

OCTOBER 2020



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Recommendations to Strengthen Schools

It could be viewed as New Mexico's perfect storm: COVID and online learning, shrinking school budgets, and meeting the requirements of the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit. Each one in its own right impacts school districts and student learning on a daily basis. With perseverance, schools throughout the state are marching forward during the pandemic, while behind the scenes long-term strategies are being discussed at the highest levels.

NMCEL leadership and district superintendents recently met with the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) to flesh out 2021 legislative recommendations that could potentially shore up the state's educational foundation during this "storm."

NMCEL Executive Director Stan Rounds said that we must act together in support for our public schools and he presented a draft of eight initial recommendations to the LFC. The committee members also heard from Dr. Arsenio Romero, superintendent of the Deming Public Schools, along with members of his staff, who provided a local school district's perspective to the issues.

Several of the proposed recommendations focused on money matters:

1. The Legislature must support district cash balances – Unlike two years ago, Rounds stated this is a time where districts must be allowed the opportunity to manage their cash balances; unimpeded as they manage through the crisis;
2. The Legislature, with assistance from school leaders, must develop prior year averaging methodology for student membership through FY 23 because of the significant fluctuations of student membership numbers brought on by

—continued p. 14

Despite Challenges, Las Cruces Remote Learning Going Well

As of October 6, 2020, teachers and students in the second largest New Mexico school district had spent 187 days in remote learning, spanning the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years. Yet, their challenges, large and small, have been met with support throughout the community. Dr. Karen Trujillo, Superintendent of the **Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS)**, reported to the Las Cruces School Board recently that it has taken a village to meet instructional needs during a pandemic and they've had their share of hurdles, but with collaboration, partnerships and patience, all is going well.

Trujillo said LCPS began remote learning last spring — on March 13 — when COVID was spreading in New Mexico. And like all other districts, LCPS had to solve a myriad of challenges, including how to feed meals to students, developing a "Remote Learning Plan," how to grade, providing Internet access community-wide, and creating a YouTube channel for the district, to name a few. "We took the bull by the horns as a district," Trujillo said. "We knew online was a reality that wasn't going away."

To date, 30,000 accounts have been added to the district's Canvas learning management system software that is used daily. District leaders and teachers honed instructional guides to mitigate for summer learning loss and now, entering the second nine-weeks of school, LCPS is being asked by the NM PED to share Las Cruces' uniquely created courses, Spanish

— continued p.12



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Stan's Straight Talk

STAN ROUNDS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Colleagues:

As we look forward to the remainder of this fall and set our sights on the districts throughout New Mexico and the erupting challenges for the remainder of 2020, it is easy to

witness the dedication of our districts' leadership statewide. I am reminded that the strength of leadership and the commitment of leaders is galvanized by hard times. Such is the case in this school year of 2020-21. More than ever, the need for clear/crisp decisions, thoughtful/forgiving reactions, and consistent/full support are required in daily educational practice in this state.

Today, we are in hard times. We are in a generational crisis that I suspect will be as defining and impactful as the Great Depression on the generation of children in our schools today. The continuing impact of the Corona Virus (COVID) on this generation is placing indelible impressions and setting a pall of uncertainty into the day-to-day lives of this generation. The certainty of "normal" school experiences is replaced with the abnormality of isolation from peers, the impersonality of the teacher-student relationship and the depressive nature of the array of unknowns. Together, these factors are creating an exhaustion of spirit in our students to a level not experienced in our lifetimes, leading to a crisis of optimism and hope.

As the education leadership of this state, we have the capacity to interfere, in a positive way, with this calamity of the times. I have been blessed to be a part of this unique New Mexico fraternity of public educators for more than 47 years.

I know the quality and capacity of our fabric. I know that we have persevered through many a rocky and dusty road and together have succeeded through the challenges that have been encountered. Today, more than ever, it is our time to "get to work" and take the reigns and guide our public schools through this gauntlet.

It is time to be proactive, perseverant, and passionate about our mission. With the continuing ebb and flow of remote/hybrid/in-person learning that will be likely for the next 12-18 months, it is time for us to develop and redesign our educational system from the local, grassroots level and care for the educational needs of our youth. It is time for us to assure stability at our schoolhouses and set our schools as the centerpiece of each of our communities. It is our duty and responsibility to assure

that every student is connected to us and has us as their azimuth point which assures them that they are not minimized or forgotten. We have the capacity to design our daily practice to support the "whole child" and to wipe away the despair and deprivation created by these times.

