Welcome Back To School Year 2007-2008
Ms. Daisy Thompson, Director

I would like to personally welcome all students, staff, and parents to another exciting year of educational opportunities that are waiting to be uncovered. Let me take this opportunity to announce that we began the new school year with five annual goals:

- Increase literacy skills of APS Native American students in grades K-12 through the integration of culturally relevant materials and activities.
- Increase communication with parents of Native American students who attend APS.
- Increase school attendance and decrease absenteeism.
- Increase partnerships with neighboring tribes.
- Increase instruction of Native Languages and Culture for Native American students.

Since August, 2007, the Indian Education Department (1) provided Back to School Supplies and took Applications for Navajo Nation Clothing Program for eligible Native American students that attend APS. Many parents and students came to our department to receive these items; and (2) hosted the First Annual Parent Conference on August 31, 2007, that was received well by those parents who attended. Listed below are data comparisons for increase of services between last school year and this school year:

Back to School Supplies
2006-2007: approximately 300
2007-2008: 750+

Navajo Nation Clothing
2006-2007: approximately 185-200
2007-2008: 353

Schools with Resource teachers
2006-2007: 9-10
2007-2008: 17

The Indian Education Department would like to welcome our new staff members:

Mr. James Jones,
Edmund G. Ross E.S.
Mr. Russell Davidson,
Cibola H.S.
Mr. Jay M. Leonard,
IED, Instructional Manager

Special points of interest:
- Hearing testimony
- Parent Conference a success!
- Leadership Council
- Fancy Shawl Dancers

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Indian Education Department Programs:

Wilson’s Reading Intervention Program: a researched based reading program that is effective in improving student skills in reading and writing. It is designed to give explicit, cumulative, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction to students in grades K-12. The program integrates Native American literature to strengthen vocabulary, sight words and comprehension skills.

Native American Studies: a specialty elective course offered in 4 high schools and 2 middle schools.

The course is designed to offer specific Native American perspectives in Literature, Language Arts, History, and Social Studies.

Math and Science Exemplary Program: Provides instruction and activities through the use of an aligned curriculum that is culturally relevant. Students learn mathematical and scientific concepts in a “hands-on” approach which also integrates cultural artifacts, dance, song and stories.
The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee (HELP) held a field hearing on August 10th in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the Santa Fe Indian School. Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) presided over the hearing, which was titled “No Child Left Behind: Improving Education in Indian Country”.

The witnesses who testified at the hearing were Governor James Mountain, Pueblo of San Ildefonso; Dr. Veronica Garcia, Secretary of Education, State of New Mexico; Dr. Verlie Ann Malina Wright, President, NIEA; Maggie Benally, Principal, Tsehootsoi Dine Bi’olta’, Navajo Immersion School, Window Rock Unified School District; Bernice Gutierrez, Resource Teacher, Indian Education Department, Albuquerque Public Schools; and Samantha Pasena, recent graduate of the Santa Fe Indian School.

In his opening statement, Senator Bingaman began by noting that the passage of NCLB in 2002 was an effort to close the achievement gap between children of affluent families and children of poor families and minority children and that NCLB is premised upon the principle that every child can learn. He also stated that NCLB is based upon accountability requirements. He also stated that states and school districts have not received adequate funding to implement NCLB but that funding will improve for FY 2008. He noted that the Congress is providing $1 billion for Title I and $500 million for school improvement for FY 2008. He also conveyed his belief that all states should be allowed to use growth models because one size does not fit all given that the needs and circumstances of schools are different. Further, he stated that NCLB does not accommodate the special needs of students with disabilities. He commented that, in Native communities, Native children are struggling with proficiency in English due to language limitations and poverty. He stated that, before NCLB, there was no data on the performance levels of Native students in comparison to other categories of students but there is now data due to NCLB. The data shows that Native students are lagging behind other students based upon the tests and lagging behind in participation in advanced placement courses. He closed his opening statement by introducing and welcoming the witnesses and by noting that he was looking forward to hearing the testimony.

Ms. Bernice Gutierrez, Resource Teacher, Indian Education Department, Albuquerque Public Schools, testified that the essence of NCLB is excellent because it looks at the children who have been left behind. She stated that she has 3 boys in Albuquerque Public Schools and that it is the largest school district in New Mexico. She stated that one of the good ideas of NCLB is that it holds educators accountable. She commented that Native communities have a chance to help improve the standards in NCLB. She noted that one size does not fit all and that multiple measures should be used to measure success as well as a longer time frame. She also commented that some children need accommodations such as children with special needs. She stated that English language learners receive accommodations so why shouldn’t other students with special needs. She stated that more funding is needed to meet the requirements for highly qualified teachers and to provide training for educators and administrators so that they are aware of cultural needs. She also stated that more funding is needed for facilities because some teachers do not have classrooms. She commented that students and teachers need environments conducive to learning. Some classrooms lack materials or air conditioning. She noted that there is a need for more native teachers and more programs to support teachers. She also mentioned that if a school does not meet AYP then transportation is needed so that students can attend other schools. She stated that the key to academic success is for teachers to be the architects of the curriculum. Ms. Gutierrez also noted the need for more Native American researchers and for more Native American research. She closed by stating that more funding is needed to involve parents in the school system.

