During NEA-NM’s Virtual Town-Hall meeting last week, headlined by NEA National President, Lily Eskelsen García, PED Secretary of Education of NM, Dr. Ryan Stewart, and Lt. Governor and educator, Dr. Howie Morales, Dr. Stewart mentioned a significant and inspiring milestone, “we just eclipsed the three-million meals served [in NM]…” He echoed a sense of gratitude many New Mexicans have for ‘essential’ school employees on the front lines serving meals. I count myself among them and sent a message last week to our food service and other essential support staff, thanking and honoring them. Here is a small excerpt from the letter: “You [food service workers] are keeping the system running and caring for our kids and families by making sure their basic needs are met, like you always do. I know you are doing this for the kids, and you are carrying most of the burden. We can never forget the critical role that you have in public schools. NEA-NM wants to make sure you are safe and have what you need during this difficult time. We want you to know that we are in this together and we will stand with you.”

Your membership in NEA-NM strengthens our voice on matters of safety and other working conditions, thank you. In these trying and dynamic times, it is as important as ever that we have a seat at the table when decisions are made. This edition of the Newsletter has information on how to get more involved, starting with inviting potential members to join; filling out your Census forms and encouraging others to as well; and requesting an absentee ballot in preparation for the upcoming elections. Together, we continue to confront challenges while embracing new opportunities that honors our workforce and stands with New Mexican students and their families.

Mary Parr-Sanchez
NEA-NM President
As part of our ongoing commitment to keep the lines of communication open between members and education stakeholders, NEA-NM hosted its first in a series of virtual town-halls. We thank our special guests for joining us and look forward to advancing these conversations. Thank you to all who submitted questions in advance! Though we couldn't get to them all, we are reviewing those not asked and are working to get answers.

About K-5 Plus, Dr. Stewart pointed out many of its elements are, “written into law... we are bound by the statutes; our flexibility can be somewhat limited.” He went on to add, however, “we encourage all of you and your members to talk to your legislators to reach out and say, ‘if there is a way to keep the impact of these programs and think about other flexibilities for how they get implemented...’ when they hear it from you directly, it is the most influential way.”

NEA National President, Lily Eskelsen García

“...those buildings never were who we are; who we are, we carry inside of us. We take it wherever we go. This virus did not stop us from being who we are. We are people who love someone else’s child.”

Lt. Governor, Dr. Howie Morales

"I can tell you, in talking with teachers all across the state and hearing from educators of the impact that you [NEA-NM] have made, I know that now every parent and every New Mexican understands the work that you do... On behalf of the Governor and myself, we are grateful for the input you provide; the questions that are asked..."
NEA-NM has put together several frequently asked questions about COVID-19 and correlating employee rights issues.

If you need help in addressing any of those mentioned, or advice on others that arise within your school district, please contact NEA-New Mexico at 505-986-2855.

Vote, Sign it, Mail it!

Signing up to receive your absentee ballot now ensures you’ll have access to your vote, protects you from having to gather in a centralized location should they open, and helps flatten the curve for those people who may still need to go and vote in-person, as well as poll workers.

New Mexico does not require a reason to request one.

Click here and request your ballot now.

Absentee ballots will start being mailed out on May 5, 2020.

Absentee ballots must be requested BEFORE May 28, 2020.

ANYONE CAN REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT!
Have you moved recently?

☑ Changed your name?

☑ Any other reason why your voter registration may need to be updated?

Check your voter status

Register or Update Info

The deadline for registering online to vote in June's primary is 11:59 pm May 5th, 2020.
- You can still register in-person at a county clerk’s office up until May 30th.
- You CANNOT change your political party after the May 5th deadline for the purposes of the June Primary.

6 things Congress must still do to protect students and families during COVID-19

Educators across the country know that for students and school communities to recover from the emotional and financial crisis spurred by the coronavirus pandemic, legislators need to invest in the public education system now.

Digital Learning

Register now for our Weekly Webinar “A Closer Look at Distance Learning” featuring an NEA-New Mexico member, sharing how they connect with their students during this time of crisis. Webinars take place on Thursdays at 4:00 pm

Families Distance Learning Toolkit

Educator Distance Learning Tool Kit

Look out for recorded Webinars on Social Media and on our Website

CAPP
Centers for the Advancement of Professional Practice
NEA & NEA-New Mexico Micro-credential Virtual Professional Learning Communities

NEA and NEA-New Mexico will be providing members an opportunity to participate in a virtual Professional Learning Community (PLC) to support successful completion of an NEA Micro-credential from start to finish. Educators who participate in a PLC to complete a micro-credential are more likely to earn their badge the first time. Registration closes April 30. PLCs start in early May and end in late June.

The virtual PLC will be hosted by a trained micro-credential facilitator and consist of weekly support meetings via zoom.

