

Restart S.M.A.R.T Coalition Working Group Meeting
Friday April 23rd, 2021
1:00 PM



Attendees:

Jansen Azarias	Founder / CEO	Higher Ground
Stephanie Anderson	Coalition Project Director	Higher Ground
Rema Hamdan	Interim Executive Director	Higher Ground
John-Peter Wilhite	Director of Community Impact	Social Venture Partners (SVP)
Ava Butler	Organizational Development Consultant	Social Venture Partners (SVP)
Sara Long	The Rosedale Group	Social Venture Partners (SVP)
David Greenberg	Director of Education Initiative	New Mexico Community Schools
Dustin Williams	Pima County School Superintendent	Pima County Superintendent of Schools
Lee Lambert	Chancellor	Pima Community College
Randi Dorman	Community and business leader	R + R Develop
Chris Nanos	Sheriff	Pima County Police Department
Mark Montoya	Interim President	Community Foundation of Southern Arizona
Steve Holmes	Superintendent	Sunnyside Unified School District
Brittany Kovrig	Youth Leader	HG student for 13 years, undergraduate
Dr. Dan Ranieri	President and CEO	La Frontera
Jamal Givens	President / CEO	LPKNC
Jim Zarling	Business Owner, Youth Advocate	Retired, Private Business Participant
Gabriel Trujillo	Superintendent	Tucson Unified School District
Adelita Grijalva	County Supervisor, District 5	Pima County (TUSD Board member)
Bonnie Bazata	County Program Manager	Ending Poverty Now
Dr. Marla Franco	Assistant Vice Provost, Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Initiatives	University of Arizona
Charlinda Haudley	Project Manager, Office of Diversity, and Inclusion	University of Arizona
Margaret Chaney	President	Tucson Education Association
Maya Luria	Director, Senior Services	Tucson Medical Center



S Anderson	Dave Greenberg will share about the work that New Mexico is doing with regards to Community Schools
J Azarias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is community schools and how to make it sustainable here in Tucson? • Higher Ground is passionate about education and community. • Higher Ground has worked with the Center for Community Schools in New York and they are 3-4 decades ahead of us. • New Mexico is only a decade ahead of us and they have made Community Schools an integral part of their system in NM. • Look for similarities <i>and</i> look at the progression, growth, and necessary steps they took to get where they are at. Why we want to get there as a community. • In order to adopt what NM is doing to our community, <i>start thinking of who else is needed at the table.</i>
D Greenberg	Presentation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ground is a catalyst, not look to own this effort. HG is looking to have the community to own this model. • Has been able to speak with many communities across the country since Joe Biden’s announcement of budget increase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Schools • Pie Chart Quiz > How much in variance in student achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue > teacher • In-school factors > red • IN-SCHOOL >> less than 25% • Green > out of school factors • The profound impact of out of school factors have on student success. Wrestling with all these social determinants can be difficult when trying to be successful in school. • Community Schools help to address some of these gaps and restructure the paradigm of. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More equitable education system and community • Deep visioning • Engaging community partners • Grassroots vision of success • Research Practice Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stars have aligned with research and community schools. • Study in Albuquerque - Return on Investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantified value of what CS Coordinator > immediate, within 5 years • 7:1 return rate = For every \$1, \$7 returned • There is substantial research from each of the 4 pillars of Community Schools. • Community Schools is the Federal evidence-based model for support. • RAND study > positive impact on attendance and academic engagement • Vibrant research agenda to validate the success of this framework.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural diversity + geographic beauty • 50th in Child Well-Being a decade ago. • Has grown to 80 Community Schools statewide • A decision to approach as a statewide transformation strategy for education. • State level funding for community schools was the tipping point. • NEA-NM Center for Community Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides professional development. • Drives statewide advocacy. • In 2021 Increased statewide funding > \$5 mil • Yearly Overview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015 - launched a collective impact initiative > Success Partnership • 2016 - passed a resolution. • Attended many meetings / attended conferences to learn about framework. • 2017 - launched very first Community School > Lynn Middle School • Developed best practice model for New Mexico. • Grew capacity and had a number of successes. • 2018 - Established a Joint Powers Agreement • Formal agreement between public schools and many parts of the community • Established a formal board that included; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University, non-profits, grassroots voices, etc. • Allowed for shared collaborative leadership over CS, so the city felt comfortable continuing providing funding, while still having a stake • CS Best Practice Leadership Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools have a site-based leadership team that is community based • Intermediary leadership • Community-wide leadership (Community Stakeholders) ~ like this stakeholder meeting • Dec 2018 > Statewide Community Schools Meeting • Worked with New Mexico Governor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Schools became a part of her campaign • How to implement statewide? because focused in more urban regions • Jan 2019 > Community Schools Act and establishing a competitive grant program for establishing new CS • Launched about 20 more CS • 2020 - Strengthened coalition for different areas for data, tracking • State funding has continued to grow over the years
<p>QUESTIONS:</p>	
<p>D Williams</p>	<p>Where did the motivation come to start CS? Who brought the idea and what was the reasoning?</p> <p>-</p>



