



# El Noticiero

Newsletter of the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education

www.nmabe.net

Vol. 37 No. 2.2

March 2013

## Rio Rancho Public Schools: Reaching Student Excellence Includes High Quality Bilingual Education Programs

*By Victoria Tafoya, Executive Director, Federal Program, Bilingual Education and Native American Programs*

Rio Rancho Public Schools (RRPS) is dedicated to graduating each student with an educational foundation for success as a responsible, ethical contributor to society.

The district is comprised of 19 schools Pre K-12; eight of these offer maintenance and enrichment models of Bilingual Education. This year, Puesta del Sol Elementary School began a Dual Language program in Kindergarten, with plans to expand the program to the next grade level each year. A 50/50 time factor is used for the language delivery model.

Bryan Garcia, Principal at Puesta del Sol completely supports Bilingual Education in his school and is and very excited about the momentum expressed by the community in regards to the Dual Language Program. "In visiting our Kindergarten dual language classroom, I have been so impressed with our students by the way they can speak and listen in both English and Spanish. As I observe them learning to read, I am even more impressed and convinced that this is the approach that best suits their needs and

will make the most positive impact on our students and school!!"

Victoria Tafoya, the District's Executive Director of Federal Programs, Bilingual Education, & Native American Programs believes a Dual Language Program is a first step at demonstrating how learning a second language contributes to the global society. RRPSBoard annually approves the District's Bilingual Education program and the Superintendent, Dr. V. Sue Cleveland provides her support to the Bilingual & ESL program improvement efforts.

Bilingual programs must utilize the Core Standards, set high expectations for all learners, and demonstrate how learning a second language contributes to the global perspective and quality of life. High quality Bilingual Education programs must fulfill not only our country's commitment to educating all students, but withhold the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act by ensuring equitable access to a quality education. Rio Rancho Bilingual Education programs not only include English Language Learners, but all interested students at the participating schools. "The goal I support daily in my position is one I believe educators across our state should focus on as well: Sup- **Continued on Page 2**

## Challenges and Praise Expressed at Recent Diné Language Teachers Association Conference

*By Tina Deschenie, Farmington, NM*

There were some significant ideas that just about every speaker repeated to the Navajo Language teachers at the 2013 Diné Language Teachers Association (DLTA) conference held at San Juan College January 24-26. We thank you and need you to keep doing the work you do. Our youth must continue to learn to speak the Diné language, and there is so much more work to be done. The DLTA membership is made up of current and past teachers and supporters of Diné language learning, and the group offers a forum for the teachers to share and learn from one another.

In his keynote address, Rex Lee Jim, the Navajo Nation vice-president, suggested a number of initiatives to strengthen

and broaden the usage of the Diné language: using more Diné in drama productions, in films, and in songs -- even in rap, as he said he'd witnessed in one school. He challenged the instructors to "be more open-minded" in order to motivate the students to use the language, perhaps to become more in synch with the artistic expressions he endorsed.

When Jim noted there was a need for more publishing of books and materials in Navajo, he wondered aloud about the role of existing local presses. The Navajo vice-president also said that he has heard increasingly creative use of the Dine' language by the Christian community, especially in their songs.

Jim chuckled as he told how he had **Continued on Page 2**

**Continued from Page 1 - RRPS** porting students to become bilingual and biliterate in English and a second language and meeting state academic content standards in all subject areas. It is my hope that all students in the state of New Mexico possess the competence and necessary attitudes to be successful, contributing members of our thriving diverse state”, stated Victoria Tafoya, the District’s Executive Director overseeing Bilingual Programs.

Rio Rancho continues to seek bilingual endorsed teachers to build upon the present framework for instruction. If you are interested in finding out more about Rio Rancho Public Schools or about our diverse programs, call Victoria Tafoya at 896-0667 ext. 127. If you are energized by the idea of participating in an improvement effort of bilingual programs and want to share your expertise with us, please visit [www.rrps.net](http://www.rrps.net), or call Victoria to schedule a school visit.

**Continued from Page 1 - Diné** sometimes texted with his family using abbreviated Navajo words, and without the accent marks, since their cellphones lacked the Navajo keyboard (which he has since downloaded). He recalled how they sometimes had to guess at the words they wrote, and then he suggested that the Navajo orthography perhaps needs a fresh review to determine whether useful changes might be possible, presumably to help with more efficient writing. A Navajo Language commission, he said, could explore this and other issues in order to ensure continuation of the language.

