STORYTELLER

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS Indian Education Newsletter Oct/ Nov 2025

Mission

By working together with schools, parents, and communities, APS Indian Education Department develops enhanced and supportive Indigenous educational opportunities for American Indian/ Alaska Native students by increasing knowledge of Native values through teaching language and cultural differences.

A:shiwi Students at ILI (Indigeneous Language Institute) High School Day

Rory Becenti (Mula:kwe) and Ciara Booqua-Natachu (Yaddokya:kwe/dakkya:kwe) respectively represented the class in learning through active listening and how language games can teach young people to stay in the language. They also learned that fluent speakers should be intentional when young people are present to speak in the language. They met native language teachers from Zia Pueblo and Pojoaque Pueblo and had the chance to say who they were Shiwi'ma and what A:shiwi have names for other tribes in NM. Students also heard lectures from a young Hawaiian scholar and learned about the unique second language generation of learners and lack of support for those learners. How adults who are fluent speakers should consider how the language journey is different and oftentimes are marginalized by lateral oppression based on who is more "Native" by skin color or blood quantum. Then they heard from a young woman who is from Canada and her language immersion experiences in Canada.

The highlight of the language conference was meeting Deb Haaland!
Deb Haaland expressed how it is integral to keep Native languages alive.
All in all, it was a good day to express and use Shiwi'ma Bena:we in public!
Elahkwa hom chimona a:hoi. Thank you young people.

Hodgin Homework Diner

In honor of Native American Heritage Month, our school community came together for a meaningful and joyful Homework Diner that celebrated the diverse cultures, histories and traditions of Indigenous people. With help from the Indian Education Department our November Homework Diner is rooted in connection, gratitude, and learning.

Students, family, and staff gathered to share a meal and participate in activities that highlighted the cultures in our community. One of the highlights of the evening was sharing Indian tacos brought to us from Highland High Culinary school.

The event also included a raffle and book giveaway, ensuring students not only went home with full hearts and bellies but also with new stories to read and explore. Books by Native authors

and featuring Indigenous characters reinforces the importance of representation and culturally relevant learning materials in our schools.

Beyond the food and prizes, this Homework Diner created a true sense of belonging. Students saw their cultures honored, and our school community strengthened its commitment to celebrating the many identities that shape who we are.

We are grateful to all that participated, supported, and helped make this evening a success.

May the spirit of this gathering continue to inspire respect, understanding, and unitythroughout the year.

Indigenous Storytelling at Hodgin Elementary

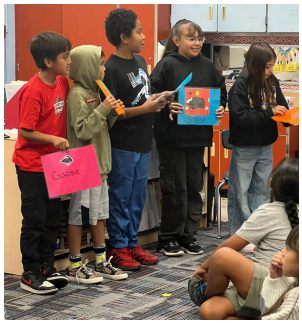
Hodgin Elementary recently welcomed a powerful and inspiring group of storytellers to campus as part of our ongoing celebration of Native American Heritage Month. Ms. Shannon Romero, along with high school Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, shared traditional stories with students in grades K–5, transforming our ELA blocks into a living circle of culture, imagination, and connection.

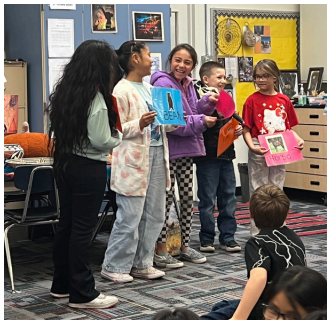
Through animated storytelling, acting, expressive voices, and engaging movement, the storytellers brought lessons of resilience, respect, humor, and identity to life. Students were captivated as stories unfolded before them. Students not only listened, but also participated, responded, and became part of a tradition that has been passed down through generations.

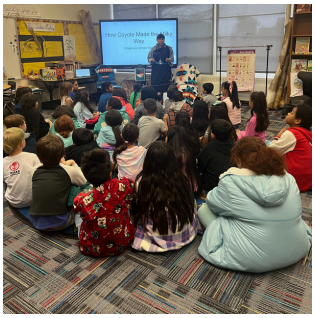
For many students, this was more than a performance. It was a reminder of the importance of oral storytelling in Indigenous cultures, where knowledge, history, values, and community teachings are carried through voice, gesture, and presence. The high school Indigenous Knowledge Keepers modeled leadership, pride, and cultural strength, offering younger students a powerful example of what it means to honor one's roots while sharing them with others.