Our mission must be to combine all our resources in a focused, productive way to assure that every opportunity for student impact and support is realized in every community, every day. This requires that all our

—continued p. 14

"Our mission must be to combine all our resources in a focused, productive way to assure that every opportunity for student impact and support is realized in every community, every day."

2020/2021 NMCEL EXECUTIVE BOARD



Back Row L-R: Stan Rounds, Exec Director; Ben Santistevan, COSSEP; Russell Goff, NMAER; Brian Dooley, RECA; Patrick Arguelles, APSPA (Alt); Erik Bose, Past-President; Jude P. Garcia, APSPA; Ricky Williams, SNMERC. **Middle Row** L-R: Bonnie Lightfoot, ENMERC; Dwain Haynes, CES; Jeremy Abshire, COSSEP; Christina Velasquez, President-Elect; Travis Dempsey, NMSSA President; Maria Jaramillo, Past-President; **Front Row** L-R: Julie Arnold, NMASSP; Karla Crane, NMCASE; Lillian Torrez, NMSSA Past-President; Jo Lynn Gallegos, Business Manager; Will Hawkins, President; and Stacey Duncan, NMSU Alliance. **Not pictured:** Mark Barela, NMAESP; Patricia Beecher, COSSEP; David Chavez, CES (Alt); Traci Filiss, NMSTE; Rosemary Gallegos, COSSEP; Annette Johnson, NMAER (Alt); Bill Lewis, NMPFMA; Cindy Cims, NMSPA; Victoria Tafoya, NMABE; Brian Clark, COSSEP; and Warman Hall, newly elected to NMASSP.

Memo from the NM Secretary of Education

In case you missed it, this Memorandum was sent to all NM Superintendents, Charter Leaders and School Board Members on Oct. 16, 2020, regarding the "Impact of the new Public Health Order on New Mexico's Public Schools."



October 16, 2020

Dear Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

On Thursday October 15, 2020, Governor Lujan Grisham announced updates to the public health order for New Mexico. Included in the new restrictions was an announcement that mass gatherings are now limited to five people (a decrease from the previously allowed 10-person gathering).

This memo serves to inform you that public schools are exempt from the current Public Health Order in the following manner:

- Schools currently operating in hybrid are exempt and may continue to operate at 50%;
- Micro-districts currently operating at full capacity are exempt and not impacted by the current public health order;
- Remote schools currently operating 5:1 small groups are exempt and may continue to conduct small group instruction according to that ratio;
- Schools/Districts currently in remote who have already articulated their reopening plans to the school community when they were in a green county and the state was meeting its gating criteria may begin hybrid, as scheduled.

As a state, we are no longer meeting the statewide gating criteria and our daily case numbers are increasing exponentially. New Mexico state health officials announced 672 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday, along with a total death toll of 922 people. The Public Education Department stands in solidarity with those mourning a loss to this horrible virus. In addition to placing an untenable burden on our healthcare systems and facilities, the rapid spread of COVID-19 across New Mexico limits our ability to open more schools and could potentially impact schools already open for hybrid instruction in the near future.

The Public Education Department, Department of Health, and the Governor's Office are reviewing data and considering the establishment of thresholds above which a preemptive return to remote learning in high-impact counties may be necessary. The Department urges those schools and districts who are currently in remote but who have been previously authorized to move to hybrid to strongly consider the potential risks for spread in your local community, as well as the possibility that a closure in the upcoming weeks may be necessary if virus spread rates continue to climb when making local decisions about whether or not to shift into hybrid learning at this time.

The Public Education Department takes adherence to COVID-Safe practices during the pandemic very seriously. For example, mask wearing has been consistently documented as one of the most important actions that can be taken to prevent the spread of the virus. It is critical that all of us as educators work together to ensure 100% adherence to this mandate not just within our hallways and classrooms, but also as our educators and families go about their day-to-day lives within our communities.

The Governor has restricted mass gatherings to a total of five people. This will necessarily impact plans for school fundraisers, parent-teacher conferences, and more. We urge you to take these guidelines seriously and to maintain fidelity to the public health order outside of school hours and buildings.

