



ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Status Quo?
¿Qué? No Way!**



**An APS Primer
2013-2014**

There's Nothing Status Quo About APS

A message from Superintendent Winston Brooks

Status quo. It's a popular catch phrase among critics of public education. It implies that those who have dedicated their lives to helping the next generation are satisfied with mediocrity, are in it for the paycheck, are dispassionate and uncaring.

Walk into an Albuquerque Public Schools classroom and you know that's hardly the case. We're dedicated to our profession. We appreciate the enormity of the task. We're up for the challenge.

And it certainly is a challenge. Teaching children who face so many difficulties -- whether they be mental, physical, language barriers, poverty or others -- means personalizing education. It means a willingness to try new things, admit failure, regroup, start again.

It means anything but status quo. To those who say, "Status Quo," we say "What?" or in Spanish, "¿Qué? No Way!"

We invite you to learn more about APS in the pages of this 2013-2014 Primer. We'll fill you in on some of our successes over the past few years and the plans we have for the future as we continue to provide the foundation for happy and successful lives for all of our students.



To those who say, "Status Quo," we say "What? ¿Qué? No Way!"

APS Goals

Goal One: Academic Achievement

APS will implement an academic plan aimed at improving achievement for all students with an intensified focus on closing the achievement gap.

Goal Two: Financial Stewardship

APS will maintain a transparent, sound, and responsible financial plan that focuses resources to the classroom and advances student achievement, supports family/community involvement, and promotes school safety.

Goal Three: Family and Community Involvement

APS will meaningfully engage families and enhance partnerships with the community to maximize student achievement.

Goal Four: School Environment

APS will provide a safe and supportive climate for learning and working that maximizes student achievement.



APS Board of Education: Front Row: Steven Michael Quezada, secretary; Dr. David Percy, member; Dr. Analee Maestas, member. Back Row: Lorenzo Garcia, member; Dr. Don Duran, member; Kathy Korte, vice president; Martin Esquivel, president.

Academic Achievements

As always our main focus is on student achievement. Here are just a few examples of ways we're helping students succeed:

Eleven of our 13 comprehensive high schools improved their grades on the state **A-to-F grading system** in 2013, with six of those schools earning As.

Common Core State Standards will be implemented in all grades this school year.

Discovery Education provides 21st century learning tools in science, social studies and health.

4,000+ teachers are trained to use **interactive whiteboards** and other educational technologies to enhance learning.



2,037 students took **297** dual-credit courses in 2012-13, earning both high school and college credit.

9,343 students took at least one **honors or AP class** in 2012-13. More funding is available this year to increase the number of classes offered and students enrolled.

Nearly **400** teachers are **National Board Certified**. APS ranked **5th** in the nation in the number of teachers earning the certification in 2012.

Extended day programs are offered from pre-school to high school with an emphasis on reading, math and credit-recovery.

Redesign efforts continue at Rio Grande High, Ernie Pyle Mid-School and Emerson Elementary. Added to the list for the 2013-14 are Van Buren Mid-School and Eubank Elementary. Eubank will focus on integrating the arts into core subjects like math and language arts.

A new **student information system** will standardize student records, giving parents across the district better access to grades and other student information.

For the second year in a row, all 2012 graduates of the Career Enrichment Center **nursing program** passed their exam to be licensed practical nurses on their first attempt.

The APS **Fine Arts Program** received the Award of Distinction for exemplary support of music programs from the New Mexico Music Educators Association.

¿Qué?

APS demographics:

87,000 students

11,500 employees

6,300 teachers

142 schools

- 89 elementary
- 27 middle
- 13 high
- 13 magnet/alternative

\$1.3B budget

- \$629M operational
- \$368M capital

70% 4-year graduation rate in 2012

70% (98) Title I schools

64% of students qualify for free/reduced-price meals

14% students with disabilities

18% English Language Learners

More than **two dozen** schools offer **AVID** classes for students who need extra support completing college-prep work. Nicole Ferguson, a 2013 Manzano High graduate and recipient of New Mexico's only Dell Scholarship, credits her experience with AVID for making the scholarship possible.

