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## Superintendents Get New Guidance on Technology Decisions

By [Michele Molnar](#) on October 6, 2014 8:34 AM, published in *EdWeek*

Superintendents confronted by tough technology decisions have a new toolkit designed to help them improve students' classroom experiences, teacher professional development, assessment, and other policies and practices.

The Consortium for School Networking (also known as [CoSN](#)) and [AASA](#), the School Superintendents Association, collaborated on the [toolkit and related resources](#), which are designed to help leaders conquer those tech issues that they say keep them up at night.

"The Empowered Superintendent: Professional Learning Module 1: Five Imperatives for Technology Leadership," includes two assessment checklists—one for superintendents and aspiring superintendents to evaluate themselves, and the other to assess the district's leadership team.

The authors focus on these five themes for technology leaders:

- Strengthening district leadership and communications;
- Raising the bar with rigorous, transformative, and innovative learning and skills;
- Transforming pedagogy with compelling learning experiences;
- Supporting professional development and communities of practice; and
- Creating balanced assessments.

Keith Krueger, CEO of CoSN, said in an interview that this latest toolkit is based on what superintendents have stated they need to make the digital conversions in their district. It provides an update on guidance originally put forward in 2008 and 2010.

Co-chairing the advisory panel for the news resource were Mark Edwards, superintendent of Mooresville, N.C.'s school district, and Terry Grier, superintendent of Houston ISD, Texas. Edwards encourages district leaders to make chief technology officers cabinet- or executive-level board members to increase the likelihood that "wise technology decisions" will boost schools' success.

Earlier this year, CoSN also [released a toolkit](#) for school technology leaders to help them ensure that they are [protecting privacy in connected learning](#)—in part by asking tougher questions of vendors.

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## From the Executive Director

Dear Colleagues:



In just a few short weeks, the holiday season will be upon us; and as if we don't have enough to do with our full time jobs of leading schools and school districts and our other full time job which comes with being part of a family, now we have the added pressure of preparing for the holidays ahead! It's enough to make anyone want to throw up their hands and give up. Yet, educators don't do that at all.

In the midst of so much negativity about public education, we also hear about the great work being done in our schools. Just recently, one superintendent remarked about how tired he is of hearing that New Mexico is ranked 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> when it comes to educating and caring for our children. Yet, he reminded us, why don't we hear about the many Blue Ribbon schools in New Mexico? Doesn't that demonstrate that we have great schools in New Mexico? The process for achieving Blue Ribbon status is not a simple one and of the thousands of schools in the country, several New Mexico schools have received these awards—most recently in Dora and Gadsden. So why is it that we hear the negative press about public schools, but rarely about the great things that are happening throughout our state?

The NM School Boards Association along with various partners, NMCEL, NMSSA, AFT, NEA and others are working to remedy that situation. In a few weeks, the NMSBA will release a video produced by Christopher Productions showcasing New Mexicans who have gone through the public school system who are successful, productive role models. Our hope is that this will serve as a catalyst for districts to also showcase all the positive and productive outcomes in their districts. We, in the public schools, are not very adept at tooting our own horn; we believe that our communities can see for themselves what a great job we are doing. We all need to do our part to remind the public that public schools have been and remain the great equalizer. Public education is available to everyone regardless of their background, ability, beliefs or heritage; regardless of whether they are rich or poor, regardless of their intellectual ability. Every public school employee makes a difference in the lives of the children they serve every day.

This year as we sit around our family gatherings, let's think about all those unsung heroes and heroines in our schools: the ones who give up their own family time to think about and plan lessons for your children and my grandchildren, the ones who take money from their own pockets to provide for kids who don't have someone to do that for them, the ones who carry the burden of the heartbreaking stories of their families; yet stand in schools

## NMCEL October 30 Board Minutes in Brief

### October 30, 2014 Agenda

- Meeting called to order
  - Board approved Agenda as presented
  - Introduction of Board Members/Recognition of Affiliates & Announcements
  - Discussion Items:
    - Audit Report
    - Update: LESC, LFC Meetings
    - Update on Symposium, Ed Summit, Public School Campaign
    - Legislative Platform
    - Scholarship Process
    - Aspiring Principals Academy Institute
  - Action Items:
    - Approval of September 11, 2014 Minutes
    - Approval of September 2014 Financial Statements
    - Approval of Audit for year ended June 30, 2014
    - Approval of the Legislative Platform
  - Reports:
    - Reports from Affiliates
    - Reports from Executive Director & Staff
- 

### From the Executive Director cont'd.

every day to provide the best instruction they can and to give hope to the children of New Mexico. We all acknowledge that we have lots of work to do to improve schools in New Mexico, but let's do it by also acknowledging that everyone is doing the best they can with the resources, the skills and the knowledge they possess. Each of us has the power to help change the public perception of public schools—let's work together to make that perception a positive one.