The Public Education Department and our sister agencies will continue to closely monitor reports of violations of COVID-Safe practices in schools and follow up with appropriate enforcement actions as necessary.

Should you have any questions about this information, please do not hesitate to contact your PED point of contact.

Sincerely,

Ryan Stewart, Ed.L.D.
Secretary of Education
State of New Mexico

NMCEL Affiliates

- Albuquerque Public Schools Principals Association (APSPA)
- Alliance for the Advancement of Teaching & Learning (NMSU)
- Cooperative Educational Services (CES)
- Coalition of State Supported Educational Programs (COSSEP)
- Eastern New Mexico Educational Resource Center (ENMERC)
- New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA)
- New Mexico Association of Educational Retirees (NMAER)
- New Mexico Association of Bilingual Educators (NMABE)
- New Mexico Association of Elementary School Principals (NMAESP)
- New Mexico Association of School Business Officials (NMASBO)
- New Mexico Association of Secondary School Principals (NMASSP)
- New Mexico Council of Administrators of Special Education (NMCASE)
- New Mexico Public Facilities Management Association (NMPFMA)
- New Mexico School Personnel Association (NMSPA)
- New Mexico School Superintendents' Association (NMSSA)
- New Mexico Society for Technology in Education (NMSTE)
- Regional Educational Cooperatives Association (RECA)
- Southeastern New Mexico Educational Resource Center (SNMERC)

2020 Report: Teacher Vacancies Decline

Each year, the NMSU SOAR (Southwest Outreach Academic Research) Center for Evaluation & Policy conducts a state Educator Vacancy Report. This year's report, published Oct. 6, 2020, shows several significant differences compared to the previous year.

Under the direction of Director Rachel Boren, Ph.D., the report gives superintendents, policy-makers and higher education insight into staffing needs, for primarily teachers, in K-12 schools. The document also provides insight into "the pipeline of educators from the colleges and universities in the state."

"This Center does an amazing job of compiling this data," said Stan Rounds, NMCEL Executive Director. "The numbers put context to the difficult job of forecasting future trends when hiring staff."

Position	Number of Vacancies
Teachers	571
Educational/Instructional Assistants	173
Counselors	41
Instructional Coaches	32
Emotional/Behavioral Support Providers	20
Administrators (Principals and Assistant Principals)	16
Speech Language Pathologists	16
Educational Diagnosticians	13
School Psychologists	7
Total Vacancies	889

Table One: Educator Vacancies by Position

One of the most pertinent facts is that in all, there were a total of 889 educator vacancies, 571 of which were teachers and 173 were Educational Assistants. The previous year (2019) there were 644 teacher vacancies.

The report pointed out the "decrease is encouraging, however, to address the vacancy problem, attention [is needed] to both recruiting teachers *and* effectively retaining current teachers."

The greatest need was for elementary teachers (183) which is 29% of the total teacher vacancies, followed by special education teachers (153), which is 27%. This mirrored the previous year's pattern. The report also breaks down the vacancies by region. The Central Region continues to have the highest number of vacancies with 258. [APS, Belen, Bernalillo, Estancia, Los Lunas, Moriarity-Edgewood, Mountainair, Pecos, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe and Vaughn.] That's actually a slight decrease from last year when the total was 309.

Vacancies in other regions are: Southeast-118; Northwest-113; Southwest-61; and Northeast-21.

The vacancies grouped by subject matter areas were also the same as the previous year, however, there were slight decreases in each area. Mathematics, science, English language arts, and music having the greatest needs at 54, 33, 31, and 25, respectively. They were followed by social studies, health/PE, fine arts, technology/media, general education, Spanish and English Language Development.

There was also a decrease in the vacancies for Educational Assistants (instructional assistants). There were 85 fewer openings compared to the year before. The total in 2020 was 173, and the majority were in general educational settings and in the elementary schools.

—continued on page 9

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From A to Z, CES Provides Support to Educators: ASA

This is second in a series of stories about support from the Cooperative Educational Services, which provides resources to New Mexico's school district employees.

