

New Mexico School for the Arts
Head of School Report: September 2018
Report by Eric Crites

NMSA provides access to a rigorous mastery arts and academic high school education for youth with passion and aptitude in the arts, leading to post-secondary learning, careers in the arts, and lives that contribute to society.

School Grade

NMSA's school grade for 2018 is an A. NMSA is one of only eight schools in the state that has received straight As in all seven years that NMPED has been issuing school grades. NM Secretary of Education Christopher Ruszkowski, along with a delegation of education officials from the state of Jalisco, Mexico, visited NMSA to deliver a banner recognizing this achievement.

Audit

Management, members of the Governing Council, and the business office continue to work with the auditors as they complete their audit of FY18.

Charter Renewal

The charter renewal application is complete and ready to be submitted to Charter Schools Division ahead of the October 1 deadline. Dr. Kaplan, Karen Ehlert, Cindy Montoya, Liza Romero, Cecile Hemez, and Chelamia Quintana have been instrumental in the successful completion of the application. The charter renewal site visit is scheduled for October 18.

Charter Schools Expansion Grant

The Charter Schools Expansion Grant, which would provide per-pupil funding to cover costs associated with expanding enrollment by 80 students over five years to grow the school to its currently chartered cap of 300, was submitted to Charter Schools Division on September 6, ahead of schedule. Kaaren Boullosa did excellent work writing the narratives for the application.

Lease Reimbursement

PSFA distributed a list of revised square footage calculations for charter schools. NMSA's square footage calculation did not change. PSFA is scheduled to make a decision on proposed reductions of lease reimbursements on September 19.

School Lunch Program

With the decision having been made to opt out of the Federal School Lunch Program due to the lack of available providers, NMSA is now serving lunches catered by Sprouts Monday-Thursday, and pizza on Friday. The cost per meal is \$5. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch continue to receive their lunches at no or low cost. Student response has been positive.

Staffing/Professional Development Updates

Gregory Gutin has been hired as the part-time clinical counselor; he starts on September 17. Gregory brings with him a great deal of experience working in clinical and school settings. He will be an employee of the Charter School, through a direct private grant.

The mentorship program for new teachers is in place. Experienced but new-to-NMSA teachers have been paired with one experienced NMSA teacher. New-to-the-profession teachers have been

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paired with both an experienced NMSA teacher and an additional content area expert. Mentors receive a stipend each semester.

Safety

- Presentations on safety procedures were delivered by Safety Committee members to staff and students.
- The Safety Committee, having decided that active shooter training from Global One Defense was not a good fit for NMSA, is now working with POMS to provide this training.
- Members of the Safety Committee met with technology vendors to review available safety features, including door controls and camera systems, for the new campus at Sanbusco.

Wellness

In year two of our mindfulness program implementation, teachers--with support from Erin Doerwald--have begun leading a five-minute mindfulness practice in their classes at the beginning of first period each day. Some teachers are also implementing the practice at other times of the day. There is already anecdotal evidence from teachers and students of the benefits of the practice for students, including increased focus and reduced levels of stress/anxiety. An optional weekly sit continues for staff and faculty.

Facility Updates

The Cathedral's insurance company gave final approval for the contract to remediate and restore storm damage in the building. New carpets were installed last week. Materials are on order to begin ceiling repairs. All school programming has continued during repairs. The new roof has not had any leaks during recent rainstorms.