

April 11, 2022

Department of Diné Education introduces new Assistant Superintendent

More than two decades of education, school leader experience brought to Department



Newly appointed Assistant Superintendent Dr. Maria Carmen-Moffett speaks during a Week of the Young Child event at the Navajo Nation Museum on April 6.

WINDOW ROCK – The Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education introduced newly appointed Assistant Superintendent Dr. Maria Carmen-Moffett to staff and stakeholders on April 5.

Dr. Moffett is is Nakaai born Tł'izí lání. Her grandparents and material grandparents are Nakaai and Nakaai Diné'é. Her career in public education has spanned 27 years across New Mexico and Arizona, working as a teacher, principal, and director of various state and federal programs. Dr. Moffett's experience in Indian Education programs inspired her interest and research on the academic achievement of Native American students.

Raised in San Diego, California as the daughter of World War II veteran Newton Moffett, originally from Leupp, Arizona, Dr. Moffett attended San Diego State University and earned a BA in Bilingual/Bicultural Education. As a recipient of funding to attend the university from the Navajo Scholarship Office, she decided she wanted to give back to the Navajo Nation.

Her first education job was an elementary school teacher in Tohatchi, New Mexico where she was later promoted to principal. Years of school leadership experience led to a promotion to Director of Federal Programs for Gallup-McKinley County Schools, resulting in more experience in state and federal policies, along with state and tribal agencies.

Dr. Moffett continued her education and earned an MA in Elementary Education and a Master's in Education Leadership before finishing with a doctorate degree from New Mexico State University where she conducted her research in academic achievement of Native American students, school leadership, and Indigenous languages.

She has received numerous accolades on her education career, including Bilingual Administrator of the Year in New Mexico and Educator of the Year by the National Johnson O'Malley Association. Dr. Moffett has received educational endorsements in bilingual education and English as a Second Language in New Mexico and Arizona.

Following her experience with New Mexico schools, Dr. Moffett served as a principal in Kayenta and Sanders before joining DODE. With a vast experience as a school leader in hand, she is now prepared to serve the Navajo Nation at a greater capacity than before.

Department staff were pleased to introduce the Assistant Superintendent during Week of the Young Child at a gathering at the Navajo Nation Museum.

"I have a passion for working with children because I love children. It is my passion in this area of education of working to improve the quality of education for our children," said Dr. Moffett.

With the theme of "Work Together Wednesday" on display, Dr. Moffett spoke to the challenges that Navajo Nation students faced with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, including limited broadband access and the inability to meet with their peers and teachers and the mental and emotional strain that followed.

"With the pandemic still going on, we still continue to face those challenges. However, we as Diné, as a people, we are resilient, and we are strong, and we will overcome this pandemic and we will continue to become strong. I thank everyone for helping [to celebrate] this week because our children are so beautiful. They are our blessing. They are our future. And they will carry on everything that we share with them. It is said we raise our children as a village, a community, and a nation. We raise our children collectively and everyone here takes part in raising our children. All of you here make a difference in the lives of our Diné children," said Dr. Moffett.

The Department of Diné Education is excited and honored to welcome Dr. Moffett. We look to her guidance and leadership to continue our mission to cultivate a quality education for Diné children everywhere.

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