



NEW MEXICO
Education Speaker Series

Connecting Challenges with Ideas & Strategies

– NOTES –

**Session IV: Equity From the Get Go—
Giving All Students a Fair Shot**

September 26, 2018, Thornburg Campus

This is the fourth of a nine-month lunch series bringing together education and business leaders from around the state to learn from national and local experts about promising and best practices in education in high-performing systems. Participants will engage with each other on possible education reform in New Mexico. The group is using the report titled “No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State” created by the National Conference of State Legislatures as a guide.

Speakers: Pedro Noguera, Professor of Education at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Kara Bobroff (Navajo/Lakota), founder Native American Community Academy (NACA), Albuquerque. Moderator: Gwen Perea Warniment, K-12 Program Director, LANL Foundation.

Noguera:

While the National Conference of State Legislatures has good rhetoric, experience has shown that neither outside pressure nor state takeover of school districts works. In fact, schools today were designed to get the results they are getting: poor. Demography is destiny; family income drives educational outcomes.

Strategies that eliminate barriers:

- Equalize allocation of resources.
- Restore language and culture for marginalized children.
- Make parents and communities partners.
- Hire teachers who “look like” students (men, minorities)
- Keep talent in New Mexico. (Teach for America not the answer; it gives a challenging job to lesser-trained teachers who do not know our culture.)
- Use Canadian model: send in experts to help when a school is failing.
- Use testing as a tool, not a weapon. Know what test scores mean.

An equalization agenda:

- Prioritize allocation of resources to enhance, extend and ensure leaning opportunities.

- Set and maintain high standards for learning conditions.
- Establish community schools with wraparound services. (Teachers can't be everything: social workers, etc.)
- Increase transparency and accountability.
- Engage local community as a partner.
- Treat language and culture as resources to be cultivated and sustained.
- Change educational policies that limit the ability to undertake efforts that systemically address student needs.

Schools improve with five ingredients:

1. Coherent institutional guidelines where teachers plan together.
2. Ongoing professional development. (Universities do not produce master teachers.)
3. Strong parent-community-school ties.
4. Student-centered learning climate.
5. Shared leadership to drive change.

Look at success stories:

- Hollenbeck Middle School, East L.A., where kids are in control of learning.
- Bronx Academy of Language and Technology, immigrant children, 95 percent graduate, teachers plan lessons collaboratively. "We are like family."
- Eagle Academy, Newark, NJ, six schools with mentoring and extracurricular.
- Social Justice Humanitas Academy, L.A, where students evaluate teachers and first three days devoted to building community. Fourth highest graduation rate in L.A.

Educators can promote equity:

- Cultivate agency: individual and collective problem solving.
- Foster deeper learning: critical thinking, problem solving and curiosity.
- Build social capital: bonds based on trust and solidarity between schools and communities

Ask:

- How do we get students excited about learning? (Rather than how do we increase achievement?)
- How do we hold all stakeholders accountable? (Rather than how do we hold teachers accountable?)
- How do we expand and enrich learning opportunities? (Rather than how do we close the achievement gap?)
- How do we create schools where a child's ethnicity and class are not predictors of success?

Narrow vs. Broad Approach:

Narrow

- Use pressure/closure to foster accountability
- Focus exclusively on achievement
- Use test scores to rank

- Adopt scripted, teacher-proof curriculum
- Hold principals/teachers accountable
- Treat parents as consumers
- Punitive discipline
- Encourage competition among schools

Broad

- Focus on learning conditions/capacity building
- Use assessment to diagnose
- Develop teacher skills continuously
- Focus on “whole child”
- Hold all stakeholders accountable
- Treat parents as partners
- Use discipline to develop character
- Expand learning opportunities
- Promote cooperation among schools

AIM HIGH!

Bobroff:

The Yazzi decision is an opportunity for change. Indigenous education is good for all, and teaching native culture and language enhances ability to read. NACA offers five indigenous languages and opens with a morning circle, honoring the culture. New Mexico lacks ongoing capacity to support quality education. We need:

- Teacher/principal coaching from experienced mentors.
- At least three hours a week of professional development.
- Investment in “growing our own” New Mexico teachers.
- Continuity in leadership in schools.
- To buffer education from politics.

Pay attention to whom is in the conversation about change; talk to people you don't now.
– Noguera

Indigenous education is good for all of us. – Bobkoff.



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