The **Aspiring Superintendents Academy (ASA)** was created in 2008 through the collaborative efforts of Dr. Hugh Prather, Dr. Gloria Rendon and Mr. Tom Sullivan, all well-known former Superintendents and educational leaders in the state of New Mexico. Through their leadership efforts the first Aspiring Superintendents Academy was launched by NMCEL in school year 2008-09 with the hope of beginning to address the superintendent turnover rate in the state. The goal of the Aspiring Superintendents Academy has been to:

- Give participants an in-depth look at the skills and personal resources necessary to do the job of the school district superintendent.
- Allow participants to interact with and learn from experienced and proven superintendents.
- To build the confidence of leaders who have an administrative credential and leadership experience at the school and/or district level, but not ventured into the role of superintendent.
- Provide participants the opportunity to experience real-life experiences and projects in their role as an Aspiring Superintendent.
- Build the pool of superintendent candidates with people who are better informed and prepared to become school district superintendents.

Over the years, the program has grown and experienced a few different facilitators, but always former superintendents facilitated the program. Approximately 120 candidates have gone through the program over the years, and a fair number of those candidates have gone on to serve school districts throughout the state of New Mexico.

The program's curriculum is rich in activities and experiences which range from a study of in-depth topics such as Transformational Leadership; Effective Communication with All Stakeholders; Board Superintendent Relationships, Roles and Responsibilities;

Development of District Budgets, etc., to engaging experiences associated with Mock Interviews, Legislative Interaction and leading a year-long district project which is presented to the cohort group at the end of the school year.

Bobbie Gutierrez, former Superintendent of Santa Fe Public Schools and Espanola Public Schools, returned to ASA this year, and is co-facilitating Cohort 12 along with Stacy Diller, former Superintendent of Des Moines Municipal Schools and Clayton Municipal Schools.

Past ASA Facilitators include: Dr. Hugh Prather, Tom Sullivan, Dr. Gloria Rendon, Barbara Vigil-Lowder, former Superintendent Bernalillo Public Schools; Michael Grossman, former Superintendent Lake Arthur Municipal Schools; and Gutierrez.

Participants in Cohort 12 include: Louis Alvarez, Silver Consolidated Schools; Lawrence Sanchez, Belen Municipal Schools; Christina Freeman, Las Cruces Public Schools; Kenneth Moore, Alamogordo Public Schools; Vanessa Romero, Santa Fe Public Schools; Hilario "Larry" Chavez, Santa Fe Public Schools; Tammy Richards, NMAA (working with Rio Rancho Public Schools for ASA); John Maldonado, Mora Independent Schools; Lefonso Castillo, Mora Independent Schools; Nathan Pierantoni, Farmington Municipal Schools; and Nicole Lambson, Farmington Municipal Schools.

"I am really enjoying and learning from this course!" said Kenneth Moore, Alamogordo Public Schools High School Principal. "I've been in many similar courses where I felt I was wasting time, but not this not one of them. I feel blessed to be part of this small cohort of amazing people who all have the same mental defect of thinking about being a superintendent, with very experienced and insightful facilitators. This is right where I need to be, and I'm grateful!"

Vanessa Romero, another cohort 12 participant and Associate Superintendent from Santa Fe also said "I'm so grateful for this opportunity. It's been a humbling experience to learn from such great leaders from around the state."

—Stacy Diller and Bobbie Gutierrez
ASA Facilitators



Stacy Diller



Bobbie Gutierrez



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Fall Sports Succumbs to Pandemic, Gov. Orders Postponement

Due to the announcement from Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham that interscholastic athletics cannot take place during the Fall Semester because of COVID-19 related public health concerns, the New Mexico Activities Association has been forced to postpone its volleyball, cross country, and Fall golf seasons.

NMAA Executive Director Sally Marquez said they “were planning and hoping to begin competition as our member schools are eager to safely integrate sports and activities back in to our students’ lives. At this point, however, we cannot stage any competitive events without an update to the public health order.”

Reactions have been mixed. In Las Cruces, high school students held a peaceful protest with signs, voicing their disappointment with the decision. In Santa Fe, one coach was reported saying they will “make some modifications, but this isn’t going to end anything for us. We’ve worked too hard to get here.”

The Roswell Daily Record reported that peaceful protests also took place in Roswell, Artesia, Hobbs, Lovington and Carlsbad. Parents spoke out about the stress their children are feeling not only about the sports ban, but also about remote learning.

NMAA officials said at this time, they are working on a calendar adjustment that would move volleyball and cross country to the Spring. The Spring golf season will continue as originally planned.