We are offering Micro-credentials in the following 3 areas.

- Trauma-Informed Pedagogy
- ESP Reporting Standard
- National Board Certification Core Proposition 1

List of NEA Micro-credentials

It is our hope that your professional development continues to be meaningful and relevant.
The Washington Post recently published a story by renowned pediatric professors Bernard Dreyer and Leonardo Trasande. The title of their story was chilling yet captivating. The title of their story is chilling because it’s a dire warning of the psychological effects of living in a new world governed by COVID-19 restrictions. These restrictions have placed a heavy burden on all facets of society and especially on our children. But the fact that the title is framed as a question is also important. It’s a call to act in a time of uncertainty, of the unpredictable, and the contingent. Do we really think we can control it? Or do we have to learn to embrace it?

In her journey, Bethany felt very unsure about providing any kind of distance education for her preschool students. She felt that preschool is all about hands on experiences and providing social interactions so students will learn very important social skills. Based on her years of teaching experience, Bethany was challenged. She found herself in the uncomfortable position of being forced to choose between what she knew was best practice and the uncertain world of online teaching.

The collective knowledge gained from these modules became very useful as the District moved to implement their Continuous Learning Plan in response to school closures. The training provided educators with learning platforms: virtual grade level meetings with instructional coaches for support, and school staff meetings to ensure all felt secure in starting distance education.

In this issue, we turn to a story from our own NEA-NM Vice President and NEA-Alamogordo member, Bethany Jarrell, in search of answers on how to respond effectively and help students and families cope with the new reality of learning under COVID-19. Bethany writes that working in collaboration her union NEA Alamogordo and Alamogordo Public Schools, she was able to negotiate stipends for various google trainings. There was also a recent opportunity for educators to participate in distance learning training modules.
As she and other fellow educators across the District went live with distance learning and took that leap of faith during the first week of April, the response from her students and parents was unbelievable. Since then, Bethany has had numerous parents contact her to tell her how their child watched her calendar video over and over because they were so happy to see her. She knew that because teachers had built such strong bonds with students, those same students, although very young, missed their teachers.

A parent was able to observe and describe that unique moment of emotional pain and surrealness when her daughter watched her teacher, Bethany, teach online for the first time:

Emmy saw a video that her teacher made for the class in Google. It was their morning song. What you don’t see is that Emmy started to cry. I couldn’t bring myself to take a picture of her face and exploit her grief. She was clearly upset upon seeing her teacher and hearing the familiarity of their morning song... My Emmy is a special bird and doesn’t handle change very well...The grief of a teacher and the grief of a student are two surreal things to witness... As a mother, thank you to the amazing teachers who have impacted my children’s lives.

In the face of uncertainty, the willingness to act provides all of us with hope. True leadership requires heart and the willingness to embrace change. Bethany’s story is a perfect example that together we can forge a path forward and together we can heal.

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

Calling All NEA Members: Take the Census—Spread the Word!

NEA has been working to make sure all our members, students and communities are fully and properly counted in the U.S. Census, the federal government’s headcount of U.S. households that occurs every 10 years. The information collected by the Census is vitally important to the allocation of federal education funding to states and localities.

Find out more about the U.S. Census through these NEA resources:

- NEA.org U.S. Census Web Page
- Educators Continue Census Outreach, Despite COVID-19
- Time to Complete Your 2020 Census Form
- Llene su formulario del Censo 2020

Do your part—fill out the U.S. Census for your household today!

NEA Limited Time Offers (LTOs)

With everyone feeling the pinch of the economic environment, NEA Limited Time Offers is the new online discount buying platform for NEA members and is a great way to stretch those dollars.

Check out these featured LTOs and more!
From student debt to taxes to monthly bills, the coronavirus may be affecting your finances. This fantastic round-up of various topics from NEA Member Benefits can help you find the information you need now.

Feeling a little isolated in today’s environment? You are definitely not alone! Here are some great ideas on How Communities Connect While Social Distancing from your friends at NEA Member Benefits and California Casualty.

Many of our benefit partners are offering support through the 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.

Even during this disruptive time in our country, you can expect the same level of care and responsive service from California Casualty as you receive during more normal times. The fastest way for you to update your policy, file a claim, access your ID cards, and more is online. If you have a question or don’t see what you need, connect with them by sending a message and one of their highly trained US-based representatives will respond promptly. Or you can contact our own state-based representative, Brandon Watson, at 512-520-7248 and he will be happy to assist you.

In order to address the reduction in driving in combination with the current stay-at-home order, the NM Superintendent of Insurance has asked major auto insurers to give policy holders money back because of the new conditions. Several companies announced they would be following this guidance and will comply with the request.

Official Press Release
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 cómo 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

- NM PED
- NM Governor
- World Health Organization
- US Dept of Education
- Resources, tips and more for distant learning