Best wishes for a blessed Thanksgiving season.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gloria O. Rendón, NMCEL Executive Director

## Affiliates

- New Mexico School Superintendents Association (NMSSA)
- Albuquerque Public Schools Principals Association (APSPA)
- Alliance for the Advancement of Teaching & Learning (NMSU)
- Cooperative Educational Services (CES)
- Eastern New Mexico Educational Resource Center (ENMERC)
- New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA)
- New Mexico Association of Bilingual Educators (NMABE)
- New Mexico Educational Retirees Association (NMAER)
- New Mexico Association of Elementary School Principals (NMAESP)
- New Mexico Association of Secondary School Principals (NMASSP)
- New Mexico Association of School Business Officials (NMAASBO)
- New Mexico Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NMAASCD)
- New Mexico School Personnel Association (NMSPA)
- New Mexico Society for Technology in Education (NMSTE)
- Regional Educational Cooperatives Association (RECA)
- Southeastern New Mexico Educational Resource Center (SNMERC)
- New Mexico Council of Administrators of Special Education (NMCASE)

## 2015 NMCEL Scholarship Announcement

NMCEL is pleased to announce a scholarship opportunity for seniors who will graduate in May of 2015. The NMCEL Board has allocated funding for two \$3,000 scholarships to be awarded to current seniors who will enroll in a college or university in the Fall of 2015.

### Criteria:

1. Candidate must be a graduating senior from any public high school in the state of New Mexico.
2. Candidate must have a GPA of 3.0 or better for consideration.
3. Preference will be given to those entering the field of education (teacher, counselor, school business official, human resources, etc.).

Applications must be emailed to the NMCEL office no later than: **February 13, 2015**

Applicants must submit the following completed documents:

1. The Scholarship Application Form (signed by a high school official).
2. Two letters of recommendation from teachers and/or school administrators.
3. A written essay (at least 300 words) outlining their reasons for entering the field of education.

**Finalists must submit an Official High School Transcript prior to the interview process.**

Email to: [scholarship@nmcel.org](mailto:scholarship@nmcel.org) (preferred method of submission)

Mail to: **NMCEL**  
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- Scheduling Conflicts & Expelled Students
- Special & Alternative Education
- Behavioral & Supplemental Instruction
- Summer School & Virtual School
- 1:1 Initiatives

## Central Office Leadership as a Change Agent for Instructional Leadership

**Dr. Steve Broome, Ivy Alford and Gene May Present at CES/NMCEL Symposium**

"Time to collaborate is always valuable."

Superintendents and Instructional Leaders from across New Mexico participated in an interactive professional development session on October 21 presented by Dr. Steve Broome, Ms. Ivy Alford and Mr. Gene May.

Dr. Broome is the Director of State Development for High Schools and Middle Grades with the Southern Regional Education Board, where he leads the work in effective implementation of the *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* and *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)* initiatives in several states, including New Mexico. Ivy Alford has served as a teacher, building administrator, district professional development provider and state department of education program administrator. Gene May has experience as a teacher, administrator and educational trainer to promote positive growth in student learning through discussions of differentiation, best practices and diversity at the elementary, middle and high school levels. He currently serves as a professional learning director at Teachscape.

Participants were introduced to the online process and tool, [Smarter School Spending](#) that helps districts use their resources to improve student achievement. Through a three-step process, a district is able to align resources (people, time, money) with achievement goals.



The team also presented **SREB's 13 Critical Success Factors for Principals**, a curriculum framework for leadership preparation and development that is based on the practices of principals who raise student achievement. They are listed on the following page.

*Continued on page 6*

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# Central Office Leadership as a Change Agent for Instructional Leadership *cont'd.*

Continued from page 5

**Competency I: Effective principals have a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement.**

CSF 1. Focusing on student achievement: creating a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.

CSF 2. Developing a culture of high expectations: setting high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.

CSF 3. Designing a standards-based instructional system: recognizing and encouraging good instructional practices that motivate students and increase their achievement.

**Competency II: Effective principals have the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement continuous student improvement.**

CSF 4. Creating a caring environment: developing a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.

