



Stakeholders Meeting – August 30, 2019

On Friday, August 30, 2019, the fourth APS Stakeholders Committee meeting was held at the Alice and Bruce King Educational Complex. The following persons were in attendance:

Denise Gomez – Pueblos of Taos and Laguna, Assistant Principal, Wilson Middle School;

Virginia Chavez – Pueblo of Zuni Tribal Councilwoman;

Nicole Shaw – Diné, APS Parent;

Wesley Siquah – Hopi and Pueblo of Laguna, APS Parent;

Daisy Thompson – Diné, Indian Education Director;

Philip Farson – Indian Education Instructional Manager;

Layla Dehaiman – Director of School Climate, APS;

Dawn Begay – Diné, Coordinator, Native American Affairs, City of Albuquerque.

Raquel Reedy, APS Superintendent, addressed the committee stating that APS is aware they have a long way to go regarding the concerns of the Native American community and this committee, but they are headed in the right direction. APS wants the Native American community to know that APS is listening to their voices. She requested a plan from the committee that she would share with the legislators addressing Native American children's education.

Layla M. Dehaiman, Director of School Climate in APS, oversees bullying intervention, restorative practices in dealing with behavior issues, and suicide prevention for APS students, which is a new program. She is Hispanic and Arab and after 9/11, she experienced racial profiling and bullying. APS wants students to feel safe at school. They would like students to be more aware of other students who may be at risk for suicide. Students know more about their peers and students are more likely to confide in one another. However, APS also needs to partner with parents in all areas. The parents know their students better than APS does.

The Indian Education Director explained the four Native American Values used by the Indian Education Department: Mastery, Belonging, Independence, and Generosity. Student achievement could be seen as Mastery. Belonging is establishing a welcoming environment to include others. Independence is students willing to take risks and not being afraid to speak up or stand up for themselves. Generosity is sharing with others, perhaps knowledge, or something as simple as sharing a pencil needed for class.

APS Parent (WS) stated there needs to be more Native American volunteers in APS as role models for students. A majority of Native American students are reserved but teachers see that as not paying attention or not willing to learn.

The Indian Education Director stated during the Native American Community Open Forums, parents asked why there were not that many Native American teachers and why there has never been a Native American on the APS School Board. The Human Resources Director asked the Indian Education Director how APS could recruit Native American teachers. The Indian Education Director suggested Human Resources reach out to the different Pueblo Governors. The Wilson Middle School Assistant Principal stated recruiting members of the Pueblos may be difficult. The Pueblos are wary of APS, they see APS as large and not an inviting environment.

The APS Director of School Climate went to a school for a meeting and all the outside doors were locked. She understands the need for security measures but it was a very unwelcoming environment. APS Parent (NS) was also unable to gain easy access to her children's school. Once inside, she was not allowed to walk to her children's classroom unescorted.

The Indian Education Director spoke of a school that was intent in placing the Native American students in a Spanish-speaking class. Some of the Native American parents did not want their children in that class but when they conveyed this to the school, their complaints were ignored. The parents then contacted the Indian Education Director to intervene. The Indian Education Director does not understand why these students were not placed in an art class, for example, instead of a Spanish-speaking class.

APS Parent (WS) asked if the rolls and services of the Social Workers in APS could be expanded? The Director of School Climate stated she could check into that but it is her understanding that the Social Workers work mostly with Special Education students. The Wilson Middle School Assistant Principal and the Indian Education Director stated that Social Workers specifically focus on students with IEP's (Individual Education Plans). It was suggested that perhaps School Counselors, who are funded by school size, can play a bigger role. However, services are currently provided to Native American students per an MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) with the Counseling Department (i.e., Circle of Life and First Nations).

The question was asked on APS administration's position on equality and inclusiveness? How involved is APS in setting forth changes, or will the Native American community only receive a response without any real action plan in place? It is hard for everyone to fall in line if APS is not dedicated to making changes district-wide.

Stakeholders Committee members then discussed the next Native American Community Open Forum, i.e., if the event should still be called an "open forum" or should it be called a conference or a convention? If it will be an open forum, a moderator would be needed to limit speaking times. A local advocate and leader was suggested as the moderator. There was discussion about whether a guest speaker was needed and, if questions are asked, who would respond? APS Administration or a panel of the Stakeholders Committee?

After further discussion, it was decided that the next Native American Community Open Meeting would be held on the evening of Thursday, November 14, 2019, with a location to-be-determined. The next planning meeting for this event will be Wednesday, October 2, 2019, also at a to-be-determined location.

The Indian Education Director thanked everyone for attending

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