We've added several high school programs: a **dual-credit school** on the CNM campus, a full-time **virtual school**, the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** and **Running Start for Careers**.

6,500 students have taken **9,000** online classes since spring 2012.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Some minority students and students living in poverty continue to struggle to succeed academically. APS and its individual schools have a number of programs designed to help close the achievement gap for these students.

Dual language programs, where instruction is offered 50 percent in Spanish and 50 percent in English (some schools may offer a greater percentage in Spanish), were expanded during the past year and now include 29 elementary schools and four middle schools.

APS administrators have been trained in **cultural proficiency** to help them break down the barriers that may be caused by cultural differences in schools. As role models to the students they serve, principals and other administrators touch the lives of thousands of students each year and can help teach tolerance and respect for others.

AVID, now in 28 of our middle and high schools, specifically targets those who have traditionally been left out of the college-going mainstream including diverse and low-income students.

In order to attract teachers to schools that serve students who are academically challenged, current school **redesign efforts** at Rio Grande High School, Ernie Pyle Mid-School and Emerson Elementary School provide extra compensation for teachers who are willing meet these challenges.

The **ENLACE** program (Engaging Latin American Citizens in Education) works to increase high school graduation rates by providing academic support, engaging parents and providing leadership opportunities for students as they gain self-improvement skills.

Native American students have a high rate of school attendance at 97.2 percent. However, they also tend to be over-represented among students who are habitual truants. With programs like **K-3 Plus**, which provide extra instructional time for economically disadvantaged students including Native Americans, they are making progress—77 percent of Native American kindergarteners are proficient or nearing proficient in reading and 91 percent are proficient or nearing proficient in math.

58 percent of the Class of 2012 completed the **free application for federal student aid (FAFSA)** to help pay for college or vocational school compared to only 38 percent two years earlier, helping to remove financial barriers that were keeping too many students from pursuing higher education.



¿Qué?

The U.S. Department of Education describes the achievement gap as “the difference in academic performance between different ethnic groups.” APS has a plan to improve the academic performance of all students and to close the achievement gap by systematically identifying and supporting struggling students and working to help them improve their proficiency in reading and math.

Graduation Rate

The four-year graduation rate for the Class of 2012 was **70.1 percent**, hitting a target set by the district when Winston Brooks became superintendent in 2008.

The official district graduation rate as calculated by the New Mexico Public Education Department saw a slight increase from 63.4 percent in 2011 to 65 percent in 2012. However, the state changed the way it calculates graduation rates, now including district-authorized charter schools. When extracting charter schools, for which APS has no academic oversight, the graduation rate for APS is 70.1 percent, an increase of 3.2 percent from 2011.

APS has now set a new four-year graduation goal of **75 percent**. What will we do to help three out of four of our students graduate in four years?

We'll continue supporting students by **extending the day** at our comprehensive high schools and by offering programs like **AVID** at more than two dozen of our schools for students who have the potential to succeed, but need an extra push. We'll continue **small learning communities** and **advisories** that allow teachers to work with smaller groups of students, and **professional learning communities** that keep educators communicating with and learning from each other.

We're also offering more choices for our students and families. Our varied paths to graduation now include **nex+Gen Academy**, a project-based learning school with emphasis on technology; **College & Career High School**, the new dual-credit school at CNM that will require students to earn college credit along with their high school diploma; a full-time **virtual high school** at eCADEMY; and the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** at Sandia High.

And we're taking an active role in **Mission: Graduate**, an effort led by the **United Way of Central New Mexico** to add **60,000** two-year, four-year and graduate degrees above and beyond the norm to central New Mexico by 2020. We are partnering with several other entities that have a stake in the future of our community including **CNM**, **Presbyterian Healthcare Services**, **UNM**, **the city of Albuquerque**, **Rio Rancho Public Schools**, **SIPI**, **Intel**, **PNM**, **the Albuquerque Journal** and others.



¿Qué?

