

2021 Highlights In Education In Los Alamos

Los Alamos Public Schools opened 2021 with elementary students back in the classroom and middle and high school students still learning virtually. In January, Melanie Colgan took over as school board president from Ellen Specter, who became vice president.

At its first meeting of 2021, the Board unanimously approved the proposal to develop educational specifications for Chamisa and Piñon elementary schools submitted by Architectural Research Consultants, Inc., moving the process ahead to bring new school construction to White Rock.

In March, the Sullivan Field House officially opened at Sullivan Field. The project also included other improvements at Sullivan field, including a new press box. The new Sullivan Field House includes locker rooms for home and away teams, concessions, ticket booths, a spirit store, public restrooms, a training room and 1,000 square-feet of storage. The new facility supports not only sports teams and the Topper Band but also high school physical education classes.

In November, the New Mexico Public Education Dept. was busy collecting comments on its proposed new standards for social studies. The new standards add two new content areas: ethnic, cultural and identity studies, and inquiry. Public comment revealed widespread fears that the new standards would promote divisiveness. Educators from around the state have endorsed the new standards. A decision on the standards is expected in early 2022.

The Nov. 2 general election focused entirely on education. Successful candidates include:

The Los Alamos School Board met Dec. 14 in the School Board Room on Trinity Drive for its final regular meeting of 2021. Board members recognized Steve Boerigter for his years of service on the board. His first School Board meeting was March 14, 2017. This was his final meeting.

Board members unanimously approved a \$15 minimum hourly wage adjustment for 137 LAPS employees earning below this amount. The Board also agreed that the approximately \$93,000 in one-time supplemental funds will come from leased funds.

Interim Superintendent Guy concluded the meeting by presenting legislative recommendations for this month's legislative session.

LAPS will recommend:

- Staff compensation at regionally competitive levels;
- Local decision making;
- Funding for inclusive learning;
- Flexibility for K-5 Plus; and
- Capital Outlay Act.

The session opens Jan. 18.

The Los Alamos School Board narrowed the search for the next superintendent to three candidates in December. The candidates and their families will travel to Los Alamos Jan. 12-14 for a formal interview with School Board members as well as in-person meetings with staff and community stakeholders.

The candidates are:

- Keith Bausman who serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources for the Hazelwood School District in St. Louis, Mo.;
- Brett Bunch who is the Superintendent of the Newport School District in Arkansas; and
- Dr. Jose Delfin who serves as the Associate Superintendent for the Carson City School District in Nevada.