“Our goal remains the same, to have every sports season take place during the 2020-2021 school year. It’s not ideal, or the timeline that we had hoped, but we will play again New Mexico.”

— Content provided in part by
Dusty Young
NMAA Associate Director



Vacancies (cont. from p.5)

The other half of the report “looks at the number of students who completed an Educator Preparation Program...and the number of who were admitted to a program during the last academic year (2019-2020).”

One of the differences cited this year was due to the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology which added a new alternative licensure program that admitted students in 2019. Altogether, there were four 2-year colleges and eight 4-year universities/colleges that had educator prep programs, for a total of 1,287 students who were admitted in 2019/20. Of the total, 927 students completed the program which is an increase of 193 “admits” and 181 “completers” over the previous year.

In terms of grade level, there was very little change compared to last year in the number of students preparing in all areas. And, when

	Admits		Completers	
	Number of Students	Percent of All Admits	Number of Students	Percent of All Completers
Early Childhood	94	7%	53	6%
Elementary	497	39%	239	26%
Secondary	342	27%	351	38%
Special Education	269	21%	186	20%
K - 12	85	7%	98	11%
Total	1,287		927	

Table Four: 2019 - 2020 Admits and Completers by Program/Grade Level

looking at the subject area that future teachers are preparing for, the report shows that the highest number are those in social studies (with 68 completers) following by science, English language arts, math, and music. There were also 92 students who completed the requirements for a bilingual/TESOL endorsement.

Read the report at <https://alliance.nmsu.edu/soar/pubs/> where several other educational publications are available. Data was collected by researchers Olivia Dorn, Giovanna Perez, and Gopal Tamang.

NMAA Board Meeting

The New Mexico Activities Association’s Board of Directors held an Emergency Meeting on Thursday, October 1st via Zoom. Executive Director Sally Marquez presented a discussion item pertaining to a recent inquiry from the New Mexico School Boards Association regarding scholastic eligibility.

The Board of Directors also took action on the following items on an emergency and temporary basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

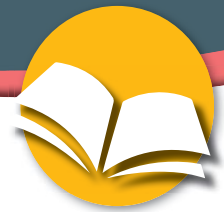
- Voted in favor of a proposal to update scholastic eligibility bylaws for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Voted in favor of a proposal to allow an eligibility exemption for current students at Santa Fe Indian School.

The next regular NMAA Board of Directors’ meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2020.

—Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director



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LCPS Remote Learning (cont. from p.1)

guides, and other best practices for online learning.

Technology has understandably become a key tool for teachers to deliver content, preK-through-12th grade. Trujillo said LCPS acted quickly in ordering hardware for students and staff. By September 1, they had checked out more than 16,000 tablets and laptops, added key hotspots around the community in partnership with Comcast Cable, and raised more than \$30,000 through a “Stuff the Bus” campaign to buy school supplies that included headphones. This “collaboration is so immense” in order to serve 25,000 students, she said.

Students also are providing solutions to families finding difficulties with remote learning. The LCPS Student Advisory Council, an organization of high school students that provides feedback and advice to the School Board, and also sends a representative to sit with the Board during meetings, has structured a tutoring service for elementary and middle school students, Monday through Thursday. Experts from the administrative offices also assist in the outreach.

LCPS is keenly aware that COVID is active in Doña Ana County. Approximately 20 employees have tested positive over the past seven months. By Oct. 13, the Department of Health (DOH) reported Doña Ana had approximately 4,158 total COVID cases, behind only Bernalillo and McKinley counties (7,926 and 4,429, respectively). Trujillo said the district’s response to disinfect is swift and thorough, and they are “following the DOH and PED guidelines and LCPS has done contact tracing with the assistance of our nurses.”

As remote learning continues throughout the Fall, LCPS safety plans at all 41 schools will be followed, Trujillo added. Teams from each building devised a site-specific plan with protocols to maintain safety while the district increases the amount of teacher interaction, and class interaction, during the second nine-weeks. LCPS is also prepared for mid-October when hundreds of high school students take the SAT examination on site, following staggered schedules with no more than nine students in a classroom and everyone wearing a mask. Teachers have volunteered to be proctors and are trained on how to take temperatures, while custodial personnel and others working at the schools also are aware of all health guidelines.

