

**New Mexico School for the Arts**  
**Head of School Report: September 2019**  
**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.*

**Kudos**

- Thank you to the numerous staff members, particularly Cindy Montoya and the Art Institute team, for making our Community Open House a successful, festive, inspiring event. We welcomed over 1,000 visitors to the school. A note from Alex Gancarz, a retired LANL scientist who has volunteered in NMSA classrooms for more than five years: “Having lived and been involved in the community for so long, I have lots of friends and acquaintances. I talked with them along with people who want to have their children matriculate to the school. To the person the response to the new school was AWE, AWE and AWE. For me it is such a privilege to be a part of the school.”
- Yang (Veronica Toledo) and Arte Romero y Carver were featured in the Santa Fe Reporter for their climate activism:  
<https://www.sfreporter.com/news/2019/09/13/the-art-of-climate-disruption/>
- In the first weeks of the school year, we have hosted tours for Senator Tom Udall, Representative Ben Ray Lujan, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, and Speaker of the House Brian Egolf.

**PEC**

Year-end ratings for 2018-2019 are pending the release of the new school dashboard (report card) in November.

**Accountability & Assessment Updates**

- PED has said they will announce whether the high school accountability assessment for math and English language arts will be ACT or SAT by the end of September.
- We have received new guidance on graduation requirements and the Progress Toward Graduation team is currently reviewing the information by student to ensure that every student is on track to graduate.
- End of course exams are no longer technically required but are used for Alternative Demonstrations of Competency. The team is determining the best approach to ensure that all students meet graduation requirements without taking extra assessments that are not mandated.
- The rubric to be used for teacher evaluations has been published; it is similar to the NMTech rubric, but eliminates the “exemplary” rating level.

**Building Update**

Classes will begin in Building C on September 23.

**Student Updates**

Parking: Currently students do not have access to park in the school’s parking lots. Due to ongoing construction, control gates that are not yet operational, and unpredictable closures of areas of the lot, the Safety Committee made the determination that we could not safely provide student parking at this time. Students have shared their concerns about this. Staff has worked with

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students to problem-solve this challenge--including an open lunch meeting to discuss ideas. We have located areas within a ten-minute walk that offer free parking. The Safety Committee will continue to evaluate options as construction finishes on phase 1 and begins on phase 2 in order to determine if we may be able to add student parking in the future.

Climate Strike: Some students intend to participate in the Climate Strike action at the Roundhouse on September 20. As always, we will support students in their civic engagement. I have met with students to share the expectation that they have parents call/email permission, and that students communicate with teachers about work they will miss and need to make up. Those involved plan to be gone from 10:35-2:00.

Student Advisory Board: This group, open to all students, meets regularly with school leadership to discuss and plan activities that matter to students. This year, the focus is on school culture. Students have an incredible list of ideas to support the growth of positive school culture in our new space: graffiti art on temporary boards in the paseo, coffee house performances, a revision of our honor pledge to better reflect the school's core values, etc.

### **Safety**

- The Safety Committee continues to work diligently to implement all necessary safety procedures and drills at the new campus. The school completed the required drills during the first month of school.
- The staff received an in-person training on using AED devices. With our expanded campus we have increased the number of AEDs to three.

### **Phase 2**

A request for proposal for a project manager/owner's representative has been issued and advertised. Proposals have been received and the next step is for the selection committee to read proposals and interview candidates.

### **Excellent Schools New Mexico/Transcend**

The school is still waiting to find out if we received this grant to support our diversity/equity/inclusion work.

### **Charter Schools Expansion Grant**

Thank you to Dr. Kaplan for leading the effort to re-apply for this funding to support the school's growth in enrollment. The application was submitted on time and we await the PED's decision.

### **School Lunch Program**

The cost of the program for the first month was \$339.75.