

**State of the Schools Address
Espanola Public Schools
October 24, 2018**

Delivered by Superintendent Bobbie J. Gutierrez

Good Afternoon,

It is an honor to be here this afternoon to deliver my first State of the Schools Address for the Espanola Public Schools, and to my knowledge the first State of the Schools address in the district's history, or at least recent history. I would like to begin by telling you the state of the schools in Espanola is on the rise. In fact, our schools are great in some areas, very good in some, and struggling in some areas. The areas in which our school district is struggling are the most well-known, and we often get caught up in those struggles rather than remembering to celebrate our successes and build on the positive. I will discuss successes and struggles this afternoon, but ...

<At this time, please stand for the presentation and posting of colors by our EVHS NJROTC Color Guard >

I want to outline this afternoon's events for you. First, I would like to begin with a moment of silence and prayer for one of our former graduates, and vibrant members of our community whose life ended on October 4 as a result of gun violence, Cameron Martinez.

I have a lot of important people to introduce to you in just a few minutes, but first I want to showcase a few of our student groups that I asked to join me today in welcoming you to the State of the Schools Address.

Students that Named ESC Facility

EVHS Cheerleaders

ETS Music Students under the direction of Mr. Jonathan Barnes.

***GUESTS & DIGNITARIES—please stand and be recognized.**

***School Board Members**

***Executive Staff and Directors and Principals; Teachers**

***Foundation Board Members**

OUR SUCCESSES

In just a few weeks, November 12-16, to be exact, we will celebrate American Education Week, and originally, an American Education was a public education and there is a lot to celebrate about a public education—it is the backbone of our nation, and one we need to embrace and improve, and not abolish with more charter schools, private schools and vouchers. There is a lot to celebrate in our public schools. Our teachers and school administrators in Espanola Public Schools are more dedicated than you will find most anywhere, and our school leaders are strong and committed. Our schools have more support systems in place for helping students to be successful than ever before and our schools are safer, and better maintained than we have seen in the past.

Unfortunately, many stories featured in our daily newspapers and in particular, weekly publications, and on television, often highlight the things that can and do go wrong in our schools, and sometimes journalists report incorrect facts and information based on some sort of bias about the schools, and refusal to create fair and balanced stories based on the facts rather than assumptions. At the current time, I would be remiss if I did not thank our Education Reporter, Jacob Mulliken,

at the *Rio Grande Sun* for holding knowledgeable and realistic beliefs about public education. We are thankful for the publications of the past year that reflect accurate pictures of our schools—which have included the good, the bad, and the indifferent, and I remind our audience this evening that our schools are simply a reflection of our community—a microcosm, if you will. We are thankful for publications and stories that reflect real stories about our schools and our district; the challenges we face and the successes we experience.

For example, did you know, our 2018 graduating class was the largest graduating class in almost a decade? They also received more than a quarter-million dollars in scholarships, and we have graduates attending schools, not only in New Mexico, but across the nation. Our graduates can and do compete on a national and international level. We had four graduates this past year that received the prestigious Bilingual SEAL on their diplomas, and the first Native American student in New Mexico to receive the SEAL on his diploma for being tri-lingual in English, Tewa and Spanish. This year, we have approximately 16 candidate's in-line to receive the SEAL.

While our student awards are too numerous to mention today, I will say that we had students receiving awards in math, science and engineering through a variety of programs, most notably our **MESA programs and our Robotics programs** throughout the district. Our **Athletic Teams at Espanola Valley High School** produced state qualifiers in several sports, and our **most recognized** this past year, was of course, Boys & Girls Basketball. We brought home the **District 2 5A championships**, and both teams qualified for state competition with our Sundevils earning the 2 5A runner-up in the state finals. Our **NJROTC program** received the highest rating possible during their inspection this past year which earned them the designation of **Honor Unit with Distinction**. They earned 95 of 100 points. Our NJROTC brings a lot of pride to our school district and the Espanola Valley, and I am grateful to our cadets and their leader, Major Mark Gonzales.

Thanks to our wonderful partnership with the LANL Foundation, we have six teachers planning to receive National Board Certification this year in December, and another 16 scheduled to obtain their certification in the coming year or so. When we started this initiative last year, we had one Nationally Board Certified teacher in Espanola at Alcalde Elementary. I had the opportunity to work with many fine people in Santa Fe when we started the journey there, and it has been wonderful to continue the journey here in Espanola with a lot of support, enthusiasm and appreciation by our teachers.

