

New Mexico School for the Arts
Head of School Report: December 2020
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

- Congratulations to Lucy Shattuck (theatre/grade 12) and Veronica Silva (visual arts/grade 12), who have been offered the Davis New Mexico Scholarship. We are grateful to Andrew Davis and the scholarship program for this incredible partnership and opportunity for our students.
- Congratulations to Elsa Sanchez (vocal/grade 12), who at the end of this semester will be granted a Business and Entrepreneurship Certificate through the dual credit partnership with IAIA (first NMSA student to achieve this!).
- Kudos to the Creative Writing & Literature department on their ongoing series of open mic nights, which have been a joyful sharing and celebration of student writing.
- Kudos to Sativa Cruz, whose 9th-grade integrated science class conducted an Outdoor Classroom Prototype project-based learning unit partnering with UNM's Wild Friends. They were awarded 2nd place and \$1,000 worth of material!
- Thank you to Student Council for hosting a fabulous assembly where we shared work from Visual Arts and Creative Writing & Literature; for leading a food drive; and for hosting last week's Ugly Holiday Sweater Fashion Show. Their next project is a good old-fashioned pen pal project to give students the chance to connect without adding screen time.
- Thank you to our operations team for diligently planning for and gracefully responding to the many unknowns that this year has brought.
- Congrats to Hailey Chanler (visual arts/grade 11) on winning third place in the Railyard Art Contest:



•
UPCOMING: Thursday, December 17, 6:00 p.m., is the Music Department's Salon Showcase--link to come.

New Mexico School for the Arts
Head of School Report: December 2020
Report by Eric Crites

Remote Mode/Hybrid Mode

- As we finish the semester, we are closely tracking student progress to ensure that our model and interventions/supports are working. The percentage of students who are currently at risk of failing a class is consistent with where we are during a typical year, thanks to the diligence of our teachers and student support team (led by Chelamia Quintana).
- An area of concern remains the small number of students who are failing multiple classes. Interventions and supports are ongoing with those students and their families.
- While we returned to a traditional grading model for the 2020-2021 school year (after having a pass/no pass approach in spring 2020), we are providing flexibilities to ensure a “do no harm” approach to students’ transcripts for this COVID school year.
- Counselor Mikiko Ellis, Mesa Vista Wellness therapists, and our Natural Helpers team continue to provide social-emotional and behavioral health supports to students who are impacted by the conditions of the pandemic (economic stress, health stress, social isolation, etc.)
- We intend to return to offering small group instruction on campus (5:1 student to teacher ratio) for students with disabilities as soon as we are allowed to by PED. We are hopeful that there will be flexibilities added to enable us to make local decisions about bringing in other students for additional support.
- NMSA staff will have to participate in surveillance testing (at-home saliva COVID tests) before we eventually enter hybrid mode. 10% of staff will have to test each week.
- Planning is underway for creating and reimagining ArtSpring in this unique circumstance we are in. It is a great example of the benefits of artistic thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.

Legislative/PED/PEC

- There is a push to pass “hold harmless” legislation in the upcoming session for purposes of determining SEG funding for FY2022.
- Eric, Chelamia, and Denise will attend PED’s virtual assessment conference in January.

Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Instruction

- Work continues for the Equity Leadership Team’s three subcommittees: representation in the curriculum; student-centered initiatives; and grading/homework best practices.
- 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.
- The NMSA Women of Color Collective (founded this year by Zoe Colfax, with support from faculty adviser Sativa Cruz) is working on a Land Acknowledgement project with the participation of a dedicated group of students, faculty, and Board of Trustees member Rose B. Simpson. They will

New Mexico School for the Arts
Head of School Report: December 2020
Report by Eric Crites

share more with the Governing Council and NMSA community as they further develop their plan.

- NMPED has shared that they will relaunch the Equity Council initiative in January.
- Thank you to Cecile Hemez, who manages our dual-credit partnerships, for working with IAIA to offer our first Tewa language class during semester 2.

Professional Development

- Denise Hinson has provided follow-up training on project-based learning (using the PBLWorks Gold Standard model) as teachers are implementing their first project units.