**Monday, May 22, 2017**

**For Immediate Release**

**BLACKWELL SCHOOL RECEIVES HELP FROM UT SAN ANTONIO**

**Marfa, Texas**

The Blackwell School Alliance hosted a visit this past Saturday by Bill Dupont, Director of the Center for Cultural Sustainability at the University of Texas, San Antonio. Mr. Dupont is bringing a team of historic preservation graduate students to Marfa and the Blackwell School in July as part of a summer seminar. This recent weekend trip gave him a chance to look at the school building and meet some of the people involved in its preservation.

Bill Dupont and his students will contribute to a Historic Structure Report (HSR) currently being prepared by the Blackwell School Alliance. Students will conduct detailed investigations of the building, deed and map research at the Presidio County Courthouse, and interviews with former Blackwell School students and others familiar with the building’s history.

The Blackwell School Alliance has been working with local architect Mike Green and representatives of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to lay the groundwork for an HSR. Consultation is also being provided by historian Lonn Taylor and architect Peter Stanley.

An HSR describes the building’s history and existing condition through historical documentation, photos, drawings, and physical descriptions. Broadly recognized as an effective part of preservation planning, an HSR also addresses goals for the adaptive use of the property. It provides a carefully considered road map for restoration. Grant applications have been submitted to the THC and philanthropic foundations to pay the expenses of the report not covered by the students’ work.

Alliance President Gretel Enck says, “We are over the moon to get going on this project with such a dedicated and experienced team. This is a very important step toward achieving our long-term goal of creating a fully functional museum and community center at the Blackwell School.”

The Blackwell School Alliance will host a public presentation by the students of UTSA to share their findings at the completion of their field work in July.

The Blackwell School served the Mexican American students of Marfa from 1889 until 1965 when Marfa schools achieved integration. Today the Blackwell School welcomes visitors to learn about this important piece of Marfa history. Open hours are Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Learn more at [www.blackwellschool.org](http://www.blackwellschool.org/).

Photo Caption 1: The team conducts a preliminary building walk-around, from left to right: Lonn Taylor, Mario Rivera, Mike Green, Bill Dupont

Photo Caption 2: Mario Rivera, Blackwell School Alliance Vice-President, and Bill Dupont look at old building photos inside the Blackwell School.