



Dr. Daisy Thompson  
DIRECTOR

## Stakeholders Committee Meeting May 6, 2019

On May 6, 2019, the first Albuquerque Public Schools' Stakeholders Committee meeting was held from 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m., at the Albuquerque Public Schools' Alice and Bruce King Educational Complex. The meeting began with introductions and the purpose of the formulation of the Stakeholders Committee was shared. All in attendance introduced themselves as well as sharing their vision for participating on the committee. The following were present:

- Lloyd Lee – University of New Mexico (UNM) Associate Professor of Native American Studies, a member of the Commission of Indian Affairs for the City of Albuquerque, and a member of the Diné Tribe;
- Craig Cole - High School Junior at Manzano High School, and a Tribal member of the Pueblo of Cochiti;
- Virginia Chavez – Head Councilwoman from the Pueblo of Zuni;
- Jean Mahooty – Outgoing Chairperson of Albuquerque Public Schools Indian Education Committee and Indian Parent Committee from the Pueblo of Zuni;
- Dr. Madelyn Serna Marmol – Associate Superintendent of Equity, Instruction, Innovation and Support;
- Dr. Glenabah Martinez – UNM Associate Professor of Educational Thought and Sociocultural Studies, and Dean for Educator Preparation and Development, and a member of the Diné Tribe and the Pueblo of Taos;
- Kara Bobroff – Deputy Secretary for New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), and Founding Principal of NACA Charter School, and a member of the Diné Tribe and the Lakota People;
- Denise Gomez – Assistant Principal, Truman Middle School, and a member of the Pueblos of Taos and Laguna;
- Nicole Shaw – Parent of three APS students and an Engineer, and a member of the Diné Tribe;
- Dr. Daisy Thompson – APS Director of Indian Education and a member of the Diné Tribe; and
- Raquel Reedy – APS Superintendent.

The Director of Indian Education began by stating that the formulation of this committee came about from the incident at a local high school on October 31, 2018. She stated the issues of this incident needed to be addressed and that the work developed by the Stakeholders Committee would become a strong documented plan that would support the Albuquerque Public Schools in the four key areas of: Professional Development, Language and Culture, School Climate, and

Curriculum. She also stated that she was fortunate to have the capacity to select the members of the committee.

To establish background and history to the committee members, the Director of Indian Education shared a power point about the first and second Native American Community Open Forums that have taken place since January 2019. The power point highlighted the concerns and discussions by community members, parents, and students. These concerns and issues were brought to the attention of District administrators and School Board Members as pertinent, and needed to be addressed by the school district.

The first Native American Community Open Forum was held on January 24, 2019, at the Paradise Hills Community Center. Community members, parents, students, and others voiced their concerns in an open microphone format. Those who did not have the opportunity to speak, noted their concerns on post-it notes. As the comments and discussions were voiced by participants, four primary areas emerged which included: curriculum, school climate, professional development, and language and culture.

The second Native American Community Forum was held on March 5, 2019, at Del Norte High School. Participants broke into small groups to discuss the four guiding questions that were developed relating to the above-mentioned main concerns. The agenda for the second meeting and the questions were developed with assistance from UNM Native American faculty led by Dr. Glenabah Martinez.

1. **Curriculum** – What do you suggest for greater representation of indigenous or Native American perspectives, experiences and/or knowledge in the curriculum?
2. **School Climate** – What are the characteristics of a safe and welcoming school environment for Native American students, families, and educators?
3. **Professional Development** – What are the characteristics of an exemplary educator, e.g., principal, counselor, coach who works with Native American students and families?
4. **Language and Culture** – How can APS recognize the integrity of Native American cultures and languages?

The four questions generated much input and discussion from all participants. The comments and input are too numerous to list in these notes but here are a few:

1. **Curriculum** – true and correct history, provide literature written by Native American authors;
2. **School Climate** – greet visitors to the schools, making them feel welcome, and rid acts of bullying in the schools;
3. **Professional Development** – develop a clear plan for staff behavior and discipline, and hire staff who support all students, i.e., students with special needs and students with different ethnicities and culture;
4. **Language and Culture** – increase instruction of Native American languages in the schools, and educate staff about different cultures.

The Director also reviewed a handout titled, Student Learning, Teacher Practice, Administrators' Role in Change, and Parent and Community Support. The document asked the following questions, which the committee was requested to ask themselves in going forward. The questions were:

1. What specifically is happening with/to our students? 2. What evidence do we have that substantiates our concerns? 3. What aspects need to change and why are we prioritizing these as issues? There have been incidents that have occurred in APS with our Native American students but those have not been publicized to the degree that the incident at the local high school has been this year

The next steps process is creation and implementation of the Stakeholders Committee. The Committee will plan a third Native American Community Open Forum in the fall. The second task will be to develop short-term and long-term goals from the community comments and input. As the short and long goals are developed, an action plan for each objective and activity, as appropriate, will also be developed.

The Stakeholder Committee members shared comments and made suggestions as shown below:

The Deputy Secretary for the NMPED shared that changes will be made for the better and that they are coming. She also stated that a large percentage of Native people do want to see a difference in long-standing issues. Her first experience with racism was in the first grade. While attending a local high school, she noticed the information she received from the counselors regarding access to college was minimal compared to the information given to non-Native students.

This indicates that issues related to equity for all students does need to be examined.

