

For Immediate Release  
June 13, 2011

**FORMER CROWNPOINT HIGH SCHOOL CUSTODIAN PLEADS  
GUILTY TO FEDERAL SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENSE**

ALBUQUERQUE – Today in federal court in Albuquerque, **Benjamin Natonabah**, 41, entered a guilty plea to sexually abusing a female who was incapable of understanding the nature of the sexual conduct under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. Under the terms of his plea agreement, Natonabah will be sentenced to a thirty-month term of imprisonment to be followed by at least five years of supervised release. Natonabah also will be required to register as a sex offender after completing his prison sentence. Natonabah, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, was released to a half-way house after his arrest on January 26, 2011. He will remain at the half-way house pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Natonabah was charged with sexually abusing a female student at the Tohatchi High School in Tohatchi, New Mexico, at a time when he was employed as a custodian at the school. According to the indictment, which was filed on January 12, 2011, Natonabah sexually abused the student on or about January 12, 2010. In his plea agreement, Natonabah admitted engaging in sexual intercourse with a high school student despite knowing that the student was incapable of understanding the nature of the conduct.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, Crownpoint Division, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jack E. Burkhead.

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