajo Community College cannot be all things to all people, including all Navajo people. Peter McDonald once stated an intention to make NCC the "Harvard of the West". Others have suggested that the college move toward becoming a four-year institution granting bachelor degrees. Considering that financial resources will always be limited, and that if NCC loses sight of its original mission, it would also lose its uniqueness and special appeal to the Navajo people, such propositions are not realistic. Certainly at this time, Navajo Community College would be
better advised to limit its goals, work toward improving its academic standards, and attempt to establish itself as a credible two-year institution.
CHAPTER 6

THE TRIBAL ROLE

Peter McDonald and Navajo Education

In 1970, the Navajo electorate chose Peter McDonald as tribal chairman over two-time incumbent Raymond Nakai. McDonald won largely due to his emphasis on tribal self-determination, a major element of which was education. Ironically, however, the issue of education itself was seldom raised during the campaign. Nakai claimed credit for the establishment of Navajo controlled schools like Rough Rock and NCC, while McDonald only made vague references to education when discussing the need to train Navajos to assume positions held by whites. To Navajo voters, however, McDonald, not Nakai represented the value of education. A college graduate with a B.S. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Oklahoma, McDonald combined a traditional upbringing with a formal education from the white establishment. Consequently, he seemed best qualified to bridge the cultural gap and provide the leadership so desperately needed by the Navajo tribe.

During McDonald's three terms, Navajo education made its greatest strides, experiencing a transformation from BIA
dominance to Navajo control. This latter stage of development has been labeled by historian Peter Iverson as being a "Navajo National approach to education" (Iverson 1981, p. 151). While McDonald presided over, and is generally credited with this transformation, evidence indicates that he actually had little to do with initiating it, nor did he have much direct effect on it. In the view of many, McDonald directed his energy into economic development and the strengthening of tribal government at the expense of education. One critic, Robert Roessel, while acknowledging that he was "a great tribal chairman, who brought the Navajo into the Twentieth century," charges that "education was not a major concern of Peter McDonald" (Roessel 1984). Others, such as Dillon Platero, agree with this assessment (Platero 1984).

Whatever the extent of his personal involvement, the Navajo tribal government under Peter McDonald played a greater role in Navajo education than under any previous chairman. On June 17, 1971, the Tribal Council paved the way for this increased participation when it created the Navajo Division of Education (NDOE).

The Navajo Division of Education

In the words of Peter McDonald:

The Division was established to support and execute the Navajo Tribe's educational philosophies, policies, and objectives affecting Navajo school
children, youth and adults in all areas and activities on and near the Navajo Reservation. This is consistent with the policies of the Navajo Tribe and the speech made by the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, on July 8, 1970, which outlined and proposed a new federal Indian policy which would assist the first American in his search for self-determination and preservation of culture and identity by allowing him to voice his opinions, approvals and recommendations which would best shape his own destiny (Navajo Division of Education Jun 1973, p. 3).

In the publication, Strengthening Navajo Education, the NDOE elaborated on its mission stating that its creation signified more than a change in political climate: It implied a basic decision that the survival of a great nation and a great culture hinges upon the Navajo Tribe's ability to develop a full and rich life for all Navajos on the Reservation. Thus, the Navajo Nation had made a decision for culture as well as for individual survival. Currently, the Navajo Division of Education is the primary vehicle for assuring the preservation of the Navajo cultural heritage (Navajo Division of Education Jun 1973, p. 6).

If the NDOE hoped to achieve any success, it was vital that the new agency possessed capable leadership. In March 1973, McDonald appointed Dillon Platero to the directorship. Platero, then Director of Rough Rock Demonstration School and President of the National Indian Education Association, clearly brought the necessary experience, capability and dedication to his new position. Under Platero's
leadership, the NDOE first undertook a thorough and comprehensive review of the state of Navajo education. Their findings and recommendations were released in a series of publications which provided the most detailed analysis of Navajo education to date. In one of these publications, "Programs for Strengthening Navajo Education", the NDOE described its comprehensive educational plan which it hoped would be "the solution for eradication, or at least substantial reduction of many of the unfavorable educational conditions which have long plagued the Reservation (Navajo Division of Education Dec 1975, p. 4). This outline for educational reform centered the planned establishment of the following programs:

1. Establishing and operating the "Navajo Tribal Education Agency".
2. Assessing the Educational needs of the Navajos.
3. Providing technical assistance to schools, colleges, and communities.
4. Improving the sponsorship and coordination of federally funded programs.
5. Developing Navajo educational policies and school board guidelines.
6. Providing training for Navajo school boards.
7. Guiding the development of Navajo educational programs.

