

PRESS RELEASE

HORNE ANNOUNCES MAJOR FEDERAL DROPOUT PREVENTION GRANT AWARD

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PHOENIX (Thursday, April 20, 2006) -- State schools superintendent Tom Horne today announced the U.S. Department of Education has awarded the Arizona Department of Education a \$1.8 million grant for the Arizona Native American Dropout Prevention Initiative. Arizona was one of only four awardees nationwide to receive federal funding for reducing state dropout rates.

"In my 24 years as a member of a school board and now the state schools superintendent, it has been my passion to make sure that all students have every opportunity to soar academically," Horne said. "Those opportunities cease to exist when students choose to drop out of school. I'm very pleased to be able to work in partnership with the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the White Mountain Apache Tribe in recognition of the need to address this serious problem. It's very important that the people of these communities work with their tribal leaders and the local educators to spread the word to all students that they need to be in class in order to obtain the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in life and to help their communities grow stronger."

The Arizona Native American Dropout Initiative is to be a first time model of comprehensive community collaboration in partnership with schools to reduce dropout rates in Native American reservation communities.

Dropout rates have been disproportionately higher in American Indian Communities, in Arizona and on a national level as reported by the NCES (National Center for Education Statistics). The Arizona Native American Dropout Prevention initiative will produce a national model of effective collaboration efforts between public schools, communities, and tribal governments to create an integrated support for students living in tribal communities.