The 2012 four-year graduation rates compared to 2011:

Albuquerque High, up 3.9 to 67.6%
Atrisco Heritage Academy, 76.9% (first graduating class)
Cibola, up 3.8 to 78.1%
Del Norte, up 4.8 to 59.5%
Eldorado, down 0.8 to 79.8%
Highland, up 5 to 53.9%
La Cueva, up 0.4 to 86%
Manzano, down 4.1 to 64%
Rio Grande, up 3.5 to 55.6%
Sandia, up 0.6 to 77.5%
Valley, down 2.9 to 66.2%
Volcano Vista, up 0.5 to 79.9%
West Mesa, up 11.8 to 70%
ECA, up 12.5 to 91.7%
eCADEMY, up 20.4 to 25.1%
Freedom, up 3.9 to 37.4%
New Futures, down 6.8 to 27.6%
School on Wheels, up 1.6 to 20.9%

The 2012 graduation rates for demographic groups:

Caucasians, down 0.6 to 74.6%
African Americans, up 7.2 to 62.7%
Hispanics, up 2.1 to 61.6%
Asians, up 7 to 84.7%
American Indians, up 3.7 to 49.4%
Economically Disadvantaged, up 4.9 to 56.5%
Students with Disabilities, up 4.3 to 49.2%
English Language Learners, up 6.7 to 57.3%

Student and Staff Awards

APS receives many awards each year on individual, school and district levels. Students and staff work hard and excel at what they do and are routinely recognized for it.

Here are just a few of the individuals who took home awards this year:

- The New Mexico PTA recognized Todd Resch of La Cueva High School as its Principal of the Year. Chaparral Elementary's Renee Rodarte-Keeling earned Teacher of the Year honors.
- Joycelyn Jackson, coordinator of multicultural education, received the Leadership Award of Excellence from the Southern Minority Leadership Council.
- Two students, Manuel Marquez of Early College Academy and Luis Calderon of Jimmy Carter Middle School, received the New Mexico School Boards Association's 2013 Excellence for Student Achievement Award for helping to improve student achievement at the district level.
- Four APS elementary teachers were honored with Golden Apple Awards.
- Jessica Belmares-Ortega of Albuquerque High received a \$100,000 scholarship by Ronald McDonald House Charities for her commitment to community service.
- APS Chief Operations Officer Brad Winter received a Distinguished Service Award from the Council of the Great City Schools.
- Lynne Rosen, director of APS Language and Cultural Equity, also was recognized by CGCS

for her role in developing Spanish-language parent roadmaps for the national Common Core Standards.

Plenty of schools and school teams also received recognition this year, such as:

- Monte Vista Elementary, which received an award for Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy for a collaborative group from the Association of Fundraising Professionals, New Mexico chapter
- Desert Ridge Middle School, which has won individual and team honors in state and national math competitions, including the 2012 Ciphering Time Trials.

Grant awards provide funding for programs that benefit students at multiple schools. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant will spread \$7 million among five local programs over the next



four years for academic-based after-school programming at 25 schools. These community learning centers, supported by the New Mexico Public Education Department, serve students at no cost to their families.

Students and staff continue to set the bar high, and 2013-14 should be no exception.

¿Qué?

Manzano High School 2013 valedictorian Katherine Cordwell earned a 5.0 grade point average, the highest in APS history.

Katherine earned straight As and more than 36 high school credits. She only needed 25 credits to graduate. In addition, she earned 19 college credits from the University of New Mexico through dual-enrollment.



“Katherine not only is the valedictorian of Manzano, she is the valedictorian of Albuquerque Public Schools,” said APS Superintendent Winston Brooks. “What she has accomplished is nothing short of spectacular. She also is representative of so many of our students who take challenging classes, work hard, earn good grades and prepare themselves for success in college and careers.”

Schools & Facilities

Highlights in 2012-13 include the grand opening of a new Del Norte High School in August and the successful capital improvements election in February.

Voters overwhelmingly approved the **\$368 million** bond and mil levy package, with **79% percent** saying yes to **\$200 million** in general obligation bonds and **72 percent** approval of a mil levy that's expected to generate **\$168 million** over six years. This funding will cover maintenance of buildings as well as technology infrastructure.

