



## At-Promise Movement Gains Momentum!

By Ernie Silva, Executive Director, RAPSAs

At RAPSAs's 2019 Forum, nearly 300 education and workforce leaders came together to celebrate AB 413 – the Nation's first legislation replacing the "at-risk" label with the inspiring "at-promise" articulation in both the California Education and Penal Codes. RAPSAs has begun developing a tool chest for leaders looking for curriculum, policy statements, and research explaining the importance of the term. <https://rapasa.org/at-promise-tool-kit/>

The Changing At-Risk to At-Promise Tool Kit will continue to grow with your submittals. We're looking for copies of editorials, curriculum, student projects, and legislation from other states. One of the critical issues is adopting a working definition of what "at-promise" encompasses. RAPSAs will be opening an online platform to capture your vision and your suggestions for how we articulate at-promise in a way that is constructive, reflective and functional.

California Legislator Reginald Jones-Sawyer, the author of the bill, was in attendance at the Policy Forum to provide the keynote address and receive RAPSAs's Vision Award. Attendees also enjoyed a special screening of the ground breaking film, "The Pushouts" facilitated by film producer Dawn Valadez. The Pushouts illuminates the schools to prison pipeline issues that push students out of school and into low-paying jobs and the criminal justice system. The story is told through the experience of Victor Rios who combines the authentic experience of growing up gang immersed in urban violence and as an academic researcher and professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Rios has published the first book to focus on using at-promise curriculum to encourage and grow students who face poverty, violence and trauma so that they know that they are at-promise of strong futures and productive lives.

Between October and now, there's been a lot of activity among education leaders to shift the conversation from the risk faced by students to their promise. Please write me and let know what else is happening in your school, district or county.

- RAPSA's October 16 Changing From At-Risk to At-Promise webinar with RAPSA Board Member, Julie Evans;
- November 14 AB 413 Author Reginald Jones-Sawyer provides RAPSA Forum's Keynote Address
- November 14 through the 16th Board Member and Journalism Professor Matthew LaPlante conducts a series of interviews with Forum attendees to capture how RAPSA participants are leading the change
- December 16 AB 413 Signing Celebration Event in Los Angeles featuring Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer, Senator Steven Bradford, RAPSA President Linda Dawson, Los Angeles County Office of Education Superintendent Debra Duardo, Los Angeles Unified Superintendent Austin Buetner and Education Consultant Larry Bell.
- January 9th Education Week was the first national publication to write about the growing use of At-Promise instead of at-risk.
- February 12th CBS was the first television network to feature a story about the impact on students from changing at-risk to at-promise.

Finally, at their February 25th meeting, the RAPSA Board and Advisory Committee Members finalized five major projects to advance the at-promise movement over the next year.

Define At-Promise Students. Advisory Committee Member Joe Herrity Joseph Herrity Joseph\_Herrity@scoe.org will be leading an effort to create a practical definition of who at-promise students are. His interest is in recognizing and differentiating definitions of Opportunity Youth and others. Larry Bell has encouraged the development of an On Line interactive platform for sharing ideas and finding a consensus.

Survey Practitioners. Board Member Julie Evans JEvens@tomorrow.org will lead the effort to Identify Needs and Strategies for Serving At-Promise Students. Julie's Project Tomorrow is a leader in the field of educational surveys and will develop a survey of at-promise youth and adult supporters to identify needs of at-promise students.

Media Outreach. Board Member Mathew LaPlante Matthew LaPlante matthew.laplante@usu.edu will work with RAPSA Members to develop essays and opinion pieces based on interviews at the Forum. Board Member Tony Simmons will work with Matthew to develop place Pod Casts based on issues raised in the essays.

Develop RAPSA At-Promise School Designation. Board Member Tony Simmons tony@hsra.org will identify practices and characteristics of schools successfully serving at-promise students for National recognition. The work product may result in physical awards; media pieces; and recognition at RAPSA Forum.

Identify At-Promise Curriculum and Pedagogy. This fifth project is looking for a Leader. The foundation of RAPSA is to provide professional development for education and community leaders serving at-promise students. RAPSA can be the repository of emerging best practices and work to distribute these practices.

If you're interested in working on any of the five projects or have advice for direction, send me a note or contact the leader of the project that you are interested in.