D Greenberg	<p>During a time when leadership was top down with top-down policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community was craving a vision for education that valued community voice and whole child. • Teachers' union and others were talking about the same things • At a non-profit that was taking on a Cradle to career partnership they were trying to unite the conversations. • Everyone was looking for a common agenda for education. • School district admin, teacher's union, non-profits, leadership committed, school board (1-2 members deeply invested in this) connected with school board candidates. • Meeting of the minds • This is a politically popular strategy in New Mexico
D Williams	How were you measuring success and failures?
D Greenberg	<p>This leads to a broader question of CS evaluation and success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a healthy dance between indicator success such as between RAND Study (attendance, behavior, and locally derived indicators and the need for deep, year-long planning process, needs and assets assessment. This effort includes 95-100% of students and families to determine values for success. • Marriage between traditional outcomes and locally derived outcomes is how we look at success - and for continuous improvement collaboratively.
D Williams	What does your population look like?
D Greenberg	<p>Las Cruces has many similarities to Tucson demographically.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we were able to secure \$2 mil, then doubled, then to \$5 mil - This effort has broad general support from legislature
R Dorman	Real exponential growth, 1 to 8 to 20. How did this happen? Was it one organization, or more ad hoc?
D Greenberg	<p>There was an existing Community Schools movement in Albuquerque and a Community Schools in Santa Fe (slightly different), but there was no statewide organizing structure.</p> <p>When Las Cruces 1st Community School opened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a lot of personal relationships leveraged • Governor coming into office, NEA, NM, Albuquerque, Santa Fe Team, Las Cruces partnership (Great work on the ground) • Yazi Martinez Lawsuit > NM was unconstitutionally funding education > ordered to invest in education • Put pressure on governor and state legislature to do something bold • Increased education budget 26% as opposed to 3% previously • The key was the groundwork that happened and then bringing it together when the moment was right.
D Ranieri	<p>We have been working on this since 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a long history of Cs in Tucson. • We started this when Dick Miranda asked for help with homicide prevention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% were young Hispanic males 18-25, every single one of them dropped out between middle school and high school



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All for social determinants > instability within their families, neighborhood, and community Stabilization of the youth and community was needed. Crime went down by 60% in first year at Apollo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key was the principal! If the principal buys in, then safer more healthier place If principal feels like infringing on their turf, then the model will not work.
D Greenberg	<p>There needs to be some additional capacity added to the school: a Community School Coordinator so role doesn't fall on School Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In NM had a well-known community school in northern New Mexico for 48 years, a book written about it. John Rodgers UCLA historian > wrote centennial paper about the community school There seems to be an ebb and flow about the model. It's not about reinvention, but piecing them all together and rediscovering what happened in the past and learning from those lessons.
D Ranieri	Why a middle school? > key transitional period
S Long	<p>I have worked with Jansen and Higher Ground for 4-5 years and met Dr. Ranieri.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equally important to principal buy-in is a funding stream. We won't be able to make any progress without funding
D Greenberg	<p>the funding stream and capacity is crucial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the right time to be thinking about funding for CS because the American Rescue Plan specifically mentions CS for funding stream Funding should not be an issue, not even counting Joe Biden's proposal for the federal increase from 330 mil to 443 million. How do we mobilize our networks to open doors to the funding? Being willing to recognize and to see this as the key strategy for recovery from COVID and key strategy to mobilize communities Lean in and use funding to recover and rebuild stronger
C Haudley	What role do parents play in the strategic planning and identification of outcomes? How are parents going to be positioned?
D Greenberg	Not just seen as in a deficit frame as a receiver of this work but invest in the process of mobilization. We need to be actively asking them about what they care about and what they want to see and work on that.
J Azarias	<p>Parents, families and caring adults are "Baked" into the process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are part of the first assignment that Restart SMART coordinators engage past the youth Steering committee is purposefully made up of families and community members Intentional approach to starting this with the family voice right away
C Haudley	<p>Are we thinking about students who may not live with their biological families?</p> <p>How will they get the familial support?</p>