And in the words of Selina McGinn, “I wouldn’t necessarily recommend completing all four modules of National Board Certification in one year, but being Nationally Board Certified means holding my teaching practice to the highest standards possible. *“My national board certification is by far the most effective process I have undertaken to improve my teacher qualities and to prove to myself and my students that what I do every day makes a difference.”*”

And in my humble opinion, one the greatest compliments ever paid to me came from one of the National Board advisers in which she stated, *“Bobbie Gutierrez is known as a teacher’s Superintendent; regardless of her position, her heart has always remained in the classroom.”*

I will showcase some additional programs, training and support the LANL Foundation provides in just a few minutes, but first I want to talk about a new initiative this year which is focused around the continued building of Fine and Performing Arts in our Schools. When I came to Espanola the first time in 2015, I discovered that while the schools were receiving money for the Fine & Performing Arts through the Fine Arts Education Act provided as part of our funding by the Public Education Department, schools were not really using their money for K-6 Arts Education. Upon further exploration, I learned that some schools weren’t aware of their money or they didn’t know what artists or musicians were available to work with the schools, so ultimately, the schools were not receiving much in terms of Fine & Performing arts instruction with the exception of a few schools.

At the time, I asked Denise Johnston, who was doing some contract work for us at the time, if she would consider managing our Fine & Performing Arts grant, which was right up her alley. She began work on the program and I am happy to share with you today this beautiful Arts catalogue, (also available on our website) that showcases artists willing to work with our

students in the schools. Our mission this year has been to get music back into the schools, and while it has been somewhat more challenging than we initially imagined, we are slowly getting there.

We started by hiring Steven Iliff to assist us with re-establishing band programs at the middle and high school because at one time, we had award winning programs and so many people in our community speak fondly of the EVHS Band that was selected to perform in the Rose Bowl Parade in the 1980's. Steven is in the process of planning a Winter Band Concert, and off we go....I would like to add we still need instruments and our Espanola Public Schools Education Foundation has helped to embrace the initiative by organizing an instrument drive as well as going out and picking up instruments. We've also had a few monetary donations, and if you're feeling generous today, please see Denise or me in a few minutes when we go into our Open House for refreshments and a tour of the facility.

I am also happy to report we recently hired three music teachers for our elementary schools and we are excited about the quality and skill-level these three, exceptionally-talented music educators, brings to the Espanola Public Schools to share with our elementary students, and of course to build music programs in our secondary schools, and hopefully, overt time rebuild and restore the music program at Northern NM College. Denise and I will be putting together a Music Advisory Task Force soon in order to roll out our Music programs in a larger more encompassing way, but first we had to find some experts to help us—so mission accomplished in terms of first steps.

Our Board and Strategic Planning:

One of the things our Board did this past year was to help me, along with our staff, roll out a Strategic Plan to guide the District. They revised the District's Mission, and slightly altered the district's Vision, and established five Board goals that they expect me to aspire to in leading the district. The Board Goals include the promotion of academic excellence, recruitment and retention initiatives, fostering of a safe learning environment, improvement of systems and operations, and wellness initiatives and programs.

There are 40 pages of detail in this plan; and it was released a few weeks ago. We have copies available today or it is available in PDF format on our website.

One thing I want focus on for a few minutes this afternoon is the Board's mission statement as it was revised to reflect:

Espanola Public Schools, through family and community collaboration and partnerships, will engage all students in meaningful learning experiences that meet the highest academic and ethical standards in a caring, collaborative and safe learning environment.

Our Community Partnerships:

Espanola Public Schools Education Foundation

I introduced you to the Foundation Board a few minutes ago, and while still in its infancy, the Foundation has the potential to be an amazing organization of support over time, with the long-term goal of being able to establish an endowment that would:

- Support the cultivation of teacher excellence
- Enrich the learning environment by providing mini-grants to teachers that support and enhance teaching and learning
- Support effective and innovative programs for teachers and students; and
- Assist with teacher advancement and provide new teacher support

This past year, the Foundation has been wonderful to support NNMC student tutors to support our younger students through MATCH NM at Hernandez Elementary School. They also provided welcome baskets for our new teachers

this year that included office supplies for the teachers and a book; additionally, they want to support teacher licensure advancement by supporting the dossier process.

I am grateful to the Foundation for their support and their sincere and genuine interest in helping our district to grow and improve.

Northern New Mexico College

NNMC is a great partner with our school district. They offer a variety of classes available to students through dual enrollment; this past year NNMC received funding for Upward Bound which serves about 90 of our freshmen at EVHS. Upward Bound is funded by the United States Department of Education, and the **program** provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. **Upward Bound** serves: high school students from low-income families; and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree.

We continue our planning with Northern to eventually have an **Early College High School or Academy** on campus, and we're also working closely with the College of Education to build our number of young people in the area going into education while maybe offering part-time employment with the school district and creating some type of paid student-teaching experience...more to come in this area.

It is nice to have a great partnership with Northern. We also have dual enrollment partnerships with UNM-LA; SFCC and coming this spring UNM-Taos. Our goal is to expand interest and opportunities for our EPS students in terms of college and career preparation.

The LANL Foundation

The LANL Foundation provides amazing support, not only to our school district, but to school district's in Northern NM. The LANL Foundation supports elementary schools in northern NM by offering an amazing Science program to our elementary schools, and the Inquiry STEM Education Consortium (ISEC) program is recognized both nationally and internationally. They are a great source and support for training and professional development, not only in STEM initiatives, but more recently in professional development opportunities focused on trauma-informed instruction.

