A message from Mary Parr-Sanchez, NEA-NM President

Hello NEA-NM Members and Leaders,

I want to share some important guidance from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) published this week in their School Reentry Guidance Document. Districts have leeway in how they will reopen their schools, and their reentry plans must be based upon Department of Health data for their region in the state. All staff, including custodians, teachers, bus drivers, nutrition services, educational assistants, physical plant folks NEED to be involved in discussion around these decisions keeping the health and safety of our students in mind. Reach out to your local leaders to find out how workers are involved in making these decisions.

In our continued commitment to inform and engage our membership, NEA-NM is organizing three webinars in the coming weeks around school reentry. We want to work with all of you to promote transparency and collaboration with your district as you fight for the students and staff's best interests at heart. We are all in this together, and all three levels of NEA are working with you during this time: your Local NEA Association, NEA-NM, and NEA. Your membership helps strengthen our response, including having legal teams to inform proactive strategies to keep staff and students safe in the reopening schools’ plans that districts will be submitting to the NMPED.

New Mexico PED Reentry Guidance

Here is a link to the complete comprehensive guidance referenced above to support the state’s districts, charter schools and communities in relation to the ongoing pandemic and subsequent reopening of schools for the upcoming year. This critical work was the result of a collaborative effort among many stakeholders including the New Mexico School Reentry Task Force (of which our own NEA-President Mary Parr-Sanchez was a participating member), the New Mexico Medical Advisory Team, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and other forms of research.

As this information was just released, NEA-NM would like to hear your immediate thoughts and concerns in order to address them in a collective manner. Your voice needs to be heard and we value your feedback! Please know that we will be listening to any specific concerns by groups and the overarching concerns of all by filling out our survey. Together, we will continue to keep students and staff at the pinnacle of our focus in this constantly changing educational environment.
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Summer Leadership Academy: Strengthening a Collective Voice

Local leaders of NEA-NM Affiliates, from across the state, gathered over three days last week to assess the challenges that lay ahead and forge a collective path to grow and strengthen our union. The first day opened with somber reflections around the impact of this pandemic on the lives of New Mexicans and a heightened urgency to address racial inequities laid bare by the recent killings of unarmed Black brothers and sisters by police. Princess Moss, NEA Secretary-Treasurer, joined the Zoom call to echo a sentiment of gravity and need for focus to defend and strengthen our public schools and communities. Additionally, there were a series of trainings that members were able to participate in.

Every subsequent year, NEA-NM Affiliates increase their capacity to identify and connect with new hires, particularly those just entering the profession. This year is no different. Though the settings may change, due to new social distance norms, we stand ready to join Affiliates as they welcome new members! Keep an eye out for email and other notifications to join your local Affiliate as they plan back to school events in your community.

Not a member? Now is the best time to Join to strengthen public education in NM! Simply download your application.

Despite the challenging times, we keep organizing for our students.

In early March our state confirmed the first cases of COVID-19 and from the onset of this outbreak Governor Lujan-Grisham and the Secretary of Education Dr. Ryan Stewart worked with NEA-NM to set an inclusive and collaborative tone to advocate for students, public-school employees and our communities. The Governor issued a series of public health orders and executive orders and we shared pertinent information on our website under the banner Schools and Coronavirus, What should you know? in a collective effort to mitigate the widespread community transmission of COVID-19.

We will continue to organize for educational equity for all New Mexican students, regardless of zip code. For that, we make no apologies.