8. Developing a school and community television system for the Navajo nation.

9. Implementing educational programs for teachers and administrators.

10. Developing administrative support services.

11. Creating a Navajo nation youth development and employment program (Navajo Division of Education Dec 1973, pp. 4-7).

Unfortunately, most of these programs never materialized and those that did met with very limited success. The main reason for this failure reems to be the absence of communication and the differing educational philosophies between Peter McDonald and Dillon Platero. Roessel in his book Navajo Education, 1948-1978: Its Progress and Its Problems, noted that the relationship between the two men was "at best uneven and at worst... characterized by jealously and vested interests" (Roessel 1979, p. 291). Roessel went on to add that when the NDOE attempted to proceed with its programs, it did so "without the support from the chairman's office, and even more tragically, with the active opposition of the administration" (Roessel 1979, p.291). Platero states that education was a "low priority" with McDonald and also that he and the chairman were "very far apart in philosophy" (Platero 1984).
In late 1977 Dillon Platero left the NDOE to work on his doctorate at the University of New Mexico. McDonald elected not to fill the vacant position of director, but rather, entered into an agreement with the BIA to have the Bureau's Assistant Area Director for Education, Rebecca Martgan, also assume the directorship of the NDOE. Several months after this was done, however, the Washington office of the BIA ruled that such action was illegal and rescinded the appointment (Roessel 1979, pp. 315-316). Subsequent directors appointed by McDonald lacked Platero's vision and imagination, and consequently, the NDOE never became a major force in Navajo education.

The Navajo Teacher Education Development Program

The most notable project launched by the Navajo Division of Education under Dillon Platero was the Navajo Teacher Education Development Program (NTEDP). According to the programs Director and Coordinator, Dr. Gerald M. Knowles:

the primary principle underlying the Navajo Teacher Education Program was that there was an extensive cadre of community people (teacher aides) who were familiar with Western Pedagogy through prolonged exposure, who were steeped in their own language and culture, who were knowledgeable about how to make appropriate syntheses of the anglo and Navajo worlds and who desired to enter the schools as professionals if the appropriate conditions could be set up. Most of these individuals, because of family responsibilities and lack of financial support, could not pursue the usual on-campus degree programs. Those few who did, stayed off the reservation. Thus, the proposed teacher education
program could bring about sudden educational changes and might provide the only true base for educational metamorphosis of the Navajo (Knowles 1981, pp. 10-11).

The NTEDP, funded with money from Title IV of the Indian Education Act, and operated in conjunction with the University of Arizona and the University of New Mexico, began its work in September 1973 with an enrollment of 100 students. These individuals, teacher aides who already possessed at least 60 college credits, were expected to complete their degree requirements by attending one day of formal instruction per week offered at five centers located on the reservation, and four days of monitored and supervised "practical application" at their respective schools (Knowles 1981, p. 11).

Those responsible for the creation of the NTEDP, primarily Platero and Knowles, announced that the ultimate goal of the program was to produce "1000 teachers in five years" (Knowles 1981, p. 24). While such a goal might be laudable, it also reflected the basic weakness of the program, that being the emphasis on quantity rather than quality. While many of the participants recruited for the program were top prospects who would later distinguish themselves as outstanding educators, others, as Knowles admitted, "were not well-prepared to cope with the demands of college work" (Knowles 1981, pp. 25-26). Since it is doubtful that such candidates could ever become successful teachers, the program should have set lower numerical goals
with more selectivity. It seems however that the NTEDP was more of a social and political experiment to achieve Navajo control and self-determination, than a serious attempt to improve the quality of Navajo education. Knowles seemed to indicate this when he wrote:

The emphasis was primarily focused on the quantity of Navajo professionals to be generated... Hence, the potentials for qualitative teacher training, curriculum development and the formulation of special bilingual techniques were, in essence, subordinated to the quantitative variables, which were social, political, and economic in nature (Knowles 1981, p. 13).

Another weakness of the NTEDP was that most of its participants were BIA teacher aides, and upon completing the program, went on to become elementary teachers in the Bureau. Thus, the area which had the most severe shortage of Navajo teachers, the public high schools, experienced no benefit from the program.

In the autumn of 1974, the NDOE initiated a companion program to the NTEDP to train Navajos already holding bachelors' degrees as school administrators. Graduates of this program, which was funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, would receive a master's degree in educational administration with the University of New Mexico providing the instruction.

Both the NTEDP and the school administration training program realized a degree of success. As of June 1977, 105 Navajos received teaching degrees from the University of Arizona (Iverson 1981, p. 199). In addition, over 60
received Master degrees in educational administration from the University of New Mexico. Both programs, however, were dissolved shortly after Dillon Platero left the NDOE (Platero 1984).

