

# COUNSELING CONNECTION

*New Mexico School Counselors' Newsletter*



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## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK 2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Make plans to attend the 2021 NM School Counselors' Virtual Conference, *Preparing Students for the Future of Work*, on Thursday, February 25, 2021. Although the conference is FREE, you must register to attend.

The day will begin at 7:45 a.m. with a welcome and overview of the day, followed by keynote speaker Bill Daggett, Founder of International Center for Leadership in Education, speaking on *Preparing Students for Their Future, NOT Our Past*.

After the keynote session, breakout sessions will be offered through 2:50 p.m. Although many of the sessions center around college and career readiness, a variety of sessions on other topics will be offered, including:

- What's Next for Graduation Requirements?
- New Mexico's SEL Framework
- Next Step Plans: How to Make Them More Useful
- Overviews of Various Statewide Initiatives

Additionally, there will be a "Lunch and Listen" Session with Hasan Davis, J.D. If you've never heard his personal story, you don't want to miss it! The impact others had on his life made him who he is today... a Hope Dealer. You, too, impact the lives of others tremendously!

We plan to release a dedicated page on the resource website in mid-January with additional details about conference sessions, speakers, and the final schedule of events.

To register for the conference, click the button below.

[Conference Registration](#)

## FARMINGTON WBL PROGRAM WORKS FOR STUDENTS, BUSINESS, AND COUNSELORS

The kickoff to Farmington Municipal Schools' Work-Based Learning Initiative went off without a hitch last January. There was tremendous excitement surrounding this new program that gave Farmington High School students the opportunity to take their emerging career skills into businesses, learn from experts and gain internships to help them fully understand their fledgling career pathways.

The program had wheels, and it was rolling along like a mighty steam engine on a smooth mountain pass. Then, the calendar struck March. COVID-19 hit and it stopped the train in its tracks.

Thankfully, the district's dynamic duo of Jenelle Cummins, an experienced Career Technical Education (CTE) teacher, and Jose Villarreal, an entrepreneur, small business owner turned educator, would not have any talk of letting the program suffer.

They are the district's Workforce Community Liaisons, and they not only kept the program going, but they are planning to strengthen the program and replicate it around the state. If other districts are interested in a well thought-out plan that helps counselors, works for education and improves the future workforce, they might just want to use the FMS work-based learning model.

This districtwide approach to improving CTE education was embraced by FMS leadership at Central Office, especially Superintendent Dr. Eugene Schmidt and Secondary Curriculum Director Korth Ellsworth.

"We're all in on this initiative," said Villarreal. "We had support from Central Office, a tremendous launch, with a boot camp, placed students with employers and had a banquet to celebrate the business folks and our students. We were three weeks in and COVID hit."

Cummins said they pivoted and the district counselors were vital to making the shift to virtual WBL opportunities.

"We connected with our business partners and

we came up with a plan that worked in a virtual environment," Cummins said. "We secured some distance learning resources, and adopted [virtualjobshadow.com](https://virtualjobshadow.com)."

Postsecondary neighbor San Juan College was already using a virtual software for classes as well, so students could continue dual credit options. FMS adopted the software that allowed them to keep track of students' attendance and how long they spend using the software.

"On the counseling side, we purchased a lot of career exploration software for middle and high school students," Cummins said. "Our criteria included: 'How can this (software) support the internship experience and how can we keep students engaged?'"

Cummins said the goal was to have counselors in middle schools emphasize career exploration in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and structure Next Step Plans based on programs of study and career pathways.

Overall, 18 business partners and 14 hand-selected students from Rocinante High School participated in the event.

Most of the students earned an 18-week internship, with the same business partners that gave them feedback during the bootcamp.

The original plan is well thought out for the students and for the businesses.

Business partners aren't hiring students to make coffee, shred papers or pick up lunch. Both the employers and the students fill out weekly surveys, monitoring both their employability and technical skills progression throughout the semester. Some of the internships offered certifications and, possibly, financial assistance for college. It may even lead to a paying job right out of high school.

"We had a ton of success setting up the students for success," Villarreal said. "But ultimately, they took that opportunity and went flying with it. They exceeded our expectations."

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## FARMINGTON WBL PROGRAM WORKS FOR STUDENTS, BUSINESS, AND COUNSELORS (CONTINUED)

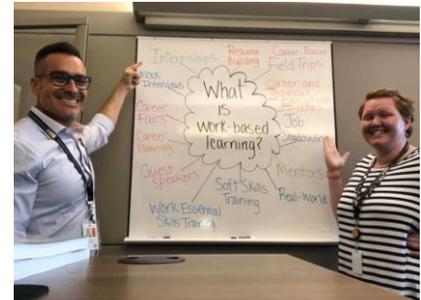
Going forward, Villarreal and Cummins are hoping the post-COVID work-based learning initiative will be as spectacular as how it began last January.

“It’s all about being flexible and adapting,” Villarreal said. “But we have found a way to keep the momentum going. This has made us think differently about how we introduce students to industry.” Villarreal and Cummins said they are more than willing to help counselors and administrators set up internship/work-based learning programs.

“Don’t be afraid to set the bar super high,” Villarreal said. “No matter how high, students will rise to that bar. A quality program raises their level of the work ethic.”

For more information, contact Villarreal and Cummins. Here is their contact information:

- Jose Villarreal: [jvillarreal@fms.k12.nm.us](mailto:jvillarreal@fms.k12.nm.us)
- Jenelle Cummins: [jcummins@fms.k12.nm.us](mailto:jcummins@fms.k12.nm.us)



## Save the Date: BigFuture Days

College Board is excited to invite students to participate in College Board's BigFuture™ Days—a series of four virtual, regional college fairs designed to help high school students connect directly with colleges.

