

New Mexico School for the Arts
Head of School Report: September 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 students, teachers, staff, families, and GC/Board continue to model passion, promise, and aptitude even while the difficulties of the pandemic continue to challenge us all.

School Re-Entry Update

- We had our second positive COVID case on campus the week of September 6, reported the week of September 13. Students, staff, parents, and PED were notified following guidelines. Close contacts were notified, and unvaccinated students had to quarantine.
- We continue to have numerous situations where students or staff feel sick and have to quarantine pending a negative COVID test.
- The NM Department of Health conducted another vaccine clinic at the NMSA campus September 13. It was open to the public.
- At least 58% of students and 98% of staff are fully vaccinated.
- In September, we are working on steps to offer on-site surveillance and on-demand COVID testing through a program of the NM Department of Health.
- There is a lot of positive energy on campus, and also the stress of the pandemic is evident for everyone. Mikiko Ellis is managing referrals for therapy with Mesa Vista Wellness--many students are taking advantage of this resource. We are planning circles for students and staff both.

Legislative/PED/PEC

- We are awaiting the final report from the Charter Schools Division annual monitoring remote site visit for 2020-2021.

Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Instruction

- Eric is working with student groups (Women of Color Collective and Student Equity Leadership Team) to propose policies to the Governing Council on the Juneteenth holiday, Land Acknowledgement, and dress code (among others)..
- We are providing trainings on microaggressions and supporting LGBTQ students during the next two months. Georgina Garcia with the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center in Colorado is partnering with us and has already delivered a training on bias.
- Next steps: reactivating our Equity Council (adding new parents in place of those whose students graduated; adding students). The Equity Council will be a resource for helping us with the Representation project among many other equity topics we are working on.

Professional Development

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- We will provide QPR (suicide prevention training) to students and staff in September.
- We had one training on supporting students with autism; another will occur at the end of September.

Safety

- Public address speakers have been installed in offices and teaching spaces that did not yet have them.
- We have conducted all required first-month safety drills.
- We had a vandalism incident (two car windshields smashed) in the East lot. Police were notified; we are going to try to establish a relationship with the Alternative Response Team for support.
- CPR training was provided for non-instructional staff.

Staffing

- Guia Bowman is starting in our front office this week.