



Overall Updates with TUSD

- Character Lab in TUSD – Palo Verde, Pueblo and Hollinger. Still waiting on the District to push their data to Character Lab. Character Lab is working with the School Research Leads to prepare the research activities at those schools. This project will bring Dr. Angela Duckworth’s scientist and organization straight to the heart of Tucson and make TUSD a part of a nationwide research network.

- Community Schools Initiative – This is Community Schools that involve Americorps members placed at several school sites. While this is not the full service model, this allows Higher Ground to begin some work at several schools of need at TUSD using Americorps Members. The focus of this initiative is solely on chronically absent students and improving college access.
 - Last school year, Higher Ground increased the attendance of 78% of chronically absent students we worked with in several TUSD schools.
 - This year Booth-Fickett and Pueblo are active sites for Americorps Coordinators.
 - Still recruiting Americorps members to place School Coordinators at C.E. Rose and Palo Verde.
 - Pueblo’s School Coordinator started 9/10/18, has been training, acclimating to Pueblo’s school culture, and building relationships with school staff, and participating in on-campus groups like Boys to Men.
 - Palo Verde has a 900-Hr Resource Navigator focusing solely on college access work with 11th and 12th grade students.
 - Currently in the 3 active schools, there are 2321 total students in the 6th-8th grade. 658 of these students are chronically absent (28.3%). [Chronically absent is missing 10% or more days of schools.
 - There are currently 35 chronically absent students that is currently on Higher Ground’s caseload.

- Full Service Community School at Hollinger – A full service community school has a full time community school director hired by a partner non-profit, that acts as an assistant principal at the school site, whose only focus is to address the non-academic needs of the school to ensure student success. They do a needs analysis and bring in resources from other organizations to create a strategic approach in solving the challenges that schools face. Higher Ground recognizes that majority of the issues in high poverty schools are non academic and curriculum related but instead issues of socio-emotional needs such as homelessness, poverty, mental health, behaviors, food supply, and family issues. Partnering with a non profit whose expertise are around this allows a school to focus on academic and curriculum issues that they are experts in. This is an evidenced based highly effective strategy that is extremely more cost effective to school districts than funding single programs or more staffing to address these non academic issues.
 - Higher Ground funded 100% of the position for a Community School Director - zero cost to the district.



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- In addition to a Higher Ground funded FT Community School Director, Hollinger also has an Americorps Coordinator funded by Higher Ground.
 - There are 215 middle school students at Hollinger, with 55 of them being chronically absent (25.6%).
 - The School Coordinator and Community School Director currently have a total 35 active students on their caseload (received parent permission to begin coaching phases week of 10/1).
 - The School Coordinator and Community School Director have participated in and/or coordinated 40+ community engagement and school support activities in the first quarter alone - including helping plan Mexican-American Heritage Month events, taking students to receive clothing and books for Operation School Bell, conducting home visits, joining student support meetings - PBIS, MTSS, Leadership Team, ASPE (parent group), and Site Council -, and volunteering in afterschool and weekend events - Maker Night, Pancake Breakfast, Food Distribution, and Wakefield Community Clean-Up. Eight existing community partners have been engaged with support by the Community School Director to either strengthen the relationship with Hollinger or for proposed expansion to other Community Schools - YOTO, McKinney Vento, Elements City Church, Assistance League of Tucson, Lifetouch, Community Share, Tucson Community Tennis Program, and Mr. Steve & Mr. Taylor Garden Supporters.
 - A family needs assessment received 83 responses during Open House, providing the top needs as before- and after-school care / athletics, dental care, health care / health insurance, and food assistance.
- Hollinger Judo/Jujutsu program - as part of the Community School Model, Higher Ground brought in an SEL focused Judo/Jujutsu program to Hollinger with 6th grade students who have behavior issues.

To quote Hollinger's principal Kamren Taravati

"Hollinger, K-8 has been incredibly blessed this school year, as the Hollinger Family was lucky enough to have been selected for a partnership with Higher Ground Resource Center. The Hollinger/Higher Ground Partnership was designed to support the development of a community school model, with Higher Ground being at the helm in terms of bridging the community to our students and their families. Now with every great program, comes great leadership. In that spirit, Higher Ground has afforded Hollinger an on-site, Community School Director named Rema Hamden. Ms. Hamden's work has been absolutely essential in the creation of systems that align family and student need to community resource. This is true in several different aspects of the Hollinger/Higher Ground partnership. If there is a need tied to after school support, then Ms. Hamden works to find placement for students. If there is a behavioral health concern, Ms. Hamden works to align a provider that specializes in the focus area to ensure optimal treatment. Additionally, Ms. Hamden works with Hollinger School Leadership, and staff to support in the expansion of structures that work to sustain a positive school climate and culture. Ms. Hamden's work is vital to the support of our school community, and as a principal, I am very fortunate to have her on our team."