“I’m just so proud of everything we’ve been able to do,” Trujillo added. “And, the partnerships don’t ever end.”



Las Cruces elementary educator Laura Bryant teaches from her “home” classroom, as do thousands of other New Mexico teachers.

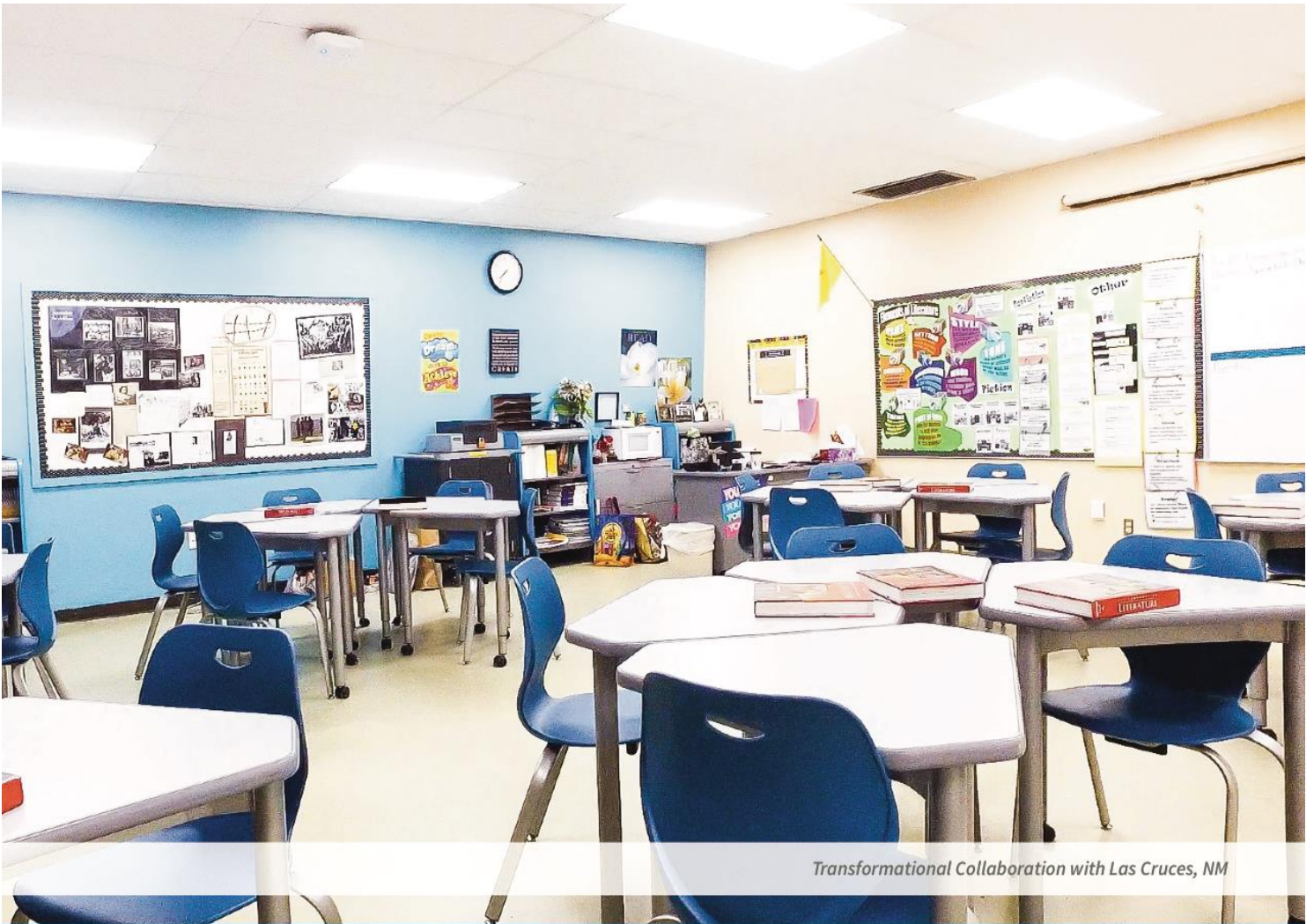
Let Us Introduce . . .

We’d like to present to you the new educational leaders in New Mexico. Each year, the Advocate features superintendents throughout the state who are new to the profession, to their position or to their district.



