

Peñasco Elementary Community Schools

On behalf of Community Schools, I am pleased to welcome you back to Peñasco Elementary this fall!

Most of you know me, but for those who don't, here's a little bit about me: I grew up in rural Kansas on a hog and cattle farm and am the oldest of six kids. (That's me in the yellow stocking hat in the photo with the fish!) My parents, with one of my brothers, still run the farm. My other siblings are spread from Kansas City to Rio Rancho to Seattle. I earned degrees in journalism and English at Kansas State University, and I earned my Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at Texas State University. I met my wife (high school English teacher Ms. Noll) in graduate school, and she is the one who introduced me to hiking and camping in New Mexico. We moved to Chamisal with our two boys a few weeks before the COVID pandemic began.



Before working at PISD, I was the program director at a statewide educational nonprofit in Austin, and, before that, I taught at Texas State University. I wrote and published a book that is still used as a textbook in high school and college creative writing classes: *The Writer's Field Guide to the Craft of Fiction*.

This year, Community Schools will continue offering afterschool and summer programming, with the goal of giving students the chance to explore their interests in a fun, social way. We are planning to offer 3D printing, Art, Circus Arts, Flamenco, Guitar, Songwriting, Violin, Photography, Filmmaking, and more. We also intend to offer a regular ski and snowboard program at Sipapu. You can also expect a lot of fun events and activities that will engage both students and families in the culture and history of our community.

As always, I encourage all families to participate in Community Schools meetings. Let us know what is working at the school and what could make it even better. Family involvement is one of the best predictors of student success. With your help, we can make Peñasco Elementary one of the best schools in all of Northern New Mexico!

See you at school!

Mr. Noll