Funding from the 2010 election continues to provide for construction as part of the 2011-17 Capital Master Plan. Recently completed projects include:

- The new Del Norte HS main building
- Truman MS classroom building
- Hoover MS/John Baker ES renovations

- Kindergarten/fine arts buildings at A. Montoya ES and Wherry ES.

Some of the best may be yet to come:

- APS Community Stadium on the West Side with facilities for football, track and field (opening August 2013)
- A new Sandia HS
- Chaparral ES classrooms, cafeteria and more
- McKinley MS classroom building.

In past years, capital funding has helped APS resolve issues like crowded schools on the West Side, building permanent structures for district-authorized charter schools and creating smaller schools for students who need a different kind of learning experience like:

- nex+Gen Academy, a magnet school with a focus on project-based learning and technology



The new Community Stadium on the West Side opens in fall 2013.

- eCADEMY, an online school that's expanding in 2013 to offer full-time online course work.

¿Qué?

APS construction projects have helped stimulate the local economy. APS has accounted for as much as 68% of commercial construction permits in Albuquerque in recent years. As the district continues to meet student needs, that trend is expected to continue.

Testing

All APS students take tests. Some exams like the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, which are administered to students in grades 3 through 8 and 10-11, are state mandated, while others are given by schools or the district to see how students are progressing. Some examples of the exams given by schools are:

- **The Kindergarten Developmental Progress Record Assessment** or KDPR, which is usually administered twice, once at the beginning of kindergarten and again at the end to determine how well a student has progressed.
- **Short Cycle Assessments** are district exams given to students in first through 12th grade to gauge students' progress throughout the year.
- **The New Mexico English Language Proficiency**

Assessment is given to students to determine whether they need bilingual instruction services.

- **End-of-Course Exams** are required by the state to make sure that high school students in English 11, U.S. history, biology and chemistry have mastered the required concepts.
- **The N.M. Standards Based Assessment** is required for students in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. High school students must score at the proficient-level in order to receive a high school diploma. The test also is used to grade school on the state's A-F grading system.
- Exams like **Advanced Placement**, ACT and SAT are optional tests, often given at schools, for students preparing for college.

Safe & Supportive Schools

Safety and student support are top priorities at APS.

The district has

- 220 counselors
 - 140 nurses
 - 105 social workers and
 - 126 police officers and campus security aides
- to help provide an environment that is conducive to learning and free from harm and distractions.

APS has its own police department to protect students, staff and school property around the clock.

APS Police in partnership with the Albuquerque Police Department and Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, responded to 29 school lockdowns in 2012-13.

APS Police handled nearly 2,500 incidents last school year including burglaries, thefts, fights, domestic issues, disturbances and vandalism.

No real guns were found on school campuses last year.

APS Police handled 540 informal and 110 formal threat assessments last year.

Other safety systems set up by APS include:

- A school-to-home communications system (SchoolMessenger) that notifies parents about absences and campus security concerns
- A bullying prevention program and website: abqsafeschools.org
- Healthy kids programs targeting asthma, obesity and diabetes
- Crossroads, a drug and alcohol prevention/intervention program for high school students
- A cell phone policy that allows students to have phones on campus in case of emergencies but restricts school-day use.

¿Qué?

According to the 2012 Quality of Education Survey, 91 percent of parents believe students are safe at school.

Communications

Communications is vital in a district that impacts so many lives, so APS uses a variety of tools to disseminate information to students, families, staff and the community. We recognize the need for transparency. Our website, www.APS.edu, recently received an A+ rating by the Sunshine Review, a national nonprofit focusing on state and local government transparency.

In addition to the website, we use a variety of communication tools to message families and the community on a daily basis including:

- Individual school and department websites
- Social media -- Facebook and Twitter (@ABQschools)
- **SchoolMessenger**, a school-to-home communications system that notifies parents about student absences, upcoming events, school delays or closing and campus security concerns
- News media
- Electronic newsletters including **APS News** and **Perspective**
- Electronic billboards located at Cibola, Del Norte and Eldorado high schools and Wilson Stadium
- Videos
- Public forums
- An annual wall calendar and other printed materials



¿Qué?