• **MS. RANDY ANN STICKNEY** began her employment with the **Zuni Public School District** in July 2014 as the Director of Instructional Support Services. She currently is both Interim Superintendent and Director of Instructional Support. Previously, she was Superintendent for Hammon Public Schools in Oklahoma for 12 years, and was Superintendent for Ninnekah Public Schools in Oklahoma for 8 years. During her 20 years as superintendent, she was active in Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration (CCOSA), OASA and Organization of Rural Oklahoma Schools (OROS). She served on the Superintendent’s Advisory Councils for both the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the Oklahoma State Department of CareerTech. Her career includes positions as a Counselor, Library Media Specialist, Gifted/Talented Teacher, Academic Team Coach, Creative Writing Teacher and French Teacher.

Ms. Stickney obtained her Bachelors of Arts in Education in Speech Communications from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant. She received her Masters of Education in Counseling from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. In addition, Ms. Stickney completed principal’s certification from East Central. She received her superintendent’s certification and additional post-graduate work with an emphasis in School Law from the University of Oklahoma (OU) and University of Oklahoma Law School in Norman. She firmly ascribes to Stephen Covey’s tenet that we should not be products of our circumstances, but rather we should be products of our decisions. Contact her at: randy.stickney@zpsd.org



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Recommendations to Strengthen Schools (cont. from p. 1)

COVID. The establishment of “surety” of resource is a necessity for proper and balanced management of public school through this crisis;

3. Future CARES Act type funding should be allowed without consideration for base adjustment as happened in the Special Session of 2020. The impact of reducing state resources in some proportion to special federal support funding is deleterious to local districts having the capacity to meet, head-on, the challenges of assuring PPE, special technologies, and filtration systems and other unknown expenses are sufficient.
4. Develop deeper instructional materials funding is needed. Districts have learned first-hand the escalation of costs in instructional materials created by going remote and hybrid. Current funding is woefully short of needs leaving our students unsupported in their basic needs for materials.

Rounds also discussed a recommendation for the state to remove retirement “penalties” for potential substitutes and retirees. He noted that there is a void of qualified substitutes statewide and a need for well trained teachers. Current law penalizes our most desirable persons answering this emergency, our retired teachers. He recommended that a moratorium period be set in place to forestall these penalties and provide the necessary emergency workforce needed for our public school mission.

In addition, Rounds stressed that districts need to be given a range of flexibility to manage through COVID. Removing impediments of bureaucracy and “one size fits all” regulations could substantially enhance local decision making and customize the supports needed for students.

Although a recent report from New Mexico State University’s SOAR Evaluation & Policy Center shows an 11% decrease in the number of teacher vacancies statewide (see related story on page 5) the LFC was told the actual retention of teachers is less likely to be salary-related. Teachers are also concerned about COVID and whether their school-based practices for instructional planning and delivery will be supported.

These Legislative recommendations also have to account for continued efforts to meet expectations from the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit. In 2019/20, two programs - K-5+ and Extended Learning Time (ELT) - became increasingly important. Schools were planning and beginning their initial roll-out of changes in these areas, and then COVID hit. Mid-semester, there was a huge impact on instructional days, data collection and analysis, and time needed to create sustainable relationships.

The LFC was told that in 2020/21, schools still need support to continue their implementation efforts. Rounds said the state needs to give flexibility to create a system that will be supportive for each district, including non-punitive measures of accountability and evidence of an effective program. State support is needed to create plans that integrate the diverse cultural strengths into an inclusive curriculum with high expectations for all students.

In addition, the impact of the pandemic is expected to continue its impact for the rest of the school year. Some districts will maintain remote or hybrid schedules, while others are face-to-face. Rounds said districts have had to scramble to implement new learning modalities and each district had to account for their local workforce practices and protections.

Even when schools return to “established practices,” Rounds said it may not happen until 2021/22. And, along the way, it will be essential to offer teacher and principal professional development while honing a framework that empowers rigorous instruction, analyzes student data, and uses data to drive instruction.

Rounds said he and others will continue to work with the LFC and LESC Committees “as we report and recommend for the upcoming legislative session.”

