

COUNSELING CONNECTION

New Mexico School Counselors' Newsletter



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GOING BACK TO IN-CLASSROOM BRINGS SHARE OF EXCITEMENT, ANXIETY

The return to in-person learning is highly anticipated by some families, students, teachers, and school staff. It also brings with it some anxiety for those and many others. As schools begin the transition into buildings this month, school counselors are going to be there when they are needed.

"We all want to see the students in the classrooms, and our teacher and counselor co-workers and friends," said Jaqi Baldwin, the principal of Siembra Leadership High School in Albuquerque and a licensed school counselor and mental health professional. "However, we all will have to remember to give each other some grace, every day. Patience and empathy is going to have to be part of our jobs for a long time."

Baldwin said she realizes that most people who work in education are, for the most part, resilient and able to handle changes at a moment's notice. The pandemic, however, has been a year-long challenge between virtual classroom learning, hybrid models and now in-person.

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GOING BACK TO IN-CLASSROOM BRINGS SHARE OF EXCITEMENT, ANXIETY (CONTINUED)

“Not everyone’s going to be happy with going back full time,” Baldwin said. “And that’s okay. Our job as counselors is to support students, families and our co-workers as much as we can with what they are feeling.”

Most students are resilient as well, said Baldwin. And in many schools across the state, it will be the students who are ready to help ease the transitions as much as possible.

Student clubs and groups, including Career Technical Students Organizations (CTSOs), are planning to be part of the welcome back activities at their schools.

When the return to in-person learning was announced, SkillsUSA students from Las Cruces Public Schools and Deming Public Schools wasted no time planning for school activities to open.

In Deming, SkillsUSA lead sponsors Mary Anderson and David Monjaras reached out to students in the health sciences chapter to see if they were interested in handling COVID-19 screening duties at high school games. Students were eager to take advantage of the hands-on experience.

“Kids are constantly volunteering,” Anderson said. “Since we can only have a couple students work each event, we have a schedule of who is volunteering for each event. It fills up very quickly.”

Students handle temperature checks and health screening questions for indoor games (essential workers) and outdoor games (essential workers and limited fans), while an adult supervisor documents answers.

“They’re showing a plethora of skills through this process,” Monjaras said. “They have a sense of responsibility for their school. They are extremely loyal and want to serve their school.”

Las Cruces Public Schools CTSO students also are ready to make the most of the rest of the

school year through their broadcast program. Liz Wendler, a SkillsUSA NM advisor who teaches the Bulldawg Broadcast team, said for the past year, her students have been producing newscasts together virtually. Many of them would use their cell phones to record video and edit the video using Adobe Premiere on their own laptops.

Now they are ready to be out and about at live events. Wendler and her students are going to livestream sporting events at the school.

“As soon as games were announced, kids asked: Can we go to this game and this game?” Wendler said. “They’re very focused on covering the seniors and giving them the coverage they deserve.”

Since they only have two media passes for games, one camera livestreams the game through Vimeo. The other camera is recording video for future highlight videos and “Senior Night” promotions.

Wendler, Anderson, and Monjaras all credit SkillsUSA NM as one of the main reasons their students remained engaged this school last year, allowing them to be ready when reopening occurred.

Allowing students to reach out, stretch to reach their potential and help out as schools transition to full-time, in-person learning is important, according to Principal Baldwin. “You would be surprised at how empowered students are in their own education and in the pride they have for their schools. We are going to need adults and students to make this new normal a little easier.”

Because school counselors know how important peer networks are to mental health and resilience, they are an important partner for CTSOs. Counselors can highlight the role of CTSOs in building employability skills as well as friendships. Encourage students to get involved in the organizations at your school. Or, for more information on New Mexico’s CTSOs, visit the [Career Technical Student Organizations page](#) on the College and Career Readiness website.

ACTE'S REGION IV VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



ACTE's Region IV Virtual Leadership Conference

April 14-15, 2021

The Power of CTE

The ACTE Region IV Conference provides career and technical education professionals a relevant and exciting professional and leadership development opportunity.

