

ISSUE  
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NEW MEXICO  
SCHOOL COUNSELORS'  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

# COUNSELOR CONNECTION



*NM School Counselors'*  
**Community of Best Practice**

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## COUNSELORS' BEST PRACTICES IN USING THE CAREER CLUSTERS GUIDE

Many school counselors are familiar with the *New Mexico Career Clusters Guide*, a resource that helps students as they make important life and career decisions. The guide, available both in hard copy and online, is designed to be a tool for planning and preparing students for a career.

Merrilee Saige-Alvarez, lead secondary counselor at Las Cruces Public Schools, said 100 homeroom teachers are using the Career Clusters Guide routinely for advisory periods and in helping students complete their Next Step Plans each year.

"When I was first introduced to the guide at a CTE meeting, I was floored," Saige-Alvarez said. "All these years I've been doing little bits and pieces of things in that book. And to have it all in one resource has been amazing for counselors, teachers, and our students."

Students start by taking the interest

inventory at the beginning of the guidebook. The interest profiler helps students see their aptitudes for different jobs, work styles, and interests in general. Then it points them to career clusters that may have an occupation that suits them in the future.

The guide was invaluable during the 2020 school building closures, Saige-Alvarez said.

"During remote learning, advisory teachers created lessons about career exploration using the online version of the Career Clusters Guide," she said. "And, since counselors couldn't meet face-to-face, we used it in our meetings with students and parents. Based on their interests, we could have them turn to the exact page that showed them the credentials they will need to pursue their career pathway, the postsecondary education required, and what the job outlook is for them. We had all those tools at our fingertips."

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## COUNSELORS' BEST PRACTICES IN USING THE CAREER CLUSTERS GUIDE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

### CORRECTION FROM JUNE/JULY NEWSLETTER

The Counselor of the Year award is presented annually by the New Mexico School Counselor Association (NMSCA). We incorrectly stated it was awarded by another group. We extend our apologies to NMSCA and Heather Fried. We would again like to congratulate Heather for being awarded Counselor of the Year!

### JOIN US FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THE 2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

The first monthly meeting of the New Mexico School Counselors' Community will be held on Wednesday, August 18. Join us to reconnect with colleagues around the state, learn about resource site updates, and the upcoming NMACTE conference.

To register for the series of meetings, held on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00 p.m., click [HERE](#).

LCPS also uses the guide in other ways, including:

- Using the pathway charts to create big posters of various career clusters
- Creating career exploration lessons to be used on the Canvas online platform
- Completing electronic Next Step Plans
- Building the district's curriculum guide

At New America School in Albuquerque, College and Career Coordinator Lisa Hernandez-Ortiz meets with every student in the school within the first two weeks of the school year. The charter school is small, so she has this opportunity to really make a connection face-to-face, she said.

"On the first meeting, I give them their Career Clusters Guide and we go from there," she said. "I'm still fairly new at career guidance, so when the PED's College and Career Readiness Bureau encouraged me to use the guidebook, it was a blessing."

After the interest inventory is taken, Hernandez-Ortiz has

students view a PowerPoint presentation that pulls together all their resources, not only for succeeding at school and graduating, but also for going on to postsecondary education and career. She uses positive messaging when she meets with students.

Ortiz said having the guidebook in Spanish also is a great resource for students whose first language is not English.

***"We have daily affirmations that encourage perseverance, resilience, and dreaming big," she said. "The students create dream boards and we show them what it takes to reach those dreams."***

To order the Career Clusters guide (in English and Spanish) visit: [Career Clusters Guide Ordering Form](#).

For more information on the Career Clusters Guide and to view the book online, visit the PED website at: [Career Clusters – New Mexico Public Education Department](#)



The above links for ordering and viewing the Career Clusters Guides can also be accessed on the resource site at <https://schoolcounselors-nm.com/college-and-career-resources/>

### Call to Action

If you use the Career Clusters Guide in counseling, please email [Barb Armijo](#). She would like to learn how you are using the guide to strengthen career exploration at your districts and schools.



## FAMILIES CAN HELP ACCELERATE STUDENT LEARNING THIS FALL

For thousands of parents and caregivers, the 2020-21 school year meant learning to teach, direct, or instruct their own children. It was on the run, off the cuff and with only a handful of resources from which to draw. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) recently shared some resources and articles that can help families accelerate their students' learning this fall in order to close any gaps that may have occurred in 2020.

Parents may be asking: "What skills did my children miss out on learning?" Or,

"How can I make sure they get back on track and have access to grade-level learning?" Or, "How do I even know what grade-level content looks like for my children?"

To share these resources and articles with your school community, especially families and caregivers, visit: [How Families Can Help Students Accelerate Back to Grade Level This Fall | TNTP](#).