NIEA press release August 13, 2007
First Annual Back-to-School Parent Conference

The Indian Education Department held its first parent conference at the end of August that was attended by over one hundred parents, community members and poster exhibitors.

There were several notable guest speakers including the Honorable Verna Teller the Chief Judge of the Isleta Tribal Court. Judge Teller also holds the distinction of being the first and only woman to be elected a Governor of Isleta Pueblo.

Dr. Larry Emerson, a long time educator having worked in various capacities in Indian Education, health and mental health. He is a community activist working in the area of cultural self-determination and cultural restoration for healthy Indian nations.

The conference was the brainchild of Ms. Daisy Thompson, Director of the Indian Education Department. She was instrumental in recruiting speakers and organizations to give parents’ important information in break out and poster sessions that were scheduled.

Feedback received from the participants stated there was a great deal of information gained from the speakers and there was an overwhelming request to repeat this informative conference next year.

Jay M. Leonard, IED

Current Issues in AI/AN Education Research

The NCLB and IDEA: Better Together

A recent publication by the National Center on Educational Outcomes provided an overview of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and what parents of students with disabilities need to know and do. Both federal laws relate to the education of children and are important to parents of students with disabilities.

As the author states, the NCLB is designed to hold schools, school districts, and states accountable for student achievement. By requiring that all students in the required grades participate in assessments of reading/language arts and math, schools are graded on how well students are learning the knowledge and skills defined by the content standards. By requiring that the performance of certain groups of students (subgroups) is reported, schools’ grades are based on how well these particular groups of students are learning.

The requirements of IDEA are designed to ensure that all schools, school districts, and states provide a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities. IDEA focuses on the individual child—requiring the development of an individualized education program (IEP) outlining the specially designed instruction necessary to allow the child to participate and progress in the same curriculum as all children. Nothing in the IDEA holds schools accountable for the progress and performance of children with disabilities. While IDEA allows parents to challenge the adequacy of special education services, the law does not contain any measures of total school performance for IDEA-eligible students, as is required by NCLB.

The NCLB and IDEA provisions and requirements combine to provide both individualized instruction and school accountability for students with disabilities. The progress and performance of students with disabilities is a shared responsibility of general and special education teachers. The NCLB and IDEA work together to improve the academic performance of students with disabilities as follows:

The NCLBs academic content and achievement standards are connected with IDEAs special education (IEPs) and access to the general curriculum.

The NCLBs annual assessments and accountability are connected with IDEAs participation in all state and district wide assessments.

The NCLBs qualified general education teachers is connected with IDEAs qualified special education teachers.


The publication review was submitted by Dr. Eugene R. Thompson.
This is the first year that Governor Bent Elementary School has had an Indian Education resource teacher. There are 91 Native American students at the school. Sharon Harrison has been assigned to Governor Bent, and she is serving approximately 30 students in the Wilson Reading Intervention Reading Program and in the Orton Gillingham Reading Program. Five groups of 2nd and 3rd graders are in the Wilson Program and eight 4th and 5th graders are in the Orton Gillingham Program. The school has been very receptive to the Indian Education programs, and the classes/groups are running smoothly.

Sharon Harrison, IED, Resource Teacher

SCHOOL NEWS

Highland High School Leadership Council

On Tuesday, September 25, the Highland Leadership Council had their first community based activity, The Community Native Taco Dinner. This activity not only served as a fundraiser for upcoming activities, but also served as a way to bring teachers, students, parents, and community members together for an evening of good food and entertainment. You can’t beat a Native Taco, soda, and entertainment, all for $5. The dinner provided leadership opportunities for the Council members such as script writing for the hosts, technical skills for the sound crew, organizational skills for the stage and dinner managers, and economic decision-making when assessing expenses and revenues.

Featured presenters and entertainers for this event included co-hosts Zaine Jackson and Tiffany Jiron, storyteller Jazmyn Wyaco, traditional singer Laniel Muskett, and guitarists Levi Platero and Kurt Wyaco. We had over 100 participants and had people asking, “When is your next one?” Parent involvement and support was an important factor in the success of this activity. In addition, teacher participation showed the students that they are interested in what the students are doing outside of school as well as in class.

Upcoming Council activities include: the Miss Highland Pageant on October 18th in the Highland Performing Arts Center, the Highland Crowning Pow Wow on October 20th in the Highland Gym, and the Coyote Stories Series during the months of November and December.

John Williams, IED, Resource Teacher

Manzano Mesa Elementary School

This is the first year that the Indian Education Department is providing a Resource Teacher at Manzano Mesa Elementary School. Although it is a fairly new school (four years old), the staff is committed to providing the best educational opportunities for our students. There were boundary changes at the beginning of the school year, and some Native American students were reassigned to Eubank Elementary School, as a result of this, we lost students. This year we have a total of 35 Native American Students. The reading Programs that are being administered is Orton and Gillingham; and the Wilson Reading Program. We are currently housed in Portable 10, with Ms. Molly Murphy, the Speech Pathologist.