From the Navajo language teachers’ questions and comments throughout the conference, it appeared that many are interested in helping their students to sing, to dance, to do storytelling and even to play traditional games, but the protocols surrounding some of these activities can be strict and affordable opportunities to learn them are rare.

Some teachers said they rely on the Navajo radio stations to inform them when season-specific activities can start or end, but they note that they can still be subject to criticism. One teacher said she had heard an elder on the radio scolding about young people dancing certain dances without proper guidance and that this had caused her to decide against attempting to teach her students to dance traditionally. Obviously, there are many demanding expectations of Navajo language teachers and they clearly need support and input from the communities they serve to do their vital work. The DLTA strives to assist by arranging for a variety of presenters to provide information for the group’s collective success.

At the conference, several area teachers shared their teaching methodologies and displayed examples of their students’ work. Veda Glover from Ruth N. Bond Elementary in Kirtland, NM, shared how to make and use “e-books” written and recorded in the Diné language. Irene Hamilton from Kirtland High School read from Saad, authored by Rex Lee Jim, shared a short film that she had made about her own life story, and then discussed how she integrates storytelling into her Diné language instruction.

To explain *Keshjée’*, or the Shoe Game as it is called in English, Steven Begay of Naschitti, NM, told how the game was first played, according to Navajo oral history, in order to determine Day and Night, and then he described how the game is played today. Begay’s two presentations were popular with the teachers, and they peppered him with many questions. Begay was encouraging to one teacher who had expressed hesitation about using the game with her students due to the protocols involved. He explained that since the game has its origins in a ceremony, it needs to be carried out with care and respect. After his daytime presentations, Begay and his family and friends demonstrated to the teachers and onlookers how the game is played. They later played and sang for nearly four hours well into the night.

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DINE LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS. From l to r: Louise Benally, secretary-treasurer (also the Bilingual and Title III Coordinator for the Gallup McKinley County Schools), Rose Fasthorse Nofchissey, vice-president (also the assistant principal at Tse Bit Ai Middle School in the Central Consolidated School District), and Tina Deschenie, president. Photo by Michael Thompson



# El Noticiero

*El Noticiero* is published monthly by *Language Magazine* and provides information on current affairs concerning the education of language minority persons in New Mexico and the United States.

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## PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

**No. 37:1 Fall 2012: October**  
(Back to School Edition)

**No. 37:2 Winter 2013: January**  
(Board News, Bilingual Education Day, Call to Action)

**No. 37:3 Spring 2013: April**  
(Spring Conference Edition)

**No. 37:4 Summer 2013: July**  
(Summer Activities)

**Continued from Page 3 - Columbus**

Speakers Larry King of Farmington, NM; Larry Emerson of Tsédaak'áán, NM; and Raymond Jim Redhouse of Teec Nos Pos, Az., all spoke about the various dynamics of the Diné language and how it



Irene Hamilton and Veda Glover, Diné Language instructors at the Central Consolidated School District. Kirtland High teacher Hamilton presented on "Using storytelling in the classroom" and Ruth N. Bond elementary teacher Glover presented on "Making E-books in Navajo language." Photo by Tina Deschenie

has changed significantly since the earliest contact with the Spanish and other Europeans. King pointed out that borrowed Spanish words and new vocabulary have developed to accommodate technology

as it continues to impact the Diné people. Emerson commented that the most ancient Diné language is used only in ceremonies now. The audience in Emerson's talk was eager to discuss the issues that affect language teaching and learning in both classrooms and homes. Many agreed that fewer and fewer families use the Diné language. Redhouse mentioned instances where Diné words are misused because their origins are misunderstood and also explained many traditional teachings. Both he and King told humorous stories from their language learning experiences in boarding schools.

Florian Tom Johnson shared how Rough Rock Community School has established an immersion program "to create Navajo speakers – not smarter kids" [referencing the mainstream focus on teaching students to take tests], alongside a regular instructional program that uses English while also helping students to acquire basic Navajo language and cultural fluency. He discussed students "being Navajo by showing strong, positive indigenous identity and by participating in the cultural community." At least one educator in his audience commented that a school like that would be difficult to establish in other places. However, most of the participants

expressed admiration for the curriculum and policy that Johnson presented.

