

New Mexico School for the Arts  
Head of School Report: February 2021  
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

- Our dancers shared an incredible performance last week! It's available to view on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/uhld-mejKro>
- Several students from Sativa Cruz's integrated science class testified in legislative committees as expert witnesses in support of outdoor classrooms legislation, tied to their award-winning PBL project in partnership with UNM's Wild Friends.
- Thank you to our parent community, who responded to Cindy's request to contact legislators in support of our capital outlay request to complete the cafeteria.
- Thank you to Cindy and Paula for navigating the new world of a remote legislative session to advocate for NMSA's capital outlay request!

#### Remote Mode/Hybrid Mode

- Chelamia Quintana is leading the expansion of small-group instruction (5:1 student to teacher ratio) on Wednesdays. We had over 20 students on campus last week. We are focusing the expansion on students in need of support (including but not limited to students with IEPs).
- Nearly all staff received their initial COVID vaccine shot in January; they are receiving the booster shot this week.
- We have shared links with families and students to encourage them to pre-register for the COVID vaccine once it is available to them. We have also shared the link for free Vault at-home COVID testing.
- The state is applying for waivers from federal mandates for accountability testing, and is recommending that schools "opt in". NMSA will offer the PSAT (grade 10) and the SAT (grade 11). The data will be used to assess student progress and learning, and to plan for instruction in the coming year. It will ensure that students have a college entrance exam score, even though most schools are going test-optional, at least for the next couple of years. Test data will not influence any accountability measures for the 2020-2021 school year. NMSA decided not to participate in the NM-ASR (11th grade science test) because PED indicated we would not get clear student-level data.
- Denise Hinson is preparing professional development for March on the use of classroom technology and instructional strategies to support hybrid instruction.

#### Legislative/PED/PEC

- The follow-up required on three items in the Charter Schools Divisions preliminary ratings of our 2019-2020 annual monitoring instrument were uploaded ahead of the February 8 deadline. After the final ratings are released, they will be presented as a Governing Council agenda item.

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- There continues to be a push to pass “hold harmless” legislation for purposes of determining SEG funding for FY2022.
- There is an expectation that schools will be required to participate in some form of the Extended School Year program during the 2021-2022 school year. We have delayed the 2021-2022 school year calendar process (usually voted on in the February Governing Council meeting) in anticipation of needing to meet this requirement. We will ensure that the calendar is approved ahead of our state budget deadline.
- Chelamia Quintana and Mikiko Ellis submitted to PED an application for a \$10,000 socio-emotional grant.
- NMSA is receiving just over \$60,000 in the second round of CARES funding; the funds may be expended through September 2023. (We received \$15,000 in the first round of CARES funding).

#### Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Instruction

- The subcommittees of the Equity Leadership Team (representation, grading, student voice) gave thought-provoking presentations to the entire staff and are proceeding with their goals.
- We are working with the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center to design a course of training in diversity, equity and inclusion for our whole staff during the second semester.
- PED re-started its Equity Council program in February (tied to Yazzie-Martinez); Denise Hinson is representing the school and will be connecting the internal ELT with the Equity Council as we move forward.
- The NM Dream Team will be delivering a professional development on Supporting Undocumented Students & Families in March.

#### Safety

- We continue to monitor protest activity at the Roundhouse to ensure staff safety. We are in communication with SFPD.
- The Safety Committee, led by Cecile Hemez, is currently focused on preparing for Hybrid.

#### Staffing

- We have hired two instructional assistants for the current school year, Jill Rice and Alyshia Maldonado, and a social studies teacher for the 2021-2022 school year, Isabella Aldana (NMSA class of 2015 dance alumna!). We are currently hiring for a custodial/facilities position.

#### Facilities

- Cold temperatures led to the failure of a component of the fire suppression system that led to substantial flooding of the floors in Building B on February 15. Remediation began immediately. The broken component was repaired on February 17 and water has been restored to Building B. Damage to contents was minimal. We are working with the insurance adjusters for both the school

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and the Art Institute. A design flaw will be remediated to prevent this issue from recurring. Thank you to Rob and Adam of Klinger Constructors, Ruben, Ismael, Henry, Cindy, and Liza for jumping into action to help on the day of the flooding.

- The temporary Paseo wall will be removed beginning February 22, revealing our gorgeous, bright, huge new wall of windows!

