



Notes from the
Washington Elementary School District
Business Advisory Team
January 29, 2014 Meeting

Washington Elementary School District Superintendent Dr. Susie Cook welcomed attendees to the WESD Business Advisory Team (BAT) meeting and noted many new faces in the audience, indicating the BAT is growing. She thanked Representative Justin Pierce, Senator Adam Driggs, Phoenix Vice Mayor Bill Gates, Councilwoman Thelda Williams and WESD Governing Board President Tee Lamber and members Bill Adams and Clorinda Graziano for attending.

Dr. Cook introduced a brief video illustrating student engagement – students gave up their lunch period to interact with a custodian playing a drum, saying that it takes every one of us to teach our children. She then introduced Community Outreach Specialist Jill Hicks. Jill thanked Rob Kelly, Nothing Bundt Cakes, for the delicious buntinis he brought. She asked three finalists for *Mask Magazine's* 2014 Unity Award – LeAnn Hull, Andy Hull's Sunshine Foundation; Lorraine Tallman, Comfy Cozy; and Lisa Scarpinato, Kitchen on the Street – to stand, and encouraged BAT attendees to vote for them online. <http://www.maskmatters.org/unity-voting>

Jill introduced Eric Crown, cofounder of Insight Enterprises and 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient at the Governor's Celebration of Innovation. Eric began by sharing that he took an entrepreneurship class at ASU that required him to write a business plan. That plan and a credit card cash advance led to the start of Insight Enterprises, one of the largest computer resellers in the world. Eric explained some of the challenges of starting a company that grew so quickly, including the need to hire and train hundreds of people at a time. He and his brother worked with high schools and ASU, set up internships, worked with Junior Achievement, and had Insight staff members teach classes at ASU – all to entice young people to the business. To this day, Crown Scholarships are awarded to five to ten ASU entrepreneur students each year. Eric stated, "Education became the critical instrument in our success."

Success in entrepreneurship requires three things: you need drive, you need a great idea, and you need the capital required to make your idea work. (A great idea that requires more capital than you have access to is not a great idea.) Eric said he finds that two skills missing in today's young people are a general education (geography, history, basic knowledge) and drive or motivation (learning should be a desire, not just a necessity.) He said the key to success is hard work. "Hard work overcomes almost every single thing."

Perry Mason, principal of Mountain Sky Junior High, followed Eric Crown, speaking briefly about his school and introducing seventh grade science teacher, Mariano Guerra, who was named Middle School Science Teacher of the Year by the Arizona Science Teachers Association. Mariano shared his life and classroom experiences, saying "Students need to feel they have value; that the teacher, the school and the district cares." He teaches students that "they can do more" and that college is important for every child. He invited BAT members to come into his classroom and share their stories.

"Shining a Light on You" featured three organizations. Eric Maszton, of Epic Thrift, explained the fund-raising opportunities his business has for organizations. For every pound of reusable clothing donated, Epic Thrift will give the donor 12¢.

Eric Maszton
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Lisa Scarpinato of Kitchen on the Street explained the impact of hunger on academic success. She shared information on the food backpack program and said student reading scores increased by 12% and math scores by 26% after the backpacks were made available to students.

Lisa Scarpinato
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Cameron Quick, Together United, works with businesses and nonprofits to negotiate large discounts from retailers. The WESD Business Advisory Team members can take advantage of these savings. Also, he explained that Together United was donating a portion of the profits this year to support HopeFest.

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Before the meeting adjourned, Jill asked BAT attendees to complete a brief survey of their business organization – type of business/organization, whom it is trying to reach, and the closest schools to its location. The information will be used to further connect BAT members with their communities. She invited attendees to vote for their favorite We Can End Hunger student artwork that was displayed in the meeting rooms. The winning artwork will be used to promote the February We Can End Hunger Food Drive, supporting Desert Mission Food Bank.

The next WESD Business Advisory Team meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 23, 2014**.