

# Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education Resolution to Collaborate with Partners on Improving Outcomes for Indigenous Students

**WHEREAS**, across what is now known as the United States, approximately seven out of 10 American Indians reside in an urban area, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The transitions from tribal lands or traditional homelands to urban or metropolitan areas have resulted from volition or failed federal relocation efforts from the U.S. government.

**WHEREAS**, the City of Albuquerque alone has the seventh largest urban Indigenous population (approximately 30,000 people) in the country among places with more than 100,000 citizens, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Current estimates are at 60,000 tribal people representing over 400 Tribal Nations, according to a publication from the City's Office of Equity and Inclusion.

**WHEREAS**, over the past 40 years, the City of Albuquerque has contracted with outside entities to conduct studies and produce reports to learn more about the unique needs of urban Indigenous people, with a focus on social services, health, education, employment, and economic development. In the First Mayor's Symposium on Indian Affairs in June of 1994, the report noted that urban Indigenous people in Albuquerque felt "invisible" and realized their lack of economic and political clout. Reports conducted in other metropolitan places, including Los Angeles, Oakland, and St. Louis, found Indigenous people living in those urban areas also described the common theme of being invisible.

**WHEREAS**, during the 2020-2021 school year, Albuquerque Public Schools' 80th day enrollment (not including charter schools) was 74,250 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The enrollment count for those whose primary race is non-Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) was 3,838 students (5.2 percent of the total student population). The Indian Education Department at APS serves all students who identify as AI/AN. The 2020-2021 enrollment count, which includes all students identified as AI/AN, including charter schools, was 7,021 (9.5 percent of the total student population).

**WHEREAS**, of all Indigenous students who identified a tribal affiliation in the APS education system during the 2020-2021 school year, the five largest student populations are from the following tribes: (1) Navajo Nation - 50.4 percent; (2) Other (tribes outside New Mexico) - 28.1

percent; (3) Pueblo of Laguna - 4.5 percent; (4) Pueblo of Zuni - 4.5 percent; and Pueblo of Acoma - 2.2 percent.

**WHEREAS**, generally, educational outcomes for AI/AN students have been below their non-Indigenous peers. According to the 2022 Tribal Education Status Report (TESR) from the 2021-2022 school year, the statewide four-year graduation rate for AI/AN students was as follows compared to all students in the state: (1) Cohort 2019 - AI/AN: 69 percent, All students: 75 percent; (2) Cohort 2020 - AI/AN: 72.3 percent, All students: 76.9 percent; and (3) Cohort 2021 - AI/AN: 71.5 percent, All Students: 76.8 percent.

**WHEREAS**, based on the 2022 TESR, statewide achievement data from the 2021-2022 school year found that (1) 20 percent of AI/AN students were proficient in reading; (2) 14 percent of AI/AN students were proficient in math; and (3) 21 percent of AI/AN students were proficient in science. Compared to all students, AI/AN students are about one-third as proficient in reading and science as compared to all students across the state.

**WHEREAS**, the APS districtwide TESR from the 2019-2020 school year (the year in which the most recent data is available) indicated that AI/AN students also are outperformed by their non-AI/AN counterparts in graduation rates and overall student achievement measures. The four-year graduation rate of AI/AN students increased from the previous cohort (54.2 percent in 2018 to 56.2 percent). However, it is lower than the statewide four-year graduation rate for AI/AN (69 percent). Related to districtwide assessments in the 2018-2019 school year, about 21 percent of AI/AN students are proficient in reading, 12 percent in math, and about 24 percent in science. Proficiency rates for AI/AN students remain considerably lower than other ethnicity students, especially discrepant is their comparison with students of Asian backgrounds. Compared to all subgroups of students, the AI/AN students' proficiency performance ranks the lowest in all three subject areas of reading, math, and science.

**WHEREAS**, the APS districtwide TESR also indicated that in the 2018-2019 school year, 331 AI/AN students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, accounting for 2.9 percent of total AP course enrollment for the district.

