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Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children

Truancy Prevention and Intervention

Presented by Johanna Farmer, Esq.

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644,000 Native Students

90% of Native students attend public schools while 8% attend schools administered by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).

About a quarter (24%) of Native public-school students attend schools where the majority of students are Native. On the other hand, about half (49%) attend schools where less than 10% of the student body is Native.





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Native Youth Educational Attainment Barriers

- Graduation rates for Native students: 72% in public schools and 52% in BIE Schools.
 - National Average for non-Native students: 85%
- Native youth are less likely to feel that education will work for them or that a successful employment future awaits.
- Higher education is not viewed as a reasonable expectation.



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Native Youth Educational Attainment Barriers, cont'd

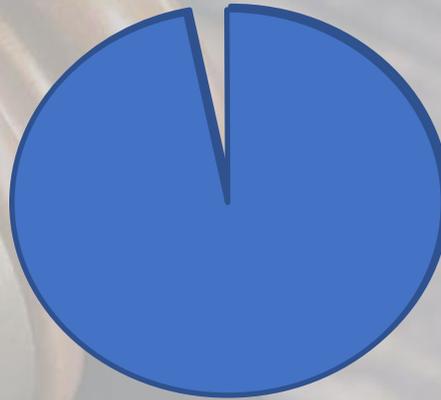
- Lowest-performing students in any category.
- Disproportionality suspended and expelled.
- Greater attendance problems than any other group.
- Highest rates of chronic absenteeism.



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The Cost of Truancy

- 98% of juvenile offenders started out as truants.
- Truant females have a higher probability of getting pregnant in their teen years.



**Truancy predicts 97%
of first time drug
users.**



**80% of prison inmates
were at one time truants.**



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Native Youth in the Justice System

- Receive either no court intervention or disproportionately severe sanctions.
- In juvenile halls, local jails and prisons more than other youth.
- Remain in detention the longest.



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Truancy Risk Factors

- Family Factors
- Economic Influences
- School Factors
- Student Variables



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As many risk factors exist, there are protective factors that exist. Individual. Family. Peer. School. Community. Culture.



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Types of Truancy Prevention and Diversion Programs

- School-based
- Community-based
- Court-based
- Hybrid



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Characteristics of Successful Programs

- Implementation of effective and relevant consequences for truancy.
- Motivational strategies used to bolster attendance.
- Truancy reduction services offered in the school and accessible community locations.
- Schools partnering with other social service providers and systems to implement truancy reduction initiatives. Schools partnering with other social service providers and systems to implement truancy reduction initiatives.
- Families being meaningfully engaged in meetings, services and other interventions.



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The Experience of One Program



ATTENDANCE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE



72 Students enrolled



Figure 15. Enrollment in the AAP by education level and age group.

64 Completed Intake Assessments³⁶

23 Completed Phoenix Assessments³⁷

100% have an AAP Achievement Plan

INCREASED CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

53 Participated in cultural programs

48% Of students (34 youth) successfully completed the AAP, and they demonstrated improved attendance, grades, goal setting, and life skills.

INCREASED EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT



The 2018 cohort has a **83%** success rate



Figure 17: Youth involvement with the AAP and their status at the end of FY 2018.

AAP HAS ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

These include:

- Increased awareness of the value of education
- Improved connection to resources and services
- Improved connection with tribal services
- Increased education skills and knowledge
- Reduced barriers to attending school regularly
- Increased participation in youth programs



179 families and students engaged and connected to resources

AAP HAS LED TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PROGRAM OPERATIONS



- Increased staffing including:
- 1 AAP Administrator
 - 1 Itom Yoemia⁴⁰ Navigator
 - 24 Case workers and counselors



Improved disbursement of information⁴² to families



Increased use of outreach to engage and educate families on AAP



Increased delivery of family care packages



Increased file accountability⁴¹



Improved coordination as a collaborative unit,⁴³ and,



Increased referrals to services and resources



Increased awareness of the program within the community and networks⁴⁴

Participation in Youth Programs



Figure 16. Participation in youth programs



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Benefits of Services-Based Interventions

- Addresses issues that brought the youth into the justice system
- Promotes the use of services rather than detention
- Provides coordination for each youth
- Designed as a cost-effective alternative



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Key Components for Collaborative Partnership

- Restorative
- Solution Based Approach
- Active Engagement
- Partnership
- Accountability



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A model of coordinated service delivery focused on self-determining families will achieve more sustainable outcomes for families and tribes.



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Recommendations

- Support tribal solutions.
- Provide funding through:
 - Full appropriations of money for federal legislation that has already passed Congress.
 - Utilization of unrestricted funding focused on building, enhancing, and expanding capacity in tribal communities.
 - Mechanisms like making it easier for tribal-state agreements for funding to go directly to tribes for programs the federal government only funds states for.
 - Equal opportunities for funding to tribes that is provided to states.
- Allow, encourage, and advocate for tribes to be at the tables where decisions are being made.