CSF 5. Implementing data-based improvement: using data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and in student achievement.

CSF 6. Communicating: keeping everyone informed and focused on student achievement.

CSF 7. Involving parents: making parents active partners in their students' educations and creating a structure for parent and educator collaboration.

**Competency III: Effective principals have the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices.**

CSF 8. Initiating and managing change: understanding the change process and using leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.

CSF 9. Providing professional development: understanding how adults learn and advancing meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.

CSF 10. Innovating: using and organizing time and resources in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.

CSF 11. Maximizing resources: acquiring and using resources wisely.

CSF 12. Building external support: obtaining support from the central office, from community leaders, and parents for the school improvement agenda.

CSF 13. Staying abreast of effective practices: continuously learning from and seeking out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.



## NMCEL, CES and NMAA Attend NMSBA Regional Meetings

NMCEL Executive Director, Dr. Gloria O. Rendón, and NMCEL Leadership Coordinator, Barbara Vigil-Lowder recently joined affiliate members David Chavez, CES, Sally Marquez, NMAA and NMASBO to present information about the work of the organizations at the 2014 Fall Regional School Board Meetings. The team attended meetings in the following locations:

- Region V, San Jon  
September 16
- Region II, Taos  
September 18
- Region VI, Jal  
September 22
- Region VIII, Silver City  
September 30
- Region I, Gallup  
October 1
- Region IV, Grants  
October 8
- Region III, Raton  
October 20
- Region VII, Gadsden  
October 28



*Dr. Gloria Rendón, NMCEL Executive Director*



*Sally Marquez, NMAA Executive Director*



*David Chavez, CES Executive Director*



*Barbara Vigil-Lowder, NMCEL Leadership Coordinator*

## What Reflects A Great School?

Excerpts from *Education Week*, October 27, 2014, by Regie Routman, [www.regieroutman.org](http://www.regieroutman.org)

Enduring achievement gains require not only applying content and concepts worth knowing, but also ensuring that learning is occurring in a healthy, thriving culture as well. School leaders—including principals, teachers and district superintendents—are the key players in creating such an environment. In fact, the quality of a school's culture is a prime indicator in determining whether all learners will experience success.

Three interconnected factors are as essential for whole-school achievement as knowing how to teach well: trust, collaboration and authenticity.

To get an accurate read on school culture, it's important to ask yourself several questions: Does the work on the walls reflect high expectations, deep thinking and awareness of an audience beyond the school building? Are the teachers working together successfully within and across grade levels and disciplines? Is the principal visible in classrooms and noticing and commenting on teachers' and students' strengths? Are students engaged in worthwhile and challenging learning? And—not to be minimized—are teachers and students enjoying instruction and learning? Joy in learning is essential to a healthy and productive school culture; fear and joy cannot coexist.

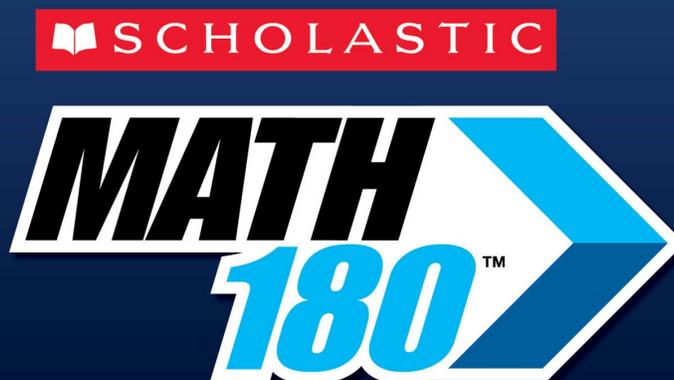
Here are a few proven ways in which effective principals and school leaders can ensure, sustain and support a culture of achievement:

- **Trust is paramount.** The quality of relationships in a school is a crucial factor in whether students and teachers have sufficient opportunity to learn and contribute their ideas without fear of retribution. Without trust within and across the school community—which includes the principal, teachers, students and families—learning will be stalled. People who are anxious with worry, concerned for their safety, or treated disrespectfully do not take risks or work well with others, nor do they perform their best work.
- **Successful principals and other education leaders deliberately model and take trust-building steps with and for their school communities every day.** This can make all things possible. Successful school leaders ensure that schedules, routines and interventions put the needs of students before standards and specialists. They listen without judgment, are open to divergent viewpoints, communicate clearly and respectfully and are humble in their actions and demeanor. They look for and comment on all that is good in each member of the school community. They celebrate

*Continued from page 8*

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## **What Reflects A Great School? cont'd.**

*Continued from page 8*

teachers' strengths before evaluating them. They give feedback that is useful and actionable. They let parents know through social media, a phone call, or an email when a child has done something well, noting even small achievements . . . They also do everything possible to make the school safe, clean, orderly and beautiful. A caring, well-organized and well-managed environment helps promote a sense of well-being and optimism.

