I hope you are staying safe and sound. Against a backdrop of immeasurable health and socioeconomic trauma across the country, the Senate unanimously voted for the passage of a two trillion-dollar emergency rescue package, the largest in US history. Substantive changes were made to the original version of this proposal, much of which disproportionately favored industry and large corporations and not the working families that so desperately need it. Calls from Labor, including our union, the NEA, echoed by legislative leaders, ultimately won important critical supports to address the most immediate challenges.

Both the Senate and House passed the historic stimulus package, which the President indicated he will sign immediately. According to a Washington Post article, “The bill would extend $1,200 to most American adults and $500 for most children, create a $500 billion lending program for businesses, cities and states, and establish a $367 billion employee retention fund for small businesses. It would direct $130 billion to hospitals and provide four months of expanded unemployment insurance, among other things.”

NEA directly lobbied for federal relief for state education funding formulas, arguing it, “…not only helps education, but takes pressure off state budgets, thereby preventing cuts in other areas. In addition, education funding has a ripple effect throughout the community. People whose jobs are saved can continue to spend in the community, supporting the local economy.” Click here for a summary of the Senate bill funding allocation.

Though it isn’t clear how New Mexico will distribute Federal funding for education, NEA-NM is at the table and will continue to ensure public school employee issues are heard and addressed. In the meantime, please review our content below for additional resources and support.

Mary Parr-Sanchez
NEA-NM President
I was told I am an essential employee but recently did not feel well. What happens if I refuse to go in? Will I have to use my sick leave? What if I am out of sick leave?

The closure of schools will have a possible repercussion on the timelines for renewals and non-renewals. It is important for members to keep their Association President informed of any notices from the District’s Superintendent to either renew or non-renew a member. Adherence to the timelines protects your contractual rights. Providing your local President and UniServ Director with any notice, especially notices of non-renewal, is imperative. They will provide you with important information to ensure your due process is being followed.

**Policy Updates!**

The Department of Education made an announcement impacting standardized testing and student loans. In both cases, applications or notice must be given to opt into these changes. For student loans, it's up to individuals to reach out to their loan providers. **A waiver for federally required assessments was submitted and approved by the US Department of Education.** This and other answers to frequently questions and answers by the NM PED can be found here.

Do you have employment concerns or questions? Fill out this FORM and NEA-NM will contact you as a result.

NEA-NM membership has benefits! Find out answers to these questions and more. Click here.
When the Public Education Department of New Mexico announced schools would be closed until April 6th, Hillrise Elementary teacher and NEA-Las Cruces member, Ken Strawn, moved quickly to collaboratively work through his Union and the District to make sure students and parents had the academic resources to weather the health crisis.

The latest numbers from Education Week show 46 states have decided to close schools. Combined with District closures in other states, at least 123,000 U.S. public and private schools are closed, are scheduled to close, or were closed and later reopened, affecting at least 54.8 million school students.

Mr. Strawn reports that student/parents have responded favorably with comments like, “Thanks again for contacting us. We have Internet. Computer. Wi-Fi. iPad. TV. No landline.” and “Hi Mr. Strawn! Just got your message! Thanks so much for checking in on us.”

Strawn invited parents to encourage their students to participate in an online persuasive essay contest. One possible writing topic he suggested; “How you and your family are dealing with the COVID-19 virus at home.” Aside from sharing online learning activities, Mr. Strawn has made sure parents and students know that “Grab and Go” meals are hot and ready to go at his school.

Mr. Strawn is not alone in pushing digital learning activities for students. Mayfield High School Librarian and NEA-Las Cruces member, Karen Hanson-Sharp, has taken full advantage of social media to offer creative ways of engaging students with digital learning opportunities. She recently posted a photo scavenger hunt activity and invited students to follow great book suggestions coupled with an opportunity to win prizes.

Like many thousands of educators across the country, NEA-NM is actively collaborating with school districts across the state to make sure stories about digital learning experiences and resources are readily available to all students.
Does your Local Association have a story to share about: organizing with members, partnering with your District for improving conditions, and addressing challenges during these times?

Our member, Jim Sauer from Magdalena School District, sent us a letter regarding COVID-19 and the origin of viruses. Jim was a former military research officer and shares his special insights into the spread of the virus. Read Jim’s letter.

We would like to hear about it and share with your colleagues across the state.

Email NEA-NM State Organizer Marco Nunez at mnunez@neanm.org with the heading: Stories from Field!
Get Involved

Grab and Go Lunches in NM: According to Voices for Children, 2019 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK, over 124,000 NM children live in poverty. Beyond education, school lunches are integral in the development and health of our youth. It is why most Districts in the state and country continue to provide lunches. Please check with your Local and District to see what is being done in your backyard and how you can help. The New Mexico PED website is also a good source to learn more about lunch distribution sites and times.

Volunteers Needed: Food distribution centers across the state continue to need volunteers to help. If interested, visit the website. At the bottom of the site, enter your zip code, and click "Find Locations." A location for a food bank will appear along with a contact number. Some of the numbers listed might not work if those schools/businesses are shut down, but this the best option right now for routing volunteers.

2020 CENSUS: School funding is informed by Census results and we need your help. By filling out your form online, you also minimize contact for canvassers! Click on the link below to check this box off from your "To-Do" list!

Time to Complete Your 2020 Census Form
Llene su formulario del Censo 2020

Digital Learning
Check out these great resources from the NM PED for distance learning:
Families Distance Learning Toolkit Educator Distance Learning Tool Kit

Join Us On Social Media
Like Us On Facebook
Follow Us On Twitter
Manage Your Membership On NEA 360
Download Our Mobile App For Apple
Download Our Mobile App For Android

Additional Resources
NM PED
NM Governor
World Health Organization
US Dept of Education
Resources, tips and more for distant learning
Messages from your partners at Member Benefits and California Casualty

Many of our benefit partners are offering support through the MAP Member Assistance Program (MAP) to those affected negatively by the COVID-19 virus. You may be eligible to access resources to help in these difficult times. Click on the link above for a list of contact information for our partners and details on specific assistance they have available.

Has your family income been adversely affected by this pandemic? You may be eligible for a skip-payment option. NEA-NM members that are customers of California Casualty can call CalCas customer service and look into the “Summer Skip” option.

To learn more about this assistance, call 1-866-477-7423

Don’t have CalCas Auto and Home? Now might also be a good time to see if you, as a member, can reduce household expenses by comparing California Casualty to your current carrier.

We at NEA Member Benefits want you to know we’re here to support you during this difficult time.

We’ll continue to update this page with additional information as we receive it.
Stay Informed and get the latest news on COVID-19

For the latest news about COVID-19 and resources from the National Education Association

For the latest news about COVID-19 cases in New Mexico

For a national, interactive map of coronavirus and school closures

Información sobre como contener el Coronavirus

To learn more about how you can help contain the spread of COVID-19

The Johns Hopkins University and Medicine website is a great source for tracking the international spread of COVID-19 and offers other great resources