APS.edu is your best source for news, events and information about Albuquerque Public Schools.

APS Education Foundation



You've heard of the As, Bs and Cs. The APS Education Foundation works on the Es.

Effectiveness – Since it began less than three years ago, the Foundation's Horizon Campaign has infused about \$400,000 into classrooms, libraries, labs, performing arts centers and fields in APS elementary, middle and high schools.

Excellence – The APS Education Foundation was rated the No. 8 school foundation in the nation by a national publication.

Energy – Our community partners help us support many initiatives. But hundreds of smaller donations help us maintain scholarships and special funds that help kids go from Pre-K to On Their Way.

Ease – You can help the Foundation do its good work by going to www.apseducationfoundation.org. This is an external link for donating. Every little bit helps us support the hundreds of thousands of good things that happen in APS schools every single day.

The APS Education Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) that raises private support and public awareness about the good things going on at Albuquerque Public Schools. We've got nearly 90,000 students in APS, and our mission is to help them graduate with a well-rounded, top-notch education that creates a lifetime love of learning. Here's how we're helping:

Horizon Awards

The Horizon Campaign has raised a million dollars in donations, in-kind gifts and pledges, funding the Horizon Awards, grants that support educators in their efforts to provide innovative, quality education. Toward that end, the Foundation has created a variety



of initiatives that supplement four major programs:

- Fine Arts
- Middle/High School Activities
- Literacy, and Science/Technology/Engineering/Math (STEM).

Awards range from \$1,500 to \$5,000 and are granted in the fall and spring.

A is for Art!

Each fall we sponsor an auction of APS student art featuring live student performances with proceeds going to the artists, the Foundation and the APS Fine Arts department. The event has raised more than \$100,000. The fourth annual A is for Art! will be held Friday, Sept. 20, at Hotel Albuquerque.

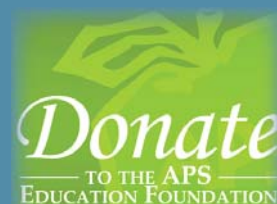
Join-A-School

Sometimes the time isn't right for a business to provide financial support. APS and individual schools are interested in your volunteer time and in-kind resources as well. The APS Education Foundation/Join-a-School Business Partnerships Program has more than 200 business and community groups working in a partnership relationship to benefit individual or multiple schools and the district at-large.

¿Qué?

Here's how you can make a difference:

Whether you're a Fortune 500 company, a small business or a civic-minded individual, you can help our students reach for the stars. Your help is critical to making it happen. Visit our website at www.apseducationfoundation.org or contact Foundation Executive Director Phill Casaus at 505-878-6165 or casaus@aps.edu.



Community Partners

APS has so many great community partners, it is impossible to name and thank them all. But here's a sample of what happens when we come together to help our kids:

PNM contributed \$35,000 to make over libraries at two elementary schools.

Target stepped in with a \$25,000 grant to save an endangered, after-school program.

Dozens of businesses including title sponsor **B&D Industries** support the Superintendent's Cup Golf Extravaganza supporting middle and high school activities.

Sandia National Labs & Lockheed Martin was the sponsor of the spring 2013 Horizon Awards for Science/Technology/Engineering/Math.

Suits Unlimited donates a portion of its proceeds from every tuxedo rental during prom season.

Several businesses including **Hinkle Family Fun Center, Whole Foods, U-Swirl Frozen Yogurt** and **Peter Piper Pizza** have hosted APS days.

Fidelity, Mesa del Sol and the **Isotopes** collected backpacks filled with school supplies.

RayLee Homes: A New Generation is building its second "Apple House" – a new home that will be sold with proceeds going to benefit the Foundation.

Lots of businesses and organizations support our athletes including **Dion's, New Mexico National Guard** and **Gardenswartz Team Sales**.

The 57th annual fall conference of the **Council of the Great City Schools** will be held in Albuquerque.

UNM Health Sciences Center is extending its hours for school-based health centers at six APS schools.

TIG sponsors the monthly Innovation award for teachers who make technology more accessible.

