



Education
Foundations:
Who, What,
Why and How

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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