Two other tribally operated programs deserve mention. In 1953, the Navajo Tribal Council passed a resolution establishing a college scholarship fund. Five years later, a Scholarship Trust Fund was created which would provide approximately $200,000 annual interest for use as scholarships. The money for the trust and scholarship program came primarily from revenue which the tribe received from the Four Corners Oil Field. By 1959, the trust fund had been increased to a total of $10,000 assuring some 400,000 in scholarship (Roessel 1979, p. 39).

In the 1970s, BIA money was used to fund undergraduate scholarships, while the Tribal Scholarship Trust Fund was used to assist graduate students. In 1977, 2,197 of 4,579 undergraduate applications were funded, with a total amount of $1,492 available per applicant. The Navajo Department of Higher Education administered the program (Roessel 1979, p. 40).

In 1976 the Navajo Division of Education established the Navajo Academy, a private school largely supported with federal funds. The purpose of this institution was to provide a quality academic education for select Navajo students
who were hopefully to be future tribal leaders (Roessel 1979, p. 312). Again, the moving force behind the establishment and operation of this program was Dillon Platero who would later become Headmaster of the school.

Originally, the Navajo Academy was located on the campus of the College of Ganado. In 1978, the Academy was moved to the Navajo United Methodist Mission School campus in Farmington, New Mexico.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Navajo education during the McDonald era largely followed the national trend in Indian education with the emphasis on self-determination and Navajo control with a bilingual and bicultural approach. As the largest tribe in the United States, the Navajo Nation assumed the leadership role in this movement.

The rise of "demonstration" or contract schools, best typified by Rough Rock, stands as the hallmark of Navajo education in the seventies. As the first of its kind, Rough Rock School paved the way for Indian controlled education, and in doing so, received a large measure of both praise and criticism. While the accomplishments of Rough Rock are many, they have been overshadowed by the low academic performance of its students. This need not be the case.

Another Navajo controlled contract school, Rock Point, has succeeded in emphasizing the cultural component, while at the same time, realizing test scores at or above the state and national averages. While there are innate differences between the two schools, Rock Point has succeeded where Rough Rock has failed, and has proven that Navajo control and emphasis is compatible to high academic performance.
Rough Rock and other contract schools must move in the direction taken by Rock Point if these type of schools hope to survive.

Like Rough Rock, the other great experiment in Navajo controlled education, Navajo Community College, experienced a controversial first decade. NCC was established on a foundation of cultural emphasis, and some have criticized the school for retreating from this position. Others point to the college's low academic standards. It appears that NCC could not, and has not, come to terms with its own mission. The school has suffered from weak leadership and constant turmoil within. Consequently, the college has acquired a poor image and continuously suffers from low enrollment.

Rough Rock and Navajo Community College share many similarities. Both have reached a point in their history where mere survival is not enough. While they have proven the feasibility of Navajo controlled education, they have yet to achieve the formula whereby cultural emphasis is compatible to, and compliments, the academic aspect of education. Thus, both schools continue to lack credibility.

Public Bureau of Indian Affairs schools became more responsive to the needs and desires of the Navajo people during the McDonald years. Again, the major emphasis centered on Navajo control and involvement in the educational process, with the BIA creating parent and community advisory
boards, while increased numbers of tribal members ran for, and assumed, positions on public schools boards.

While these achievements were notable, major problems existed which remained unanswered. BIA schools on the Navajo Reservation experienced dramatic declines in enrollment and a number of schools were closed. Many predicted the end of BIA education. While Bureau schools did fall to a secondary position of importance behind public schools, federal education remained a strong and seemingly permanent part of Navajo education.

While BIA enrollment declined, public school enrollment increased accordingly. The severe financial conditions which plagued most school districts highlighted the Navajo public education scene during the McDonald era. While legislative reform allowed these schools to survive the decade, inadequate funding remained the most critical problem facing public schools into the eighties.

The Navajo tribal government sought to assume a greater role in education during the McDonald administrations. An important step toward this goal was the creation of the Navajo Division of Education under the directorship of Dillon Platero. Although the NDOE did an outstanding job of identifying problems and needs, it did little, if anything, to address these areas. That the NDOE remained relatively ineffectual and never assumed a leadership role
in Navajo education, was largely due to its poor relationship with, and lack of support from, the chairman's office. McDonald himself played only a minor role in education and most observers criticize him for not considering it to be a priority item of his administrations.

Navajo education during the McDonald years did make substantial progress in many critical areas. Unfortunately, most of this progress was of a limited nature. While many important and badly needed programs were initiated, few were carried out to their conclusion or fullest potential. This was a tragedy since availability of federal funding and the passage of key legislation had created a climate ripe for meaningful educational reform. Encouraged by these conditions, the Navajo people themselves became more interested and involved in education than at any previous time in the tribes history. This era, however, was shortlived. By the end of the decade federal money, and subsequently, Navajo interest, had all but disappeared. The story of Navajo education during the McDonald years, then, is not so much that of success, but rather, of lost opportunity.
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