

TITLE: K'e holoogo ahidahwiil'aah : Community-Math-Science Relationships in Navajo Nation Schools
RATING: Good

REVIEW:

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

The proposers make a very convincing case for the need to improve the educational situation for an often overlooked segment of society, namely the over 250,000 Navajos in the New Mexico-Arizona area. The 5 primary investigators are an interesting assortment of educators and administrators. The team seems to be well assembled, and I think they would work very well together to meet the goals of the program, goals that are quite ambitious and carefully detailed. No one on the team has any previous funding of a project such as this, and at times I felt this was a concern. I was frustrated at times by the lack of clarity as to just when the different parties receiving compensation intend to do their work and how much of their time will be devoted to it. For example, on the first year Budget Summary for the PI, there is no indication when during the academic year the over \$200,000 in salary supplements is to be spent. Because of the nature and mission of Dine College it does seem that funding is being requested for work that in many ways ought to be a natural part of what faculty at this institution are there to do, though to what extent is hard to say. However, I really like the focus of this proposal, the partnerships it creates with the community, college and local school system, and I like the way the team is constituted. I believe the lead investigator is a bright, energetic educator with a solid vision for the Navajos and will be very effective in bringing much needed improvements to their children if given the opportunity.

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

There does not seem to be much, if any, opportunity to take the results of a project such as the one proposed here beyond the physical boundaries of the setting described. The work is of such a nature that few outside this area will be interested in the particulars, even if the goals of the project are met and a thorough evaluation of the project demonstrates its effectiveness.

Summary Statement

I think the proposal has sufficient merit. The proposal targets a group of Americans very much in need of help. The investigators seem serious and sincere about educational reforms for the Navajos and are well qualified to do the job. The proposal is unique in many ways, especially in the way it factors the Navajo culture into the various curricular reforms it proposes.