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/2rt5u57k>



State Leadership

ACTE Policy Update

Virtual Tours



[**Register Now**](#)

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

PED will host the 4th Annual Town Hall to Support Young Parents and their Children in early April with keynotes, plenary sessions by young parents, workshops, and roundtable discussions -- all held virtually. The event will be offered twice -- noon to 4 p.m. on April 28 and May 5. We hope you will share this [save-the-date flier](#) with your school community.



You are Invited!

The NM Public Education Department will be hosting the

4th Annual Virtual Town Hall Meeting

to support young parents and their children

April 28, 2021 | 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm

and May 5, 2021 | 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm



You're invited to attend and help us build on the success of the past Town Hall meetings. Young parents are active partners in planning and implementing this event.

Featuring:

- Opportunities to meet young parents across the state
- Keynote and plenary presentations by young parents
- Workshops and roundtable discussions on topics such as pandemic parenting, mental health, wellness practices, child care, and healthy relationships



UPCOMING EVENTS

April 6

- Bringing Careers into Focus PLC – Session Three with Troy Price

April 13

- 9:00 a.m. – CTE PLC with Dr. Joseph Goins

April 21

- 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/



VIRTUAL
NATIONAL SUMMIT FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Advocates for Equity

April 26-29, 2021

Preconference: April 20-22, 2021



Too good to miss!

Early bird rates –
\$99 members,
\$149 nonmembers.

Attend the Summit virtually. Hear Dr. Gail Christopher address Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation. Choose from 40 breakout sessions covering a range of equity strategies.

See <https://nsee.info/agenda/> for a list of breakout sessions.

Summit offers 40 Breakout Sessions

Take advantage of early bird rates by March 1!

[REGISTER FOR THE SUMMIT](#)

CONTACT US

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CLICK [HERE](#) TO VISIT WEBSITE



MARCH WINNER!

Congratulations to a counselor from Tierra Adentro of New Mexico Charter School! The counselor was the winner of a \$50 gift certificate for participating in the Community Forum on schoolcounselors-nm.com.

Each Wednesday, we will be sending out an email with a new Community Forum activity.

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.)

LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS WITH SIGNIFICANT GAINS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Winning investments include Family Income Index, community schools.

SANTA FE — Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s education moonshot got a \$400 million boost during the just-concluded legislative session, including more than \$200 million that will go directly to school districts and charter schools and \$215 million to fund various innovative, evidence-based initiatives.

“In 2019, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham promised a moonshot to create the nation’s best cradle-to-career education system. The New Mexico Legislature has provided much-needed fuel as we continue on that historic trajectory,” Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart said.

K-12 education highlights from the just-concluded legislative session include:

- The Family Income Index, funded with \$30 million over the next two years, would target money toward schools serving the most economically disadvantaged students for evidence-based interventions.
- The community schools program would expand with a \$5 million appropriation for FY22 and an additional \$20 million to be used in future years.
- In support of the governor’s ongoing priority of improving education for Native American students, the legislature appropriated \$10.6 million for tribal education departments, tribal libraries and tribally based Native American language programs.
- New Mexico will end a longstanding and controversial practice of reducing state funding based on Impact Aid to districts, including those with high proportions of Native American students.
- Voters will decide on a constitutional amendment to tap the Land Grant Permanent Fund to provide reliable funding for early childhood and K-12 education.

The budget also includes \$45 million to restore funding that was reduced during the 2020 first special session.

Family Income Index

The Legislature approved Senate Bill 17, creating an innovative tool to pinpoint schools serving large low-income populations in order to direct additional funding to them. The Public Education Department first proposed the Family Income Index in November, and it became one of the governor’s priority bills. The bill received a \$30 million, two-year appropriation to support math and reading interventions and other student-support strategies.

Community School Strategy

The Legislature signified its support for the community school strategy with a \$5 million appropriation for FY22 and \$20 million more after that. Currently, the state funds 33 community schools. The new funding will allow more New Mexico schools to adopt this strategy, which involves schools partnering with the local community to provide high-quality resources and other supports to help mitigate barriers to school success.

Impact Aid

House Bill 6 gives districts with federally impacted land access to more than \$60 million to better serve their students. It also requires transparency and accountability for the use of discretionary funds. A \$35 million appropriation from the general fund added to a \$31 million appropriation from the special session holds districts harmless from the impact of this change in policy.

