Why Start a Foundation?

- A 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Foundation can be a great resource for attracting community support, helping the public identify important or cash-starved programs, and creating giving programs that can offer a donor a tax writeoff.

- A Foundation also may serve in other ways, such as a program agent, or a fiscal agent.
Foundation Models

- They come in many shapes and sizes
  - Some are supported entirely by their districts, presumably with direction from the district
  - Some are completely independent, with varying degrees of alignment
  - Some are a hybrid – paid for in part by the district, but with award/giving decisions made by the Foundation Board of Directors. APS Education Foundation falls into this category.
APS Education Foundation

- Founded in 1995 because the Rockefeller Foundation wanted to support professional development in the district and APS needed a 501 (c)(3) to do it.

- Served largely as a fiscal agent until 2009. Took on an increased fundraising role in 2009. An in-classroom granting program has given more than $800,000 in four years, but its overall financial impact in the district is more than $2 million.
- Audited as a component unit
- Executive Director’s salary is paid for in part by the Foundation, which also has other costs that it must handle independent of the district’s budget.
- District employs three-plus employees to work at the Foundation.
- Fundraising targets: Major corporations, vendors, small business, individual contributors.
Board of Directors: Bylaws allow 25 voting members. Currently, we have 23, none employed by APS. Two are students. We have four ex-officio members: Superintendent, president of the Board of Education, Executive Director of APS Communications, head of the teachers’ union.

All funding decisions are made by the Foundation, depending on the level of the spend.
Foundations and Small Cities and Towns

- Foundations exist in Rio Rancho, Las Cruces and Santa Fe. But also in smaller districts, such as Los Alamos.

- Any Foundation’s success is tied to its importance in the eyes of district leadership.
Things to Think About

- Does your district need to create more community support? If so, a Foundation can help.

- Could your district combine with other nearby districts to create a regional foundation?

- Community leaders who believe in public education can help create a momentum.
Pluses

- High visibility for academics and fine arts
- A place to talk about the needs of all
- A way to engage community partners and other influential members of the region.
- A place to celebrate good
Minuses

- Competes with other nonprofits in the area, who generally don’t like the competition

- Can be seen as a competitor with schools’ individual fundraising efforts

- Unless otherwise directed, doesn’t really guide fundraising for schools, departments, etc.
For More Information

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