

Tribal Attendance Pilot Project (TAPP)

KLAMATH SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHILOQUIN ELEMENTARY

Project Director:

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Tribal Partner:

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Family Advocate:

Felicia McNair

TAPP Objective:

1. Identify barriers to school attendance and provide supports for families to address these barriers
2. Analyze school systems and policies that support and/or hinder school attendance
3. Create a school culture that celebrates and encourages regular school attendance

TAPP Action Plan:

1. Hire a Family Advocate to engage with families and students in need of support
2. Hire a Project Supervisor to facilitate professional development and policies
3. Develop a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to meet bi-weekly and evaluate data and attendance conditions

Profile of School:

- Chiloquin Elementary: 48% American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled
- Chiloquin High School: 43% American Indian/Alaska Native reported students, 2016 graduation rate was 62.5%

(Data provided per Student Information System at school.)

Communication Plan:

1. Local Newspaper
2. Tribe created attendance brochure
3. Flyers, letter of introduction, letters inviting families to meet with Family Advocate
4. Participate in community events and collaborations
5. Attend all school activities where families attended

TAPP Efforts:

1. Professional Development for all staff in Cultural Responsiveness, Restorative Justice, Trauma Informed Schools, Writers Workshop, etc.
2. Family events with attendance incentives included
3. Attend all Family oriented events including family conferences, community activities, provided TAPP family activities

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TAPP Success:

Last school year a struggling, chronically absent student whose daily behaviors included fighting, not doing work, arriving mid-day then leaving a couple hours later, was able to attend Konaway Nika Tillicum, a camp made possible by TAPP. The student started the 2016-2017 academic year dedicated to set a new trend. The student committed to getting himself to school, having a parent call if he was sick, and was not suspended for fighting. This student's turn around represents the amazing and transformative potential of TAPP for students in our schools. In the own students' words, "I want to go back to Konaway." TAPP has been instrumental in facilitating such turn arounds for more than one student in our school.

Our student whose attendance most drastically improved began at an 88.9% attendance rate last school year to a 98.3% attendance rate this year. This student wrote me (the Family Advocate) an email sharing the positive impact of having the knowledge of how important school attendance is. The student continued to tell me that she does not want to her siblings to experience the same, prior lack of knowledge and attendance support that she experienced. This student's story highlights the need for the TAPP program and continued implementation in our schools.

Lastly, it was uplifting and promising to see the relationships and trust built between parents and the Family Advocates. Parents began contacting Family Advocates for help in getting their children to school and supporting regular school attendance.

Lessons Learned as a Family Advocate:

1. The importance of building trust with families, even though they know me
2. How to engage families and encourage them to attend activities
3. How to identifying families' barriers or solutions to regular school attendance, listening to their concerns, and ultimately how to build the rapport that allows families to disclose their needs

TAPP Barriers/ Challenges:

1. Inadequate time to provide the professional development that was planned for staff
2. Building trust with both families and students
3. Finding convenient times to engage families and plan events that they could attend

Role Partners Played:

- The Klamath Tribal Coordinator was a full participant in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) and communication link to the Tribal Administration and community
- The Tribal Coordinator also shared information with Family Advocate and increased their awareness of events in community and/or with the Klamath Tribe
- Other partners assisted with opening communication with families

Sustainability Plan:

- Continue developing knowledge and capacity for all staff to create a culturally responsive climate in the school and classroom that welcomes and supports our Tribal students