Students remained deeply engaged throughout the entire experience, with eyes wide, hearts open, and curious minds. The integration of storytelling into the ELA block reinforced listening comprehension, sequencing, vocabulary, and critical thinking, while also building empathy and cultural understanding.

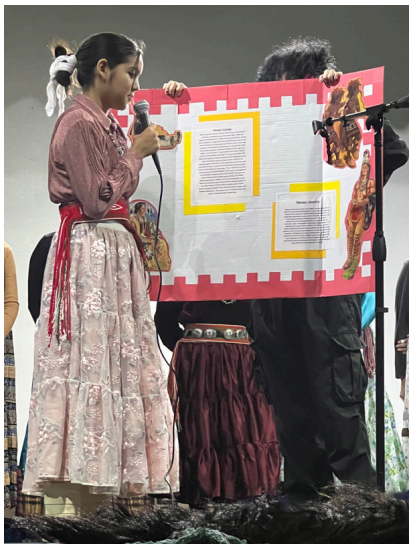
This special visit strengthened the bridge between generations and highlighted the strength of Indigenous knowledge in our schools. We extend our deepest gratitude to Ms. Shannon Romero and the high school Knowledge Keepers for sharing their time, voices, and wisdom with our students. Their stories will continue to echo in our classrooms long after the final words were spoken.







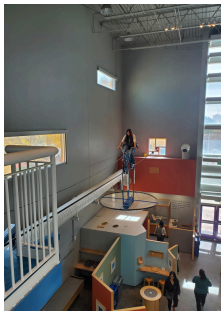
West Mesa Annual Cultural Presentations

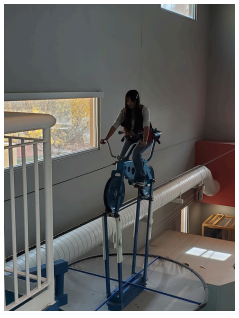


Community Engagement

Cibola JAG Students get to 'Explora'

On Tuesday, November 18th the JAG Cibola class with IED teacher, Amber Reno had the opportunity to visit the Explora museum through a collaboration with Junior Achievement. The students got a tour "behind the scenes" and got to meet several staff members. They were treated to Dion's pizza and salad for lunch and got to explore the museum.





Indigenous History from a Vantage Point: November

Occupation of Alcatraz (1969–1971)

Amid the Civil Rights era, Native activists—especially young urban Native people—were organizing around sovereignty, treaty rights, and cultural survival. Forming groups like the American Indian Movement (AIM), students and activists sought dramatic actions to draw national attention.

A group called **Indians of All Tribes (IOAT)**, led by activists such as Richard Oakes, LaNada Means (War Jack), and others, landed on Alcatraz Island before dawn.

They cited the **1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie**, which said surplus federal land should revert to Native peoples. Since Alcatraz prison had been closed in 1963 and declared surplus, they asserted a legal and moral claim.

Their Objectives

IOAT demanded:

A Native American cultural center

A university

A museum documenting Native history and oppression

Stewardship of the island for Indigenous community use

Symbolic Actions

They famously offered to buy Alcatraz for $24 in glass beads and red cloth, mirroring the myth about the "purchase" of Manhattan—turning a historic stereotype back on the U.S. government.

The occupation lasted 19 months, involving hundreds of Native people from dozens of tribes.

The island developed a functioning community with:

A school

A kitchen

A medical center

Organized security and governance

Despite challenges—harsh weather, cut utilities, and government pressure—the occupation held strong.

Government Response

At first, the Nixon administration hesitated to remove the activists forcibly, fearing negative public reaction. Over time, however:

Negotiations stalled

Supplies were restricted

On June 11, 1971, federal marshals removed the last remaining occupiers

Long-Term Impact

1. Shift in Federal Indian Policy
2. Rise of the Red Power Movement
3. Cultural Revitalization
4. Lasting Symbolism

Every November, many Native communities commemorate the event with the Indigenous Peoples Sunrise Ceremony on the island.