- **Collaboration between teachers, the principal and students is a successful school's modus operandi.** Research has clearly shown that teachers become more effective, efficient and joyful when they have time to plan, observe, problem-solve, coach and learn together. Universally, teachers in the highest-achieving countries are given significant time to work together and develop an intellectual culture of inquiry, high expectations and best practices. The most important action effective principals and school leaders can take is one in which they ensure that professional learning is ongoing and embedded. That is, the principal and teachers work closely together and assume collective responsibility for improving and accelerating literacy learning for all students. Collaboration also includes creating an environment for optimal learning. For example, having students' desks clustered so they have continuing opportunities for small-group work and providing teachers with common planning times and scheduled release time so they can work with and observe colleagues are critical. Successful principals foster a collaborative atmosphere by creating time for classroom teachers and specialists to observe, coach and co-teach with each other by hiring roving substitute teachers when budgets allow.
- **Authenticity in instruction, assessment and learning is the norm in successful schools.** In schools where students spend most of their time engaged in reading and writing high-quality real-world texts, students are far better readers and writers, which translates into greater achievement gains. Reading and writing lessons, assignments and assessments across the curriculum are practical and relevant. For example, students write with purpose for a specific audience, engage in scientific and historical inquiry, read critically for pleasure and information and respond to and raise higher-order questions.
- **The key to maintaining authenticity is prioritizing: keeping the focus on what's most essential for students to become proficient, self-directed readers and writers.** Successful principals and education leaders encourage colleagues to establish rich and extensive classroom libraries with all kinds of texts, including student-authored texts. They give students choice and easy access to books they can and want to read with understanding. They encourage more time for independent reading and conferring with students. The most effective principals and education leaders also take their own professional learning seriously and become highly knowledgeable so they can ably guide and coach teachers.
- **Because writing is one way we work out our thinking, effective principals also ensure teachers make sustained, daily writing time as important as reading time.** Also, they partner with teachers to ensure all resources and texts used in the classroom are well written and are crafted by notable authors who can serve as exemplary models and accurate sources of information for students and teachers. When using technology, such as iPads, savvy principals make sure the technology use yields an academic benefit.
- **Finally, for a culture of high trust, collaboration and authenticity to take hold and be sustained, the direct and unwavering support of the superintendent is required.** Engaged superintendents ensure that effective principals stay in a school for a minimum of three years, in order to make sure the school's culture remains stable and achieving, even as some staff members leave. These superintendents also work closely and amicably with the teachers' union to ensure sufficient time is allotted for regularly scheduled professional development. They make it high priority to schedule time regularly with principals in their schools. Such visibility not only shows the principal and staff that the superintendent supports the school's leaders, but also that the superintendent is a partner in the teaching and learning process.

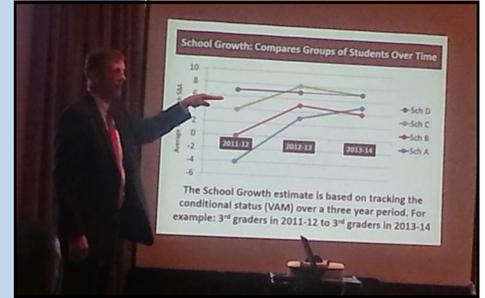
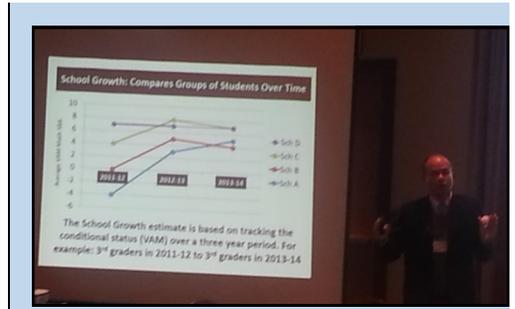
## NMSSA Superintendents and Staff Deliver Professional Development at Annual Retreat

The Annual Retreat for superintendents was held on October 22, 2014 at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque. Superintendents provided valuable information to their colleagues. The topics discussed were:

- **Unlocking the Secrets of the Summative Evaluations**, Superintendent Stan Rounds and Tim Hands, Las Cruces Public Schools
- **School Grades**, Superintendent T. J. Parks and Dr. Sarangaram, Hobbs Schools

The feedback from superintendents was very positive. Additional sessions will be scheduled in the upcoming months.

