NEA-NM Educators Host Community Art Build in Santa Fe for Upcoming Rally for Public Schools

(SANTA FE) – Volunteers, including local artists, educators, students, and community members participated in the National Education Association – Santa Fe (NEA-SF) first art build at Milagro Middle School making signs, banners, and street art for the upcoming Rally for New Mexico Public Schools on Sunday, January 23, 2022 at the New Mexico Capitol Roundhouse.

Princess Moss, Vice President of the National Education Association (NEA) was in Santa Fe to show her support and invited all to “Join our struggle to provide the resources and supports our students need regardless of their zip code. Join our movement to lift your voice for students, educators and families.”

NEA-New Mexico President Mary Parr-Sanchez added “New Mexico’s schools are in crisis. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham is listening, but can legislators hear us? Over one thousand licensed teaching positions are vacant in our state today and almost a thousand more education support professional positions are unfilled. Educators in New Mexico are doing second and even third jobs to make ends meet. They can’t afford their health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs. Some of our colleagues have turned to food stamps and Medicaid. And while thousands have left the profession because they can no longer tolerate the wages, benefits, and working conditions our schools have to offer: large class sizes, very little time to plan for vulnerable students, and many in the Legislature that do not listen to educators in today’s classrooms. The real crisis lies ahead of us as untold thousands more young New Mexicans will not even consider a career in education. Who feels the impact of this crisis the hardest? Our students.”

NEA-SF President Grace Mayer stated “Schools are the heart of the community. They are also at the center of some of the most important labor and social justice struggles of our time. In recent years, educators across the country have organized to protect their students and their communities. Decades of cuts, the expansion of charter schools, and systemic racism have left schools with large class sizes, insufficient numbers of staff, and educators without the pay and benefits they need to live in their communities and sustain themselves in their work. Besides these obstacles, educators have begun to fight back. And in the places they are fighting back, they are winning – for themselves, for their students, and for the schools upon which our communities depend.”

Education unions and other progressive organizations have led similar art builds in other states. Designs for the signs, posters, and banners to be created at Santa Fe’s art build were submitted by local and national artists in response to a call for submissions from NEA-Santa Fe. The designs were selected by a committee of Santa Fe educators led by middle school art teacher Mayer. Artists whose designs were selected include Santa Fe-based artist David Sloan, Oakland-based artist Favianna Rodriguez, and several others. The art build was held on Friday thru Sunday at Milagro Middle School.

The materials produced by volunteers at the Santa Fe art build will be used at the upcoming Rally for New Mexico Public Schools on Sunday, January 23, 2022 at the New Mexico Capitol Roundhouse. The rally is an event sponsored by the Respect New Mexico Educators campaign – a joint project of the American Federation of Teachers – New Mexico and National Education Association – New Mexico, New Mexico’s two largest unions of educators.

For pictures of the event please visit: https://www.facebook.com/neasantafenm/posts/7524321957594032