J Azarias	Yes. The Higher Ground mapping helps us to understand the family make-up and work closely with district and partners that do this support work.
M Chaney	<p>it is great to have an organization like Higher Ground pushing this effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lot more buy-in and feelings of safety and acceptance with Higher Ground involved in this effort. • Middle schools are in need. That is where they leave and come back for high school. • The Restart SMART framework will be Instrumental in bringing back enrollment and solidifying behavioral issues for TUSD.
J Azarias	<p>Timeline</p> <p>We have 20+ leaders in the meeting acknowledging that this is something that the community wants. Dave says we are really not that far off Let's all get on the same track!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When New Mexico started off, they didn't have state funding either. • The iteration that we know of started off in 2009 with Apollo Middle School with LFC with principal Ray Chavez • This was established with private funding • 2010 > coalition formed • 2015 > Mayor Rothschild & CNCS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100s of AmeriCorps members were deployed to TUSD, SUSD, and Flowing wells to increase HS graduation and FAFSA completion. • Increase 3% in grad rates, increase 11% in FAFSA completion • 2017 > conversation about the importance of middle school, pivot to middle school and chronic absenteeism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ground is recruited to utilize mapping strategy to engage family, look at whole child, and activate partners into the school. • 60% - 70% increase in attendance • Referral success rate: 30-80% increase depending on school site, leadership, and AmeriCorps member • 2018 > National Center for Community Schools became involved and made recommendations. They identified gaps such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding sustainability, most sustainable path is to figure out state level funding. • AmeriCorps model, AmeriCorps model limited because model required Community School team to stay beyond one year to collaborate with school and community leadership. • Lack of a coalition • Lack of localized steering committees. • Recognize the challenges of getting funded by the state Strong coalition could be strategy to get funded by the state • 2020 > Dr. Trujillo and Steve Holmes committed to investing funding into CS • Strategic alignment with SUSD > middle schools in Sunnyside would become CS



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in from superintendents is absolutely amazing • Higher Ground decided that Community Schools and Restart SMART Framework would be a primary focus for organization. <p>THERE ARE 2 parallel tracks that need to be built</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom track > schools track <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a very rich track that parallels a national model • Higher Ground has activated over 40 partners in one year in one school • Safford and Lawrence • Already have success stories • Activated Yaqui Wellness Center in Lawrence • Top track > Coalition track <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we create a strong voice in the community to activate the support and funding? • Strong coalition necessary to get to state-level funding • Collaborative Leadership and Practices a pillar of community schools • Looking at 20+ leaders who committed their time to this effort • Tucson is rich in community organizations and programs • Our role is to activate all the other nonprofits and switchboard them into the schools • We have a very robust history and foundation in Tucson to make this happen!
D Ranieri	<p>Outcome measures: what % of students who started at the school year, finished at the school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a coordinator to assess the needs and constantly pulling in the resources, and handling the scheduling • Meet with kids and families to get a sense of what they need and what can be delivered to them through the school • Key is a good coordinator working with a dedicated principal
J Azarias	<p>26% when started Higher Ground youth engagement services, went up substantially by the end of the first year</p> <p>We need to target this to middle school where there is the greatest need, and provide family stabilization</p>
D Greenberg	<p>In both Las Cruces and Tucson, most of non-profits in Tucson are funded to support these vulnerable populations, so the funding is there. This is just another opportunity to serve for the organization.</p>
R Dorman	<p>The concept of CS does not need proof of concept</p> <p>We all know that it works and believe in it</p> <p>This is not the group for implementation, but the group that is going to tip the scales.</p> <p>Who in this group who can work on legislative looking into? The Governor's race in 2022?</p> <p>We need to look into American emergency fund, and other areas</p>
J Azarias	<p>Absolutely, we have the implementation that exceeds national outcomes</p> <p>This is what the group is meant for - exactly what Randi spoke about.</p>



S Anderson	We need a group of champions to do the groundwork to work out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy landscape• Political landscape• Start to create a strategy for how things are going to move forward in an advantageous way• Who is willing to put in an investment of time and energy to be a part of the coalition or identify a member of their team to be involved?• What is the strategy to get a coalition going?• Stephanie will send out an email after this meeting, where you can reply with lingering questions and whether you or another person will be joining.
D Greenberg	There is no silver bullet, but if there was in our field, it would be community schools. Community Schools is an opportunity to take the work that HG has started and leverage that to truly transform education in Tucson.

These notes were compiled from Rema Hamdan and Stephanie Anderson. If you have changes, comments or additions, please forward them to stephanie@higherground.me for revision and redistribution.