Pepsi sponsors the Teacher of the Month.

New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union sponsors the Student of the Week, Seeds of Learning micro-grants and school initiatives.

APS lowered the cost for background checks to encourage more school volunteers, who spent nearly 35,000 hours worth \$3.5M.

Wells Fargo is a key Horizon Awards sponsor and matches donations to SupportAPS.org, an online giving tool that is putting more resources in the hands of teachers.

BOBS from Skechers and **Shoes on a Shoestring** distributed 5,000 pairs of shoes to Albuquerque children.

Smith's Food & Drug donates tens of thousands of dollars to our schools each year through its Earn & Learn Program.

Frank Frost Photography sponsors Selfless Seniors recognizing high school students who give back to their community.

APS works with **Clear Channel Outdoor** to post messages on four electronic billboards at Cibola, Del

Norte and Eldorado high schools and Wilson Stadium.

Albuquerque the Magazine and **Lovelace** cover the cost of the APS wall calendar that goes to students, families and staff.

The **city of Albuquerque** supports several programs including the IB Programme at Sandia High and the school-to-work program Running Start for Careers.

Jackie & Tony of **100.3 the Peak** have once again agreed to emcee A is for Art! and many others will sponsor the fourth annual event in September.



Budget

For five years now, APS has seen a jump in utility, insurance and other costs that weren't entirely covered by state funding. We've trimmed and chopped and shaved our operational budget to the tune of more than **\$105 million** and nearly **1,000** jobs since the 2009-10 school year.

We're facing another shortfall in 2013-14. It's time to rethink how we do business. We're moving from a triage approach to budgeting to a long-term, sustainable plan more in line with our new economic realities. Here's what those realities look like:

- We have fewer students in APS than we did a couple of years ago. Our enrollment has dropped by about 1,000 due in part to the growth of charter schools but also because of the struggling local economy.
- We've built a dozen new schools over the past decade, yet some of our schools are bursting at the seams while others are woefully under-enrolled.
- While the state Legislature increased funding for public education this year, much of that money is earmarked for special programs and projects and won't go directly to the classroom.
- School districts across the state, like ours, haven't received a cost-of-living increase in years despite bigger bills for utilities, insurance, teachers moving from one pay level to the next and more.



- Urban school districts across the country, like ours, are facing similar dilemmas and are considering extreme measures, including closing schools.

Not all of the changes we're looking at making will be popular. One of the most controversial issues we're facing is the possibility of closing some of our schools.

We're also looking at ways we can bring back some of our students by offering more choices such as the College & Career High School, a dual-credit school located on the CNM campus; the eCADEMY Virtual High School; and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Sandia High.

We're working on becoming more energy efficient as well, finding ways to bring down escalating utility costs.

And we're looking for other cost-saving measures. We applaud employees like Melissa Cruz, an APS Police Department dispatcher, who discovered that she could efficiently replace belts that allow the movement of surveillance cameras, a routine process that can save APS up to \$90,000 per year.

We're looking for ways to make money through enterprise funds.

And because 90 percent of our budget goes to salaries and benefits, we need to re-evaluate jobs throughout the district and possibly reorganize.

¿Qué?

Budget facts:

- The 2013-14 operational budget is \$629M.
- The operational budget has been cut by nearly \$110M in five years.
- Budget cuts have resulted in larger class sizes.
- About 1,000 jobs have been cut in five years.
- 66% of the operational budget goes to direct instruction.
- Only 3% of the operational budget goes to central services.

APS Has Heart

APS students and staff keep on giving. In spite of tough economic times, the record books are full of instances of giving back -- to the community and to each other.

Great examples of giving back come through the dozens of inspiring stories of the APS Selfless Seniors. For the past six years, the APS Education Foundation has recognized the unheralded work of high school seniors who have overcome personal obstacles and give back to their communities, willingly and cheerfully.

Consider these others, which are just a few examples of the heart of APS:

- For the past 11 years, Sandy Warrick has been teaching her Chamiza ES kindergarteners about the need to feed babies in the community. Her classes' baby food drives have brought in thousands of jars of baby food and have received grants to keep it going.
- Fran Proce's Roosevelt MS

students write persuasive letters asking for donations, prepare a budget, shop and prepare Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. It's a 13-year tradition.