Stan’s Straight Talk (cont. from p3)

decisions/planning/actions focus first on the child. It requires every ounce of our professional action and attention be productive and reflect our servant leadership. There are 89 stories (each district is unique) to be told and 89 ways to reach the goal line together. And, together, we can and will be successful!

I’m proud to be associated with such a fine group of dedicated leaders and look forward to our resurgence as the dedicated leadership of our New Mexico Public Schools!

Best Regards, Stan



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NMCEL Welcomes a New Partner — Reading Plus!

Reading Plus will be assisting New Mexico educators with helpful resources, as you see below. Reading Plus is a technology-based, adaptive literacy program and they work with approximately 95 schools in New Mexico. Each month in *The Advocate* be watching for information that will come in handy in your district.

Reading Research Review

How do we address learning loss when students do not like to read? Amidst the challenges of reopening schools this year, learning loss is a key area of concern. A majority of students do not read as fast as they speak and this impacts their learning.

If you ask students about reading, here's what many of them say...

- It's boring...
- It makes me sleepy...
- I keep losing my place...
- I can't remember...

Most students can read, but they do not read efficiently and lack stamina.

- What does the research have to say about [reading efficiency](#) and why does it matter?
- What can be done to develop independent reading skills?
- How are NM students growing their efficiency and proficiency?

Take advantage of a professional development session that will change how you think about the reading process. Leading reading researcher, Dr. Alexandra Spichtig, [shares a root cause](#) of reading avoidance and what can be done to develop independent readers. If you are ready for a mind-shift, [click here](#) to view.

— Valerie King, McComas & Associates, representing Reading Plus

Nominations Being Accepted

The NMAA Board is currently accepting nominations for Large Area A, Large Area C and Small Area D positions, as well as Large Area A, Small Area A, Small Area D and Non-Public School positions on the NMAA Commission. The nomination forms, along with requirements and a listing of schools for each area, are available by clicking here, [Board of Directors](#) or [Commission](#), or by going to the NMAA website.

Contact Dusty Young at dusty@nmact.org with any questions about the nomination process or requirements for this position.

Nominations are due by 4 p.m. on Monday, October 19th.



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Staying Current

Here are this month's suggestions from Stan's desk, computer and mobile device. Send your "Staying Current" suggestions to info@nmcel.org:



▶ WHAT'S ONLINE FROM

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

Tips for Remote Learning Without Internet Access

Every school year brings technological challenges, but remote learning without internet is an entirely new type of challenge. Consider these ideas and strategies for helping ensure that even students on the unplugged side of the digital divide continue to learn.

[READ MORE from HMH.](#)



▶ FEATURED VIDEOS

EASE SOMEONE'S PAIN AND SUFFERING

Unfortunately, the pandemic has created many people to feel sad, nervous, scared or anxious. And, many families in our state are suffering from the loss of a loved one.

This short video featuring Dr. Brené Brown helps you to understand the differences between "empathy" and "sympathy" and it will help you when choosing the right words to use when supporting your staff members and families in this perilous time.

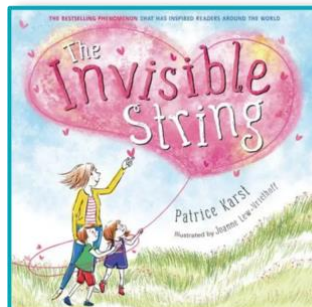


▶ GOOD READS

Children's books are a good tool to help kids cope with fears and separation from their classmates during the pandemic. Here is one to consider:

[*"The Invisible String"*](#) by Patrice Karst: This book helps children visualize the unbreakable connection between loved ones as a piece of string. A favorite among teachers, social workers, and therapists, the book is meant to soothe children coping with separation anxiety and loneliness.

\$9. - Amazon
\$11.- For the workbook
\$8. - Kindle



Upcoming Events

NMCEL

Oct. 19-21: CES/NMCEL 2nd
Annual Superintendent's
Academy

[Oct. 28: 1pm, Meeting #1,
CES/NMCEL Virtual Supt's
Academy, Presenter- Supt.
LeAnne Gandy](#)

NMASBO

Nov. 9-13: **Virtual Fall
Conference;**
Registration Now Open;
check out the [Virtual
Conference Exhibitor Options](#)

Feb. 17-19, 2021: **NM Winter
Conference** at Embassy Suites.
Registration Opens in January.
More details later.



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