Participation is **free** and will include a variety of interactive sessions and experiences that students can choose from based on what works best for them. Please note the dates various colleges will be participating:

- **February 6, 2021—Colleges in the West/Southwest:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming
- **February 23, 2021—Colleges in the Southeast:** Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia
- **March 7, 2021—Colleges in the Northeast:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont
- **March 11, 2021—Colleges in the Midwest:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

BigFuture™ Days is an opportunity for students to connect directly to colleges at a time when the college planning process has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. College Board worked with their members in K–12 and higher ed to design events that will encourage students to take action toward their future.

**Be on the lookout next week for more details and registration information.**



## COLLEGE SCORECARD LAUNCHES NEW TOOLS TO HELP STUDENTS FIND THE RIGHT FIT

Delivering on her promise to update and improve the [College Scorecard](#), Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that students can now compare average earnings two years after graduation based on field of study and how much federal loan debt they can expect to incur, including new information on Parent PLUS loans, depending upon where they decide to attend school. Also, in the coming weeks, the College Scorecard will be updated to include data on federal student loan repayment. Users will be able to see how successfully past borrowers from different institutions and specific programs have been at meeting repayment obligations ([blog post](#)).

**COMING JANUARY 13!**



**WIN A \$50  
AMAZON  
GIFT CARD!**

On January 13, 2021, New Mexico's school counselors will begin receiving a weekly email linking to resources around topics of interest as identified in the counselor-completed NS4ed surveys. A related activity will also be included in the email. Complete the activity in the Community Forum on the [schoolcounselors-nm.com](http://schoolcounselors-nm.com) website to be entered in a monthly drawing for a \$50 gift card from Amazon.

**Participate to be entered in the drawing!**

(Entries for the monthly drawing are limited to one per counselor per week. Only New Mexico school counselors are eligible to win. Remember, you must [register](#) to access and participate in the Community Forum.)

## CONTACT US

**NMPED COLLEGE  
AND CAREER READINESS BUREAU**

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CLICK [HERE](#) TO VISIT WEBSITE

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR COVID-19

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic can cause New Mexicans of any age to feel overwhelmed, scared, anxious, or make it harder to cope with mental health conditions they struggled with before the pandemic. Leslie Kelly, NMPED Behavioral Health Program Coordinator, recently released Behavioral Health Resources for COVID-19 in conjunction with the New Mexico Department of Health.

Please share the resources (linked below in English and in Spanish) with your families.

[Family Resources in English](#)  
[Family Resources in Spanish](#)

For more information, contact Leslie Kelly, NMPED Behavioral Health Program Coordinator, at [Leslie.Kelly@state.nm.us](mailto:Leslie.Kelly@state.nm.us)

## AAUW STEM SUMMER CAMP FOR GIRLS



AAUW Tech Trek NM is proud to announce their 8<sup>th</sup> annual week-

long STEM summer camp for rising eighth grade girls **July 18-23, 2021**.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, they will be presenting the camp in an online virtual format rather than a residential camp on the campus of New Mexico Tech in Socorro, NM. They will also be holding the postponed 2020 camp virtually in June 2021. The girls who were selected in the spring of 2020 to attend camp will be invited to attend the June virtual camp.

AAUW is developing a curriculum that will include hands-on projects and virtual field trips. They are planning their curriculum to look and feel quite different from regular online school. The curriculum for the postponed 2020 camp will be adjusted to meet the abilities of girls who will have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade. As always, the classes will be taught by women who are middle school science teachers, experienced in both virtual and in-person teaching formats. Each girl selected will be provided with all the materials and equipment needed to fully participate in the virtual classes. They are also gearing up to provide the necessary hardware for wi-fi connectivity to girls who may not have internet access at home.

The AAUW Tech Trek NM environment provides girls with female STEM role models as well as many opportunities for learning and practicing

new skills both individually and as members of a team. Each girl will take a core class in a subject ranging from astronomy to coding to robotics to probability and statistics. Virtual field trips in a variety of areas will also be provided for the whole group. Please visit their webpage at <https://techtrek-nm.aauw.net/> to learn more.

As in years past, the **cost to each girl selected is only \$50**. AAUW Tech Trek NM is a diverse and inclusive science camp experience for New Mexico girls who may not have much exposure to STEM programs. Application forms are available on their website: <https://techtrek-nm.aauw.net/>

In January, AAUW will be inviting all New Mexico middle school science and math teachers to nominate girls who are now in 7<sup>th</sup> grade to apply for Tech Trek NM 2021.

AAUW Tech Trek builds on issues illuminated in AAUW's research report, *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math*, which demonstrated that camps like Tech Trek increase girls' interest and confidence in STEM fields. You can download the report free at: <https://www3.aauw.org/research/why-so-few/>. The link is also on their webpage.

For more information, please contact Helena Whyte, AAUW Tech Trek NM Board President at 505-690-7824 or email AAUW Tech Trek at [techtreknm@gmail.com](mailto:techtreknm@gmail.com).



### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### January 12

- 9:00 a.m. –Career & Technical Education PLC with Joseph Goins

#### January 13

- Be on the lookout for an email with information of interest, a Community Forum activity and a chance to win a \$50 Amazon gift card!

#### January 20

- 3:00 p.m. - New Mexico School Counselors' Update Meeting

For additional information and to register for the above meetings, see the "Upcoming Events" section or the Events Calendar on the home page of the counselor website: [schoolcounselors-nm.com/](https://schoolcounselors-nm.com/)