

Super News

Official newsletter from the Office of the Superintendent



For the future



Last November, I had the opportunity to accompany Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on a tour of Lynn Middle School with NEA-LC President Denise Sheehan.

Teachers in New Mexico have a historic opportunity ahead of them, following a vote in our last legislative session, and, more recently, by the LCPS Board of Education. Mandatory seven percent raises, along with an additional three percent for extended learning, put our educators closer to where they need to be in compensation.

When the governor visited our district, we talked about what it will take to get our students out of last place when it comes to education. I firmly believe that raises, along with a balanced calendar, put us at a monumental crossroads to truly do what's best for kids - today and for the future. The work ahead will take all of us, and I appreciate the teamwork and collaboration from everyone to make it happen.

More exciting news about *Super News*: our Communications team will be creating more in-depth content for the superintendent's newsletter and will shift to a quarterly distribution. We hope you enjoy the spring issue and look forward to the summer edition, right before a much-needed break!

Thank you for all you do. We are LCPS!

Ralph Ramos,
LCPS Superintendent

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Remembering Karen Trujillo

Trujillo named a USA Today **WOMAN OF THE YEAR**



Shortly after the anniversary of her death, USA Today named our beloved Dr. Karen Trujillo one of 50 national Women of the Year. Representing New Mexico, Trujillo was honored for her lifelong dedication to education and her relentless pursuit to create better pathways for aspiring teachers.

"She was a friend and a trusted leader, but above all, she was my mentor," said LCPS Superintendent Ralph Ramos. "I try to lead our district every day as she would have wanted – with deep respect for the families and communities that support our students."

Flowers and a memorial candle were placed in the lobby at central office, now named the Dr. Karen M. Trujillo Administration Complex in Trujillo honor.

Around LCPS

Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education President Ray Jaramillo had some fun reading his book “Gust, Gust, Gust” to students from **East Picacho** and **Jornada Elementary** during Read Across America Day.



LCPS Superintendent Ralph Ramos celebrated a day of literacy as he read stories to students in the morning at **East Picacho Elementary** School, and in the afternoon at **Jornada Elementary** School.



To kick off March, Wild Friends students from **Monte Vista Elementary** participated in outdoor learning by building water filtration devices to mimic how the land filters water.



It was a full morning getting innovative and exploring science outdoors. Student at **Monte Vista** asked if they could do more learning like this.

Around LCPS



Congratulations to the **Las Cruces High School** Lady Bulldawg's basketball team for clinching the District 3-5A Tournament Championship on top of earning the title as 3-5A Regular Season District Champions.

Congratulations also to the **Las Cruces High School Bulldawgs** basketball team for winning the District 3-5A Tournament Championship. Go Bulldawgs!.





The incredible food service staff at **Lynn Community Middle School** have been “caught in the act” helping our refugee students during the lunch break, going above and beyond encouraging students to try the new foods while showing them how to eat the tuna meal kits.



With some help from a teacher at **Lynn Community Middle School**, food service staff put together some graphics of food items and translated them in both Persian and Arabic languages in order to show students what foods are being served each day.

Around LCPS



Las Cruces Public Schools HOSA advisors pictured before taking around 150 students to Albuquerque to compete at this year's state HOSA competition. It takes great advisors to create tomorrow's leaders! Thanks for all you do, **LMS, MMS, VMS, ZMS, APECHS, CHS, LCCHS, MHS, OMHS.**

Students from **Doña Ana Elementary** were invited to join U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich on a special hike on Tuesday morning to discuss preservation, outdoor equity, and the importance for all children to have access to public lands.





Students from **Vista Middle School** have some fun at the State HOSA Competition in Albuquerque. Future Health Professionals is a national student organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Health Science Education Division of ACTE. HOSA's two-fold mission is to promote career opportunities in the health care industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people.

Around LCPS



The day with students from **Doña Ana Elementary** and U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich comes in celebration of a new park and walking trail coming to the Village of Doña Ana.



Students from Elementary and Middle Schools throughout Las Cruces Public Schools started their Thursday morning putting their brainpower to the test as they competed in the **2022 District Spanish Spelling Bee**. Las Cruces Public Schools Superintendent, Ralph Ramos kicked off the competition wishing each student good luck. The Spanish Spelling Bee was held at the Organ Mountain High School Performing Arts Center.

Around LCPS



The top three spelling bee finalists (previous page) were: In first place, holding the blue trophy, **Natalia Acosta-Briones from Sunrise Elementary School**, her sponsor was Dr. Susana Rios. Second place, holding the red trophy, **Emilio Esparza from Picacho Middle School**, his sponsor was Ms. Thelma Kapernick. In third place, holding the blue trophy, **Alejandro Torres Valles from Mesa Middle School**, his sponsor was Ms. Jesemia Medina.



