



American Graduate Community Meeting Notes  
Monday, December 10, 10 AM to 11:30 AM

**Attendees:**

Vernon Butler of Families United for Education  
Angelo Gonzales of UNM CEPR  
Peter Winograd of CEPR  
Melissa Harris of Generation Justice  
Nicole Byrd – Office of African American Affairs  
Susan Reagan of New Mexico Dept. of Workforce Solutions  
Marvin Johnson of District Attorney's Office  
Kay Provolt of Jobs for America's Graduates - NM Rio Grande HS  
David Cox of Horizon Academy West  
Jennifer Cornish of Robert F Kennedy Charter and Central NM Community College  
Renate Witte of New Mexico PTA  
Hanh Nguyen – Family Advocate  
Ron Lucero - APS  
Michael Kamins of New Mexico PBS  
Rose M. Poston of New Mexico PBS  
Hollie Lovely of New Mexico PBS

**Introduction, Welcome, and Today's Goals by Laurel Wyckoff**

**Content Update:**

Production update that included a half-hour conversation among Native American teens about graduation with Tara Gatewood of native American Calling. Work is finishing up on Native American Community Academy and Rob Janov's Rockin' Rhythm program. We viewed one of the earliest American Graduate spots on truancy prevention with Marvin Johnson as an introduction to the next presentation.

**Presentation by Dr. Kristine Meurer** on a new APS Truancy Response. To be piloted in a number of elementary and middle schools. The pilot will test a case management approach with interventions as early as 2 unexcused absences and referrals as needed. Volunteers will be needed to implement this pilot. Dr. Meurer expressed her frustration that there is a public perception that APS schools are not good. She hopes that more positive messages can come out than have been appearing in the commercial media. There was some disagreement about this because American Graduate partners are

already working or want to work in and with APS schools as collaborators. They feel they are not detractors but supporters of the district who want kids to succeed, too.

### **Group work on media and community truancy response**

NM PTA will co-host a title one family engagement conference on February 23. Parents, Title I Family Liaisons will have conversations about solutions to attendance problems. Also 13 – 18 year olds will also hold discussions and report back to the group on their ideas. These will be shared with APS

Messages about APS from the community might be “Thanks APS – There are things you can become... (career). Some career paths can be found in a couple of areas of current curriculum and a few kids are excited about this.

Memory is interesting to students. What have they heard about APS? About community? What do they hear in their music i.e. hip hop, to give them confidence in staying in school. Can we use the music to get the message to them?

Marvin Johnson (truancy Officer of District Attorney’s Office ) and some other partners are interested in holding a Back-to-School Rally type of event with booths , activities, prizes and a “stay in school” pledge for kids to sign. He requested public media partnership on the event.

Give students some concrete steps they can take to get to career goals. Bring in mentors to help them visualize different jobs and careers. (ABEC has a job mentor program and there are several others in individual schools).

APS should take advantage of partnerships with other organizations in the community who routinely do background checks (like Sandia Labs, etc.) Perhaps there could be a clearance card after someone has had a background check somewhere besides APS like a driver’s license that would be accepted fro volunteers.

For the attendance program to make an impact APS will need a strong volunteer pool. How can the community share this burden? Will special training be required? What about the need for confidentiality? Preparation on emotional health may also be necessary if especially social workers are not part of the program. How can we help? Other ideas included families mentoring other families or a family support group at each school. Communication with Families United for Education may help to organize this kind of family/APS partnership.

Partners are interested in knowing what is working in other districts to improve attendance.

**Next Meeting Monday January 28, 10 – 11:30 AM**