Here are two more resources to share:

- [Family Guide – HS Literacy](#)
- [Family Guide – HS Math](#)

## THIS MONTH'S TECHNOLOGY TIP

**Have you ever accidentally closed an important browser tab while on the Internet?**

A: There's a quick solution according to LifeHacks.com. To open the last browser window closed use the following key combinations:

**PC Users**

Ctrl+shift+t

**Mac Users**

Command+shift+t



Use the keystroke combination multiple times to bring back the last several closed tabs in your history.

## COLLEGE BOARD HONORS TWO NM COUNSELORS

To highlight the work of innovative, results-oriented middle and high school counselors, The College Board honored two New Mexico Counselors.

Congratulations to **2021 Recognized New Mexico Counselors**



**Angelica Delgadillo** from Valley High School, Albuquerque

Public Schools and

**Merrilee Saige-Alvarez**



from Organ Mountain High School (formerly Oñate High School), Las Cruces Public Schools.

Criteria for counselors to be recognized by the College Board include:

- Serving as a full-time middle or high school counselor in a public, private, or independent school;
- Providing direct guidance and counseling services for a caseload of students and their families; and
- Holding a Master's Degree.



## COLLEGE BOARD SUPPORTS FOR COUNSELORS

Counselors have some excellent resources at their fingertips, thanks to College Board and its array of resources.

Specific to counselors, these resources include:

- Professional Learning that includes **free CEU credits**.
- Collections of handouts, guides, and presentations
- Programs including the SAT Suite of Assessments and Advanced Placement
- Links to information on popular topics such as fee waivers and CEUs.

For more information on College Board Counselor resources visit: [Home - Counselors Site | College Board](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AUGUST 18, 2021

- **3:00 p.m.** - first **NM School Counselors' Monthly Meeting** of the 2021-22 academic year. Meetings will be on the third Wednesday of every month. Register now and add the meetings to your calendar. [Learn More](#)

## COLLEGE BOARD COUNSELOR WORKSHOPS BEGIN AUGUST 26

The College Board is celebrating 50 years of Counselor Workshops. These workshops are occurring **live, online August 26–October 7** and can be viewed on demand as well. The workshops continue to provide timely information and resources to support counselors' work with students and families.

This year's workshops encompass:

- SAT Suite of Assessments
- AP Program
- BigFuture college planning resources, including **College Board Opportunity Scholarships for the Class of 2022** and Student Search Service

The online workshops include a series with a state focus that will provide more localized information as well as an option for a nationwide and international focus. In addition, the College Board will hold a **New Counselor Workshop** to share extra college planning information.

- **New Counselor Workshop:** Designed for high school counselors with 0–2 years of experience, this free, 90-minute workshop will provide the traditional Counselor Workshop updates with additional details to support newer counseling professionals.
- **State-Focused:** Join College Board staff from around the country for this free, state-focused, 90-minute workshop. The presentation will provide helpful updates on College Board programs and higher education trends that support students and their families for the 2021-22 school year.

All workshops are free and all attendees are eligible for CEUs upon completing a short quiz after the event. See below for the link to register for workshops—whether you plan to attend live or want to receive the recording to view at your leisure. To register, visit: [College Board Counselor Workshops 2021](#).

## EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT

Tens of thousands of eligible New Mexicans struggling to pay for Internet services during the pandemic can apply for federal assistance to pay for broadband services and for a one-time discount to purchase a computer.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is a \$3.2 billion initiative administered by the Federal Communications Commission to help lower the cost of high-speed Internet for eligible households. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

Benefits include:

- Up to \$50 month discount for broadband services per household;
  - Up to \$75 month discount for broadband services per household on tribal lands;
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop or tablet computer purchased through a participating provider.

Applications are now open. View the application information by clicking [HERE](#).

There is also a public service announcement in Diné (Navajo) about this program. To access the announcement, click [HERE](#).

The program will end when the fund runs out of money, or six months after the Department of Health and Human Services declares an end to the COVID-19 health emergency, whichever is sooner. Currently, the public health emergency is expected to continue through the end of the 2021 calendar year at a minimum.

**Please share this information with your families.**

## FREE COLLEGE ADVISING PROGRAM NEEDS NEW MEXICO STUDENTS

**Matriculate** is a free virtual college advising program that connects high-achieving low-income students with a near-peer college mentor who works one-on-one with students throughout the college and financial aid processes.

Learn more about the Matriculate program by clicking [HERE](#).

Matriculate's [Class of 2022 Application](#) is open! It has two parts, but only **takes 15 minutes to apply!**

The mentors are called Advising Fellows, and are trained college students who will help students navigate the road to college.

## **SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSLETTER**

You can also access previous issues of the *Counselor Connection* on the resources website or by clicking [HERE](#).

## CONTACT US

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CLICK [HERE](#) TO VISIT WEBSITE

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**[NM SCHOOL COUNSELORS COMMUNITY RESOURCE SITE](#)**