Congratulations to the **Centennial High School** media team who on January 22, 2022, competed virtually in the NMAA New Mexico Scholastic Press Association State Competition, taking home the title of State Champions for the 5th year in a row.

Spotlight on Excellence



Amy Ewing

Canvas Managers Stacy Alley and Amy Ewing



Stacy Alley

Meet Stacy Alley, she teaches secondary math and has been a fully online teacher for LCPS for the past ten years. Stacy teaches high school probability, statistics, and credit recovery classes. Switching hats, Stacy is deep rooted in Canvas management to support teachers, administrators, students and parents, ensuring Canvas runs smoothly. Stacy also works hand in hand with Canvas Development Teams providing helpful feedback on products coming out.

Stacy Alley works with Canvas Manager and Advanced Science teacher, Amy Ewing at LCPS. They are both known in the district as the LCPS Canvas Managers who help train Canvas Captains at each school on how to best help their individual campus with Canvas needs. More than ten years ago, they helped start up the VLA program after online classes became part of a graduation requirement with Honors, Dual Credit and Advanced Placement courses.

“Something that has been going on throughout these years, is that Canvas and online learning, because of that graduation requirement, had already been in place at all of our comprehensive high schools before COVID even hit,” said Ewing. “So that was helpful too. Not just the group of VLA teachers and adjunct teachers who knew what they were doing in Canvas, but kids as well.”

It can be said that Stacy and Amy are somewhat pioneers in the world of education for New Mexico. Together they created the roadmap for virtual learning, navigating through the times where the district faced a technology crisis, and what would soon to become their greatest challenge yet, steering the ship of virtual learning during an unforeseen global pandemic.

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Featured article (continued from previous page)

The challenges of the pandemic caused the abrupt switch to remote learning, and with nearly 30 teachers in the district who taught online classes, the greater challenge became the mission to find a way to teach more than 2,500 staff members and over 24,000 public students how to use Canvas. Numbers for the Virtual Learning Academy saw an increase from about 35 fully online students to more than 900 signed on for VLA.

With teamwork and resiliency, Stacy and Amy took on the challenge training Canvas Captains at each school in the district, leading their team through the uncertain times under the Leadership of Josh Silver; LCPS Chief Technology Officer, Stephanie Hanway; Virtual Learning Academy Principal, and Dr. Wendi Miller-Tomlinson; Deputy Superintendent for Division of Teaching, Learning, Leadership & Research at LCPS.



Josh Silver

“We were already using the Canvas Learning platform before the state decided to adopt it,” said Alley. “So, we were ahead of the game. As rough as times have seemed over these last couple of years, we’re leading the way in the state.”

It was an adjustment for the entire district, students and teachers alike embracing Canvas during remote learning. It was an assembly of knowledge and teamwork that made it all possible. Just before the pandemic hit, Josh Silver and Matt Dawkins from the districts IT team worked to make sure every student in the district had a laptop and access to internet connection at home to get their schoolwork done.



Matt Dawkins



The House **EDUCATION** Built

"None of this would be possible without Jim Schapekahn," said Kent Thurston, looking around the house on Mesa Moreno Drive that was built, in part, by LCPS students. According to Thurston, who attended Las Cruces Public Schools, Shapekahn allocated part of his own budget at Organ Mountain High School to make sure students in Mr. John Arguello's class had the tools they needed. According to Arguello, students in the residential construction class learn concepts in the first year and move on to basic framing. In their third year, they got the opportunity to be part of Education House, a project spearheaded by the Las Cruces Home Builders Association.

"There's a stage when we have to step back," said Arguello. "We bring in professionals when it's out of the scope of work students can do, but for the most part, they have had a hand in every stage of construction."

Nicole Black, Executive Director for LCHBA, said Education House is a project her organization hopes to continue. Thurston, whose company, KT Homes, sponsored Education House, says he's ready to start planning the next one.

"All proceeds from the sale of this house will go toward the program. The kids need additional supplies and tools, and this is a valuable opportunity for them to learn real-world applications of the concepts they can't get inside a classroom."

The public will have an opportunity to tour Education House at the Showcase of Homes on May 13.

Celebrating Women:

Local partnership launches campaign to promote hope, healing

Women's History Month is a dedicated time to celebrate women's contributions to history, culture, and society. Whereas historically, the accomplishments of women have been dismissed or overlooked, we are lucky to live in a time that celebrates and uplifts the attainments of women.