Christina James, the president of the San Juan College Associated Students and Student Government, tearfully praised the Diné language teachers for their valuable work. She explained how she had to work hard to regain her own Diné language skills after being raised in a non-Native household as a child. She said, "If I can do it, so can anyone else." Students from Shiprock High School also conducted a session about how important learning the Diné language was for them. And Raymond Deale from the Shiprock Navajo Nation Peacemaker program discussed how speaking the Diné language can contribute to a Diné person's sense of wellness and wellbeing.

*Tina Deschenie is a freelancer who lives with her husband, Michael Thompson, and her children in Farmington, NM. She is a past editor of Tribal College Journal and has written for The Gallup Independent, New Mexico Magazine, Native Peoples, and Winds of Change. Deschenie has served as president of the Dine Language Teachers Association since September 2012. Deschenie is a past NMABE board member and received the NMABE Native American Award for 2002-2003.*

# ¿Need to pass Prueba??

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offers YOU—**

## PROGRAMA DE INMERSION EN ESPAÑOL

**Preparación para  
-Prueba-  
7 - 14 de junio, 2013**

El programa consiste de clases en :

- Lectura en el Contenido Escolar
- Composición en el Contenido Escolar
- Ortografía y Acentuación
- Composición en el Contexto Escolar

Día y noche, noche y día...hasta las comidas... presentaciones, canciones, videos, chistes, adivinanzas y más...

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Para mayor información comuníquese con la Dra. Loretta Salazar al (505) 454-3535, lsalazar@nmhu.edu o con la Dra. Alice Menzor al (505) 426-2204, menzor\_alice@nmhu.edu



The  
New Mexico Association  
for  
Bilingual Education

# NMABE's 40th Annual State Bilingual Education Conference

Wednesday, April 24, 2013 3:00 P.M. - Saturday, April 27, 2013 3:00 P.M.  
Embassy Suites Hotel, 1000 Woodward Place NE, Albuquerque, NM

## Building On Our Legacy: Shaping the Future *Construyendo nuestro legado: Formando nuestro futuro*

### Keynote Speakers

**Dr. Gene**

**García,** a Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University (ASU), has published extensively in the area of language teaching and bilingual development, authoring or co-authoring over 200 articles and book chapters, along with 14 books and monographs.



**Dr. Kate**

**Kinsella** has devoted her career to English Language Development (ELD) scholarship and classroom practice, particularly at the adolescent level. A teacher-educator and national consultant, she is sought after by school districts on literacy for ELLs. (Sponsored by National Geographic and Quick and Associates)



**Tina  
Deschenie**

is a former NMABE Board member, author and strong advocate for Native American Indigenous Languages. She is the editor of AIHEC, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium magazine and has published articles in the Tribal College Journal.



### Registration

Register ONLINE at [www.regonline.com/nmabeconference](http://www.regonline.com/nmabeconference)

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Early Bird Registration               | \$ 299.00 |
| Presenter Registration                | 185.00    |
| One Day Registration                  | 225.00    |
| Student Registration                  | 65.00     |
| Native Language Festival Registration | 150.00    |
| Vendor Registration                   | 350.00    |
| Turquoise Sponsorship                 | 3,500.00  |
| Coral Sponsorship                     | 1,750.00  |

Complimentary Vendor Registration Form  
(contact Rosie Gonzales-Rogers at [rosie@dlenm.org](mailto:rosie@dlenm.org))

#### Room Reservations

Make your reservations at the Embassy as we will again be competing for rooms with the 2013 Gathering of Nations. When you make your reservations, make sure you let them know that you are reserving rooms for the NMABE State Bilingual Conference. Phone: 505-245-7100

For more information contact David Briseño at [nmabe@suddenlink.net](mailto:nmabe@suddenlink.net).

### Workshop Strands

*Bilingual Education Practices*  
*Dual Language*  
*ESL*  
*Native American Issues*  
*Administration*  
*Spanish Content / Fine Arts*  
*Wellness*  
*American Sign Language*

### Special Events

President's Reception  
Native Language Festival  
Student Entertainment  
Publishers' Exhibits  
Hall of Fame Awards Banquet