**WHEREAS**, the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) is a federally-funded, school-based survey given to middle and high school students in odd-numbered years. The survey helps to characterize adolescent health behaviors, as well as resiliency or protective factors. According to the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center, the 2021 YRRS indicated that in the past 30 days, 5 percent of AI/AN students smoked cigarettes, 23 percent used electronic vapor products, 10 percent used alcohol, and 25 percent used

marijuana. Moreover, it also noted that eight in 10 AI/AN students have a parent or other adult at home who knows where they are and who they are with. Six in 10 AI/AN students said they had a teacher or other adult at school who listens to them, which reduces the overall likelihood of experiencing adverse mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, persistent sadness/hopelessness, non-suicidal self-injury, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempt.

**WHEREAS**, the New Mexico Legislature passed the Indian Education Act (IEA) in 2003 to provide Native American students in New Mexico with opportunities for an equitable and culturally appropriate education in public schools. The law establishes the Indian Education Division of the Public Education Department (PED) as well as the Indian Education Advisory Council and lays out systems for the state and school districts and charter schools to collaborate with tribal governments on matters related to curricula, teaching, support services, and other programs to meet the needs of Native American students, according to a recent program evaluation on the IEA from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC).

**WHEREAS**, the New Mexico state constitution, Article XII, Section 1, states: “A uniform system of free public schools sufficient for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained.” The Albuquerque Public Schools Emerging Stronger Strategic Plan states, “In 2018, a judge in Santa Fe ruled that New Mexico isn’t doing enough to provide a sufficient education to Native Americans, English learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged children, and students with disabilities. The landmark Yazzie-Martinez ruling requires us to do more for those at-risk students.”

**WHEREAS**, there are 32 Native American-serving school districts, including APS and charter schools, in the state, according to the LFC’s program evaluation on IEA. These school districts and charter schools are those that meet the definition of “historically defined Indian-impacted school district” under 6.35.2.7 NMAC as determined by PED.

**WHEREAS**, the IEA’s purposes, among other things, “provide the means for a relationship between the state and urban American Indian community members to participate in initiatives and educational decisions related to American Indian students residing in urban areas.”

**WHEREAS**, APS is home to urban Indigenous students from over 115 different tribal nations, based on information obtained from the APS Indian Education Department staff.

**WHEREAS**, prior to 2022, there was not a formal platform or specified outlet where urban Indigenous students in Albuquerque could go to discuss areas of mutual concern with their fellow students, families, educators, and community members.

**WHEREAS**, in the summer of 2022, One Generation staff went before the Native Leadership Collective (NLC) of Albuquerque, made up of 31 Native-led nonprofit organizations and owners of Native-owned businesses that hold accountable institutions and governments regarding the local urban Native American Community, to ask what was specifically needed for Indigenous students in the city. From the NLC meeting, it was determined that One Generation staff would take the leadership initiative and coordinate an annual urban Indigenous education summit in partnership and collaboration with the Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO), APS Indian Education Department, and the NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN) – all with support and guidance from the NLC.

**WHEREAS**, the First Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit took place on November 29, 2022. It was an event planned by Indigenous-led organizations and an ally-led department. Two hundred thirty-five students, educators, parents, grandparents, other family members, elected officials, APS leadership, APS staff and educators, and community members attended the inaugural event.

**WHEREAS**, the First Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit organizers have started a collaborative partnership with each other and have committed to working together to achieve positive outcomes for Indigenous students and families in Albuquerque. The following recommendations are a result of the First Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit:

1. APS Indian Education Department will co-host an annual urban Indigenous education summit, communicating the district's progress in serving Indigenous students in collaboration with Indigenous organizations and families.
2. Increase access to culturally responsive activities and learning opportunities for Indigenous students in school, after-school, and summer programs.
3. Create a five-year strategic plan to serve Indigenous students aligned with the APS Board of Education outcomes and the New Mexico Indian Education Act.
4. Meet biannually with the New Mexico Indian Education Advisory Council and APS Equity Council and learn about ways to collaborate to ensure Indigenous students are successful.
5. Provide a platform for Indigenous students and families to provide regular feedback to APS school leadership and the Board of Education to better meet the needs of Indigenous students and understand their experiences in school.
6. Conduct a study of the needs to address Indigenous languages revitalization for urban Indigenous students. Create a plan to address Indigenous languages, given the findings from the study.
7. Seek philanthropic, state, and federal funding opportunities to increase access to programs and learning opportunities for Indigenous students.