The Associate Superintendent of Equity, Instruction, Innovation and Support shared that she was not taught Spanish by her parents. Her parents were punished for speaking Spanish in school. Later on, she saw the importance of speaking more than one language so she eventually learned Spanish. She stated that Language and culture are very important for our students. She shared that the District has begun strategically planning a District Equity Action Plan and they would like to integrate the information of the important work by this committee into the District Equity Action Plan. Currently, the plan for the Equity Action Plan will begin internally, then eventually involve the community. She currently

is part of a working group with the NMPED regarding-responsive classrooms. Additionally, the District is working on hiring more teachers of color and having more culturally-relevant classrooms, which includes indigenous curriculum. The District is also interested in a large-scale professional development for Principals and Teachers related to cultural relevancy. She has also attended a meeting this year with the Super SAC which is the Superintendent's student committee, where the discussion revolved around equity and the students were asked what they would like included in a training for the students in APS. The students stated they didn't need the training, but felt their teachers and parents needed the training. They feel they deal with diversity every day in their classrooms but when they go home, their parents have a different attitude. One student stated, "If you are not White, you are not perceived as American". The Associate Superintendent further stated, "The APS graduation rate is not great so the District really needs to look at how to improve that".

The UNM Associate Professor and Dean asked “Where does the community at-large fit in or play a part of this committee? They have diverse perspectives and their input is needed. They need to be involved.”

The Superintendent stated, “APS is working very hard to recognize that every student’s needs and potentials are met. If this entails new textbooks or professional development, then that is what needs to be done.” She further stated, “The District never had this type of discussion before. This committee is the guideposts and are part of the solution. There needs to be communication and respect.”

UNM Associate Professor and Dean asked, “In putting together this action plan, did you review what kind of empirical evidence already exists in terms of schools? What kind of research was involved and who were the researchers? Does the office of Research and Statistics have data regarding these incidents? Did these incidents affect our students’ learning or how they see themselves? Are they proud to be Native American? Do they participate in ceremonial traditions, and if they do, do the teachers/school penalize them for missing school?” As a critical researcher, she would like to see the data and documentation. Also, these may be questions the community may ask.

The Director indicated that a literature review will be conducted about incidences that have occurred across our district (if any) and nation related to Native American people and will also make the information available to the committee.

Discussion continued among those in attendance regarding their experiences and concerns.

The Assistant Principal, Truman Middle School stated, as a Native student, she felt there was a racial divide. She felt like there was no one else like her. She wondered who do I talk to, where do I go, will they understand me? It is a different environment every day in a school. Kids can get lost. It is important to talk with students and families. When she meets with Native students and families, she asks what can she or how can our school help you? Some parents don’t even know what their options are. Many Native American students come from the reservation and some students are identified as “urban Indians”. She shared that Native American parents come to her because she looks Native, because she looks different and they feel comfortable talking to her.

The Chairperson of the parent committees stated “When she and her family first moved to Albuquerque, she did not feel welcome at her sons’ schools. Instead of helping her, the staff acted like she was bothering them with her questions.” She did not know what paperwork was needed to enroll her sons in APS, or who to ask or where to go for assistance. The Indian Education helped her older sons attend a conference in California and because of that, she wanted to give back to Indian Education in some way, by helping out in the office (i.e., filing paperwork, or volunteering, etc.). She attended a parent meeting and was elected to serve on the parent committee and has served on the parent committee for the last eight years. All her sons participate in traditional ceremonies which, at times, have caused them to be absent from school. Not all their teachers

were willing to give them schoolwork to do while they were absent from school, which made it difficult for her sons to participate in their traditional ceremonies.

The APS Parent stated, “There needs to be more communication from APS with the Native American community”. She pointed out that many parents do not know about the existence of the Indian Education Department. She further added, that enrolling students through an on-line process and submitting required forms online may be difficult for some parents, which could result in parents not submitting forms and could further result in funding shortfall for the Indian Education Department. The Indian Education Department relies on the Title VI forms and Certificates of Indian Blood which determine the amount of funding the department receives each year. She would like to see more indigenous history and curriculum. She has told her own children about Navajo history and the treatment of Native Americans in boarding schools but she has no idea if other parents also do the same. It concerns her that the Indian Education Department does not receive funding from APS for their entire staff and programs.

The Head Tribal Councilwoman stated, “After hearing about what happened at Cibola High School, the Zuni Tribal Council had concerns about how the Zuni students attending APS were being treated.” Their concerns stem from how the Native American ancestors were not allowed to speak their Native Languages. She is glad the Indian Education Department wants to make things better for all the Native American students. Her grandson will be enrolling in APS next school year (his parents got new jobs in Albuquerque). She does not understand why the Indian Education Department receives operational funding that covers just five employees and no other funds for other employees or programs. She believes the small amount of Impact Aid funding APS receives (compared to other New Mexico school districts) is because APS is not making the full effort needed to collect the Impact Aid parent forms.

The Manzano High School Junior stated, “He has not always had the best experiences in school. The Native American students at his school are not as visible as the other ethnicities.” People automatically see him as an African-American, which he is and he is proud of that side of his heritage, but he is also Native American and just as proud of being Native American. He attended the College Horizons pre-college summer program at the University of Pennsylvania campus and it was one of the most rewarding experiences he has ever had. He has a younger brother in elementary school and he does not want him to have the same negative experiences he had. He would like to see changes for him.

The UNM Associate Professor and member of the Commission of Indian Affairs for the City of Albuquerque, stated “There definitely needs to be community representation on this committee. This committee needs to be transparent, not only with APS, but with the community. These meetings should be open to the community. This school year is ending so what can be done during the summer months, is there a timeline? The Mayor’s office has hired a Native American liaison to work with the Native American community and currently, there are plans to hire another liaison to work with the Tribal leaders.”

The Director stated the liaison for the Native American community should be included on this committee. She asked the member of the Indian Affairs Commission to please invite the liaison to the next meeting. The Director thanked all for attending.

The second meeting is scheduled on June 14, 2019, at 9:00 – 11:30 a.m., at the Albuquerque Public Schools' Alice and Bruce King Educational Complex, in the Rio Puerco Conference Room.

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