

New Mexico School for the Arts
Head of School Report: September 2022
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

- The Visual Arts Department Reception for the All for One exhibition is Friday, September 23, 5-7 p.m. in the Thaw Gallery.
- Addie Oracion (11/Music) performed with the Santa Fe Symphony, alongside Ms. Kountoupes!



- Mr. Montoya organized an event for the Santa Fe County Clerk's Office to come to NMSA to do mock voting and register 18-year-olds to vote.



School Year Update

- To quote Mr. Durnin: "The vibe is back." We are continuing to see greater levels of engagement, ability to stay in class, openness to connecting and communicating with peers and adults, and eagerness to jump into joyful activities.

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- While our students are much further along in the process of recovering from the experience of being isolated during the first year of COVID, we are still seeing elevated levels of stress and the need for mental health support.
- Kids Kitchen has been cooking lunch and the dorm dinner on-site now for a month. The quality of food has improved significantly since last year, when we provided cold sack lunches before our kitchen was completed.
- We have had low COVID-positive rates since school started, mirroring the low community levels we are seeing in Santa Fe and the state.
- We have a COVID bivalent booster clinic scheduled for October 7, 12-5, and a flu shot clinic scheduled for October 12, 12-3.

Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Instruction/Equity

- Academic faculty have eagerly formed PLC's to engage in professional development and planning on three equity-focused topics: Standards-Based Grading; Project-Based Learning; and Equity (including completing the Representation review of the curriculum).
- Using the Outdoor Equity Grant she secured, Ms. Cruz is leading a student mural project in association with Determined Art Movement and artist Autumn Dawn Gomez in late September.
- On October 7, the student-led multicultural & leadership club is hosting an interactive celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.
- Ms. Vigil has become the adviser for Student Council. She is working to coordinate collaboration of various identity- and activism-based student organizations through the umbrella of Student Council. Once the Student Council Elections are completed, Ms. Vigil will work with students to identify individuals who would like to step into the role of non-voting members of the Governing Council.
- NMSA will be participating in the coaching pathway for culturally & linguistically responsive instruction professional development through Dr. Hollie's organization.
- Ms. Aldana has spearheaded and submitted an application for a grant for Restorative Justice training for six staff members through a program of NMPED.
- Ms. Vigil attended a training titled: Creating Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Training.
- Ms. Welch will be our new Equity Council Lead.

Safety

- NMSA completed all required safety drills for the first month of school.
- On September 12, NMSA entered a lockdown for about an hour due to a police pursuit in the neighborhood. Students and staff followed safety protocols with fidelity.
- Our key system has been updated to ensure our ability to respond quickly in an emergency.
- RAVE Panic Button training has been provided to staff. RAVE is an app that allows staff to quickly report a variety of emergency situations.

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Staffing

- We are thrilled to have [Fernando Ramos-Cintron](#) joining NMSA as the co-chair of our dance department. He is moving to Santa Fe from Puerto Rico and will arrive in early October.
- Alejandra Avila, a member of the dance faculty, has also been hired by the charter school as the part-time residential assistant.