8. Convene Indigenous student clubs from Albuquerque schools to hear directly from Indigenous students on their needs.
9. Develop and share a Native American heritage toolkit with Albuquerque area public schools.

**WHEREAS**, the Second Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit was held on October 4, 2023. There were approximately 245 participants who attended, including students, parents, district and charter leadership, educators, APS Board of Education members, Indigenous community organizations, and community members. The Second Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit focused on empowering Indigenous students to use their voices as well as sharing opportunities for the urban Indigenous students to connect with Indigenous community organizations and partners.

**WHEREAS**, as a prominent urban school district, APS is accountable to urban Indigenous students, parents, and leaders to ensure its urban Indigenous students have access to a supportive and inclusive school environment and provide more partnership opportunities with the urban Indigenous community to bridge knowledge, share core values, and uphold commitments to Indigenous students.

**WHEREAS**, the urban Indigenous community leaders in Albuquerque strive to work in partnership and collaboration with one another and APS so the urban Indigenous students, parents, and community members will be heard and will no longer be invisible.

**WHEREAS**, APS Indian Policies and Procedures establish a framework for a shared involvement and relationship with tribal partners to develop and assess education programs and activities offered by APS and to ensure that all school-age children enrolled in the district as well as their families, guardians, and tribes have the opportunity for equal participation.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, APS departments and divisions that work with or on behalf of Indigenous students will collaborate and partner with the NLC, including AIO and One Generation, as they do with their tribal and community partners, to support the implementation of key programs and initiatives to support Indigenous students in the district to become successful students in school, in college, in career, and in the urban Indigenous and tribal communities.

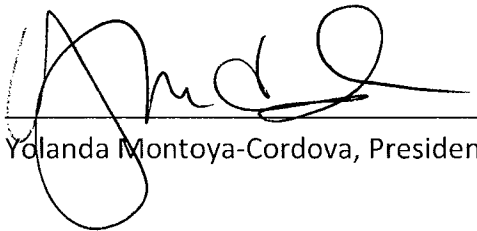
**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, APS, in collaboration with AIO, One Generation, and tribal partners, will review and create a five-year implementation plan to address the recommendations from the First Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summit. The implementation draft plan will be shared with the urban Indigenous community through the

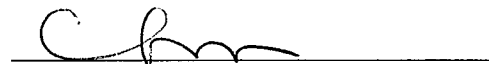
NLC for feedback and suggestions. The implementation plan will be finalized by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, APS, in collaboration with AIO, One Generation, and tribal partners will convene a working group to ensure alignment between the APS Emerging Stronger Strategic Plan and the aforementioned implementation plan.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, APS, led by its Indian Education Department and in collaboration with AIO, One Generation, and tribal partners will develop a plan to address the additional needs identified in the APS Indian Education Act Needs Assessment and Systemic Framework and articulated by the urban Indigenous students at the First and Second Annual Urban Indigenous Education Summits, including the following topics, among other things: (1) Native representation in textbooks and curriculum; (2) more access to culturally and linguistically relevant (CLR) instructional materials; (3) funding for Indigenous student-led projects and initiatives; (4) create a bridge between APS and indigenous parents, guardians, and caretakers; (5) create a bridge between the APS Indian Education Department, Indigenous students, families, and the community; (6) sharing of information; and (7) access and opportunities for mentorships and internships for Indigenous students.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023.

  
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Yolanda Montoya-Cordova, President

  
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Courtney I. Jackson, Secretary