In honor of Women's History Month, the SUCCESS Partnership has announced a collaboration with NMCO Creative Studio to celebrate our local heroines. Five exceptional women will be selected to participate in a unique photoshoot highlighting their contributions to our community. Nominations will be accepted until March 25 and winners will be notified on March 28 for a scheduled photoshoot on April 2. All nominees will be considered, and one will be randomly selected to win a \$50 gift card to D.H. Lescombes Winery & Bistro in Las Cruces.

"My goal with this campaign was to recognize and celebrate the women who are working tirelessly to bring hope and healing to our community," said Michelle Simon, Marketing Coordinator for SUCCESS Partnership. "I think Las Cruces is a very special place in that the people here care so genuinely for their community. Having lived in a big city, it often felt hard to gain enough traction to make impactful changes to benefit the community. In Las Cruces, it seems more doable with the united work of so many great organizations."

To nominate, [click on this link](#) and enter the nominee's name, title, and a short explanation of the work they do that inspires or promotes healing in our community. The deadline to apply is March 25.



A statewide virtual connection: How LCPS offers online education statewide

If necessity is the mother of invention, the pandemic of our generation has created several innovative avenues in the way of education. None has had more of an impact than the evolution of virtual school, and a new consortium that includes Las Cruces Public Schools is creating a hub for learning that is accessible to more than just students in Las Cruces.

The New Mexico Virtual Course Consortium (NMVC²) is a network of public school districts and charter schools under the guidance of the New Mexico Public Education Department to provide high quality, standards-aligned supplemental online courses for subject areas that might be difficult to staff locally. For example, a student in Sierra County who would like to take an AP English class can enroll with LCPS and get that instruction online while staying enrolled in their home district.

Opportunities like that are currently made possible because districts across the state have made themselves available to host any student whose circumstances cannot be accommodated by their district school. In LCPS, we offer K-12 courses through our OWL (Online With LCPS) program, an extension of the Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) under my direction along with Stephanie Hanway, who is the principal of VLA. In all, LCPS joins six other districts in the NMVC²: the Pecos Cyber Academy, Cuba Public schools, TriStar Academy in Santa Rosa, Fort Sumner, and Vaughn, the School of Dreams Academy in Los Lunas, Taos Municipal Schools, and the Taos Academy Charter School. The consortium can provide up to four virtual courses per student, either as a supplement to their current course of study, or as an online substitute for classes that their home school currently does not offer. Right now, students cannot enroll full-time with the consortium, but it is open to homeschooled students looking for enriched learning opportunities outside of their homeschool curriculum.

As a parent, taxpayer, or educator, an obvious question after learning about the consortium is how can all this be possible if the state funds a district according to enrollment? If you look at education as a business and districts as providers of a service, then the service is instruction, and the cost is a pass-through between districts under a memorandum of understanding. Using the previous example, our student in Sierra County is funded by the state and those monies are paid to the home district where the student resides. The home district would then reimburse LCPS using set rates. Consortium fees are \$375 per semester, per course in middle school and high school. For elementary students, those fees are \$700 per year or \$375 per semester. Fees are set by the consortium and help to cover administrative costs.

As the consortium continues to gain traction, we hope additional districts will find value in offering this unique opportunity to provide additional course resources to their students. Any state authorized district that can offer standards-based curriculum can become a member.

As we continue to redefine education in a virtual setting, the consortium, and the opportunities it provides, is creating a foundation for student success no matter students live.



Sherley O'Brien, Director of Human Resources at Las Cruces Public Schools, has been named the 2022 New Mexico Human Resources Administrator of the Year by the New Mexico School Personnel Association. O'Brien was nominated and selected by her colleagues in a statewide process.

O'Brien holds a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education with an endorsement in early childhood education and a Master of Arts in education administration. She served as an assistant principal in the district and has extensive experience in human resources running private businesses before joining LCPS.

"I've had the opportunity to work with some amazing people who have been valuable mentors throughout my career," said O'Brien. "It is with their support that I am able to do what I love – assisting employees with their HR needs, helping our departments grow and helping educators find their way professionally within our organization."

About NMSPA

The New Mexico School Personnel Association is a coalition of school human resources administrators and professionals who provide information, services and professional development related to personnel issues within the education profession. The group has been in existence for over thirty years, however, just recently took a formal and active role providing increased service to its membership through conferences, training and information.



Need a COVID test?

LCPS has partnered with the New Mexico Department of Health to provide a location for **COVID testing services**. Our property in the Administrative Complex formerly known as "Boots and Bourbon" is now hosting Curative Testing Services every Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. It's a shallow nasal swab PCR test, with results typically available in 2-3 days, depending on volume. To schedule an appointment, click on the image to your left.

Super News is a publication of the Las Cruces Public Schools Superintendent's Office. Have a story idea or submission? Email me at rramos@lcps.net.