In addition to these two sessions, superintendents attended a PED staff session on topics provided from the NMSSA Council.



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## Upcoming Events

### CES

- Special Education Law Conference, November 5-6, 2014, Congregation B'Nai Israel, Albuquerque

### NMAESP

- K-12 Principals' Conference & NAESP Zone 8 Meeting, November 7-8, 2014, Marriott Pyramid North, Albuquerque

### NMASBO

- Winter Conference, February 11-13, 2015, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albuquerque
- ASBO International Leadership Conference, February 19-22, 2015, San Diego
- Spring Budget Workshop, April 8-12, 2015, Hotel Albuquerque

### NMCEL

- Board Meeting, December 11, 2014, NMAA
- Board Meeting, February 19, 2015, Online
- Board Meeting, April 2, 2015, CES
- Board Retreat, June 1-2, 2015, Elephant Butte
- Summer Conference, July 22-24, 2015, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque

### NMSSA

- Meeting at NMSBA Annual Convention, December 5, Albuquerque
- Meeting at NMSBA Board Institute, February 20, 2015, Santa Fe
- Meeting at Spring Budget Workshop, April 9, 2015, Hotel Albuquerque
- Meeting at NMSBA Law Conference, June 5, 2015, Albuquerque
- Meeting at NMCEL Conference, July 23, 2015, Embassy Suites

### NMSTE

- New Mexico Educator's Conference, November 22-22, 2014

### AASA

- National Conference, February 26-28, 2015, San Diego

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High Plains Regional Education Cooperative (HPREC), located in Raton, NM is one of nine regional education cooperatives in New Mexico. Member districts include Cimarron, Clayton, Des Moines, Maxwell, Mosquero, Raton, Roy and Springer. HPREC's goal is to provide innovative and research-based support and services to member districts. As the public education landscape evolves, HPREC provides expertise, powerful tools, and systematic approaches to assist school districts and communities in improving service delivery and changing learning outcomes.

Whether a school district is seeking professional development, related services, systematic project implementation, policy guidance, technical assistance, or technology support, HPREC is relentless in its commitment to ensure that services and support are responsive, timely and of high quality. HPREC also

engages in entrepreneurial activities to ensure its financial stability and to augment member districts' dollars. Sound business practices including procured contracting, cooperative purchasing, and the facilitation and coordination of state level conferences are examples of HPREC's commitment to financial solvency.

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## A Common Core Check-In

Brittany Sullivan October 3, 2014

How are the Common Core State Standards affecting teachers' students and classrooms?

Acknowledging the scope of change happening in classrooms across the country, we sought to answer this question by checking in with the teachers who participated in the 2013 study *Primary Sources, America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change*, a comprehensive report sharing the views of more than 20,000 teachers.

The **2014 Primary Sources Update** reflects the voices of more than 1,600 of America's pre-K-12 public school teachers in Common Core implementation states. It reveals that many teachers have remained optimistic that the new standards will lead to greater levels of student achievement and many teachers are observing positive changes in their classrooms. We do see that it is also challenging and nuanced work.

So what are public school teachers saying about the new standards?

- In 2014, 65% of teachers say that implementation is mostly or fully complete and more teachers feel prepared to teach the Common Core (79% in 2014 vs. 71% in 2013).
- More teachers agree implementation is going well in their schools (68% in 2014 vs. 62% in 2013) while teachers also increasingly acknowledge it is challenging (81% in 2014 vs. 73% in 2013).
- Teachers continue to need support and resources, identifying Common Core-aligned instructional materials (86%) and quality professional development (84%) as critical to ensure successful implementation.

To read the full 2014 *Primary Sources Update* report and explore the data in depth, visit [www.scholastic.com/primarysources](http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources). To join the conversation on Twitter, use #TeacherVoices.

### College Board to Overhaul More AP Courses

The College Board plans to revise its 36 Advanced Placement courses. Changes include covering fewer topics in courses and emphasizing imaginative thinking over rote memorization. AP biology and physics courses already have been revised. AP European History and AP Art History are scheduled to undergo changes next year.

View the full article in:

[The Hechinger Report](#)

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