Mary Abeita, IED, Resource Teacher

Indian Education Department at West Mesa High School

The Indian Education Department (IED) places specially trained teachers at schools with the highest numbers of Native American students. At the high school level, three schools with the largest number of Native American students are Highland, West Mesa, and Del Norte.

Teachers from the IED are being trained intensively in special techniques and processes so they can directly teach reading and writing skills (decoding and encoding) to students to increase reading scores on the APS standardized tests.

Native American students at WMHS may currently enroll in Native American Leadership class, Native American Studies class, or the Wilson Reading class. We also have an Indian Club, the Native Mustangs, which meets during lunch periods on Thursdays.

The IED will support these students by offering tutoring, by monitoring their grades and attendance, and by contacting teachers and parents as soon as problems become evident.

Dan Ferguson, IED, Resource Teacher

Governor Bent Elementary School

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Sharon Harrison, IED, Resource Teacher
Hi everyone from the Wilson Middle School students. We have gotten off to an explosive start. The Native American group of students from 06/07 made AYP in a huge way. Our group was the only one out of 9 sub groups to make Adequate Yearly Progress by margins of more than 12 points in reading and math. We have a lot to celebrate and have already set our goals and mission to meet AYP again this year.

Native students at our school are very involved this year. Seven were selected to be in Wilson Middle School Student Council. They are Christian Curley/7th, Heather Navasie/8th, Latonya Williams/8th, Samantha Barbone/8th, Victoria Ghhahate/8th, Kimberly Johnson/6th, Miranda Lee/7th, and Chelsey Ledesma/7th. We also have three student classroom representatives who are Shalaine Trujillo/8th, Emilio Hernandez/8th, and Dominique Key/6th. Elections were just completed for student body officers and Christian Curley was elected parliamentarian. So we are very well represented at our school. Congratulations to all those who passed the rigorous paperwork, the grade check, and received letters of recommendation from your teachers. You deserve the positions and the praise.

Fancy Shawl Powwow Dance started the first week of September. In the after school program the girls teach each other to dance, dress, and proper powwow etiquette. Dance practice is on Mondays and they work on outfits and regalia on Fridays. Their first powwow is October 20th at Highland High School and for eight of the ten girls it will be their first time in the dance arena. We have a large group again this year and they are practicing hard. The girls are Brianna Billie/6th, Courtney Cox/6th, Kyrsin James/6th, Nizhoni Bell/6th, Shawny Jamon/7th, Samantha Barbone/8th, Demitria Jefferson/8th, Zabari Bell/8th, Shalaine Trujillo/8th, and Latonya Williams/8th. Samantha and Demitria are the student teachers and have taught the girls the forwards and backwards steps. Come out to the powwow and see them dance.

We have four students in Tennis Club. They are Victoria Ghhahate, Tony McCabe, Tino Herrera, and Steve Stephenson. So far they have won the majority of their matches. For some of them, this is their first time playing and they are doing quite well. Come to Wilson and see them play, usually on Thursdays after school, and cheer them on.

Fancy Shawl dancers: (L to R) Shalaine Trujillo, Zabari Bell, Brianna Billie, Nizhoni Bell, Courtney Cox, Latonya Williams, Demitria Jefferson, and Samantha Barbone.

Flag Football is the favorite fall sport of the 6th grade boys in NAS this year. Good luck to all the boys who tried out: Tomeeko Morgan, Bart Yazza, Dru Anderson, and Dominique Key. Remember, its not how big you are, but how smart and fast you are.

Volleyball is new this year to Wilson. We finally have a coach for the girls team. Three native students, Heather Navasie, Shawny Jamon, and Nizhoni Bell, are the best players on the team. It is hard to make the team and many tried out for the privilege. Good job girls for working so hard.

Ohiyesa had its first meeting on September 12th. Our first activity was making “goop.” We investigated how mixtures change as ingredients are manipulated. The group had a terrific time making a mess and want to thank the Ohiyesa Program for furnishing snacks and drinks for us this year. That was always an important part of the program which was left out. We won’t be meeting again until mid-October because of teacher meetings being scheduled on the Wednesdays we meet. We will be making and playing the Navajo Stick Game at the next meeting. Everyone is welcome.
We offer our congratulations to the following individuals who were recently elected to the Indian Parent Committee. The Albuquerque Public Schools and the Indian Education Department look forward to working with the committee to address Native American student programs and services.

Pueblo of Isleta Parent Representative: Theresa Ortiz
Tohajiilee Community Parent Representative: Nora Morris
Pueblo of Santa Ana Parent Representative: Pending
At Large Parent Representative: Bernice Johnson
At Large Parent Representative: Howard Connick
APS Teacher/Counselor Representative: Sheryl Baca
High School Student Representative: Sheldon Smith
Middle School Student Representative: Richard Jojola

The first official meeting of the IPC will take place on October 22, 2007 at 6:00PM at the APS City Centre John Milne Board Room.

Take a look at the upgraded Indian Education website at www.apsied.com