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LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS WITH SIGNIFICANT GAINS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION (CONT.)

This measure ends the longstanding practice of reducing state funding by an amount equal to 75% of federal funding received by school districts for impact aid -- including many districts serving high proportions of Native American students. The governor identified it as a priority bill and part of her administration's response to the Martinez and Yazzie Consolidated Lawsuit.

Permanent Funding

Voters will decide in November whether the state's Land Grant Permanent Fund should be tapped annually to access more than \$100 million for use in K-12 and early childhood education. The Legislature adopted House Joint Resolution 1, sending the proposed constitutional amendment to the ballot.

"This is an opportunity to impact generations of New Mexico students," Secretary Stewart said. "Assuming voters agree, New Mexico's children would be protected from the boom-bust cycles of state revenues with a reliable and fixed source of annual revenue. This would mitigate concerns that sound, evidence-based programs that work one year would be curtailed the next because of budget shortfalls."

Culturally Sensitive, Inclusive Education

- The Public Education Department would hire a new liaison to oversee the educational needs of Black children under House Bill 43, the Black Education Act. Provisions of the act would be carried out over the next few years.
- The Special Education Ombud Act, House Bill 222, provides resources to help families better advocate for the needs of students with disabilities.
- Students could not be penalized for wearing traditional hairstyles like dreadlocks or braids or religious coverings under House Bill 29/Senate Bill 80.
- The governor has already signed into law House Bill 52, which codifies in statute the Bilingual Multicultural Education Advisory council.

Educator Workforce

- Gov. Lujan Grisham has signed House Bill 22, amending the Grow Your Own Teachers Act to expand who qualifies for the scholarship program, which is designed to increase the number of teachers in the state.
- House Bill 188 would require the Public Education Department to create a license endorsement in secondary computer science. All licensed teachers could qualify by demonstrating sufficient content knowledge.
- Scholarships totaling \$5 million would be available for educators who want to apply for National Board Certification. The funding is included in the General Appropriations Act, House Bill 2.
- The General Appropriations Act also includes:
 - \$1 million for teacher residencies
 - \$1 million for New Mexico's new educator evaluation program, Elevate NM
 - \$1 million for mobile panic buttons for classroom teachers

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LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS WITH SIGNIFICANT GAINS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION (CONT.)

More School Time

Senate Bill 40 gives districts and charter schools more flexibility in implementing the K-5 Plus and Extended Learning Time programs. The measure was amended to remove a requirement that all districts adopt the programs. Additionally, House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Bill, includes a \$70 million non-recurring appropriation for a pilot project on extended learning using equivalent hours.

"Increasing the time students spend learning is a proven strategy to improve academic outcomes. Although the Legislature decided against making these two programs mandatory, we appreciate the new flexibilities afforded by SB40 and the pilot project outlined in HB2," Stewart said. "Because of these important changes, we fully expect many more districts and schools to adapt an extended school year program in the coming year as a powerful tool to accelerate learning as students return to full in-person learning."

By-the-Numbers

\$220 million: Increase in funding for the State Equalization Guarantee, the formula used to distribute funds to districts and charter schools. Includes:

- \$45 million to remove a credit the state was taking for funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, known as the CARES Act
- \$35 million to hold districts harmless from impact aid credits
- \$80 million for the K-5 Plus and Extended Learning Time programs
- \$5 million for instructional materials

\$135 million: One-time expenditures for priorities of the governor, including:

- \$25 million for community schools
- \$30 million for the Family Income Index over two years
- \$1.5 million for cyber security
- \$20.9 million for Impact Aid liability to the state support reserve fund
- \$15.5 million for state support reserve fund to increase aggressive approach to unit value
- \$2 million for data systems upgrades
- \$25 million for statewide digital access and broadband initiatives
- \$10.6 million for Tribal Remedy Framework
- \$3 million for Career Technical Education

\$79 million: One-time expenditures for priorities of the Legislature, including:

- \$70 million for extended learning and equivalent hours pilot
- \$5 million for National Board scholarships for teachers
- \$1 million for teacher residencies
- \$1 million for educator evaluation
- \$1 million for mobile panic buttons
- \$400,000 for Black Education Act
- \$500,000 to supplement STEM programs