- Two Highland High students started a class project to sew quilts for Project Linus, which serves needy children.
- MacArthur ES ran a Toys for Tots drive for the holidays.
- Petroglyph ES raised \$540 for Hurricane Sandy victims.
- 7-Bar ES raised \$5,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Giving back also means helping each other out:

- Principal Rosalind Deasy saved an Eisenhower MS student's life by performing the Heimlich maneuver when he was choking on a carrot.
- La Cueva HS student-athletes went weekly to read to elementary school students in the neighborhood.
- The Volcano Vista HS Spanish Honor Society visited a Tierra



Antigua ES classroom weekly during National Discover Languages Month to work with first graders.

And, sometimes, we need to help our own students:

- APS Title I Homeless Project serves 7,000+ students
- Assistance League of Albuquerque has provided school uniforms for 3,500+ students since 2009.
- APS employees contributed half a million dollars to the United Way in the past two years.
- The Clothing Bank, which is now run by APS, serves 3,000+ students a year.

¿Qué?

Justin Bates decided one day that he'd had enough, and he wanted others to have enough, too.

"I have a house full of my stuff," the Cleveland Middle School seventh grader said. "I thought, I have enough and it's time to start giving back."

Bates started out by using his own money, then asking his grandmother to help him buy toys to give to Toys for Tots. Later, he asked his mother for financial help, saying he wanted her to donate the money she would have spent on presents for him.

Next, Bates enlisted the assistance of his AVID class.

In all, they collected 49 toys to give to the U.S. Marines, who organize Toys for Tots locally.

For his efforts, Albuquerque Mayor Richard J. Berry dropped by the school to recognize Bates in front of his AVID class told him how impressed he was with his desire to give back to the community.



The Road Ahead

Like any professional organization, APS has set some lofty goals for the coming year. Ultimately, we want every one of our students to succeed academically. But we also recognize that in order to reach that goal, we have to overcome some challenges in an ever-changing public education landscape.

We've touched on some of those challenges already: financial strains, safety, mental and physical disabilities, poverty, language barriers. Here's a sample of a few more issues we expect to deal with in 2013-14:

A Shift in the Student Population

Some of our schools are bursting at the seams, even new ones like Atrisco Heritage Academy and Rudolfo Anaya built on the West Side to ease overcrowding, while others are experiencing declining enrollment.

Truancy

You can't learn if you're not in school. Unfortunately, too many of our students -- including some of our youngest -- are missing too much school. We're working with families and schools to reduce the truancy rate among all of our students.

Testing

Our students are taking more and more high-stakes tests including end-of-course exams and high school exit exams that they must pass in order to earn a diploma. We're working with our teachers and students to make sure they are prepared for these tests.

Equity for Girls and Boys

In the past few years, there has been heavier scrutiny of Title IX compliance. The federal law guarantees that girls -- including girl athletes -- have the same opportunities as boys. This could have an impact on high school sports and booster clubs.

Competition

Dozens of charter schools, both APS and state authorized, have opened up in the Albuquerque area in the past several years. We appreciate the competition and realize that our parents and students want more choices, so we're responding by providing a variety of programs.



GLBTQ Students

Because we want all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, to feel safe at school, we are working on providing safe zones and other resources for gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual students.

Disenfranchised Employees

Teachers and other school employees have seen their paychecks shrink in recent years just as the demands on them continue to grow. This is having an understandably negative impact on employee morale. With the new teacher evaluations scheduled to begin this school year, we are concerned that our hard-working employees will feel even more disenfranchised.

¿Qué?

What do you have to say?

We welcome your comments and suggestions. You can keep in touch in a variety of ways:

- Email: superintendent@aps.edu, boarded@aps.edu or servicecenter@aps.edu
- Phone: 505-880-3700 or 505-880-3737 (Board of Education)
- Address: 6400 Uptown Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110. For Mailing: P.O. Box 25704, Albuquerque, NM 87125-0704
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