Schools have an important role to play in providing stability and a safe space for children and connecting them to caring adults. We are thankful for the support and training our teachers are receiving in the area, as it provides our teachers with strategies and skills that can aid our students, as we have an inordinate number of children and young people affected by trauma in our community.

The LANL Foundation also supports recognition of **Excellence in Teaching Awards** and seven teachers throughout Rio Arriba County will be recognized later this fall, and we hope to have teachers from Espanola receive this award and check for \$1,000. This past year, five of our outstanding teachers from Espanola Public Schools received this award.

And let's not forget the scholarship awards programs for our students in Northern NM and last year the LANL Foundation supported four of our graduates with \$25,000 in scholarships.

I could go on and on about the LANL Foundation, but one of the things I want to do today is to offer a heartfelt thanks to the LANL Foundation and their amazing staff for their unending support.

Cooking With Kids

I was very proud to be a part of bringing Cooking with Kids to some of our schools in Espanola this past year, as Cooking with Kids, is an organization I have been affiliated with now for about 25 years in one form or another.

Cooking with Kids motivates and empowers elementary school students to make healthy food choices. Through hands-on nutrition education activities, kindergarten through 6th grade students explore, prepare, and enjoy fresh, affordable foods from around the world. And here in Espanola, we offer Cooking with Kids in our 21st Century Afterschool Program at Carlos F. Vigil Middle School, as well as some of our elementary school afterschool programs.

We believe that experience with fresh, healthy foods is an important part of learning how to take care of one's self. Many of us were fortunate to grow up with parents and grandparents, neighbors and friends who cooked and gardened, sharing with us the value and pleasure of food. Growing, cooking, and eating fresh foods became a cherished part of our lives. Today, most children do not have this experience. Children embrace these experiences instinctively, with enthusiasm and willingness in every class we teach.

Bringing healthy foods into the classroom can increase students' awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of healthy eating. Our experience supports research that finds that children need to be offered a new food a number of times before they accept it, and as such, Cooking with Kids works to expose students to a variety of positive food choices while honoring the individual choice and preference of each child. Children should be encouraged, but never forced to try a new food.

We also believe in being good stewards of our environment and supporting our community. Whenever possible, we purchase locally grown produce in order to support our local economy and sustainable growing practices. We are in the process of applying for a Farm to School Federal Grant, that if funded, could expand and bring Cooking with Kids to all of our Elementary schools in Espanola. We currently have Cooking with Kids at San Juan Elementary School and Abiquiu Elementary School.

AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination)

The Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program targets students in the academic middle-B, C, and even D students—who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard. AVID places academically-average students in advanced classes and provides them with an elective class that prepares them to succeed in rigorous curricula, enter mainstream activities in school, and increase their opportunities to enroll in four-year colleges.

We offer the AVID program at Carlos F. Vigil Middle School, Espanola Valley High School, and new this year, Hernandez Elementary School. In fact, Hernandez is one of about 1,000 elementary schools across the nation to be designated as an AVID school.

- AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. The AVID program levels the playing field for minority, rural, low-income, and other students without a college-going tradition in their families.

A few interesting facts about AVID:

- More than 4,500 schools in 48 states and 16 foreign countries offer the AVID program.
- Since 1990, more than 125,000 students have graduated from AVID programs.
- Approximately 75% percent of AVID students were accepted to a four year college in 2018.
- Approximately 87% of AVID students return to college for a second year; average is typically about 50%.

Other Partnerships and Programs Include:

AdvancED–North Central Accreditation:

EVHS is accredited by AdvancED–North Central Accreditation. AdvancED is the largest community of education professionals in the world. They are a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that conducts rigorous, on-site external reviews of PreK–12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP):

EPS district partners with CESDP to provide systemic and sustained professional learning for teachers, administrators, and parents. The mission of CESDP is to assist communities to improve the quality of education for students, families, educators and community members. CESDP is a legislative initiative.

City of Española- Teen Court Partnership:

EPS partners with the City of Española to support community needs. The Teen Court Partnership offers an alternative court where first time offenders are defended, prosecuted, judged and sentenced by their peers. Teens are referred with misdemeanors if they are willing to take responsibility for their actions and plead guilty. Teen Court is a way of keeping the juveniles' record clean. The charge is taken off their record once the teen successfully completes his or her sentence only on the first offense. Services offered are community service, service on jury panel treatment programs, mediation, GED completion, educational classes, and counseling.

Major Mark Gonzalez and our NJROTC Cadets are very involved in the Teen Court Partnership

Family Learning Center

Family Learning Center has three programs. They offer daycare, pre-school and afterschool programs. The before and after school program tutors and mentors children with their homework and provides recreational time.

Boys & Girls Club of Santa Fe/Del Norte

(BGCSF/DN) aims to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their fullest potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Our district partners with the Boys and Girls Club to offer programs on the Chimayo, and Abiquiu Elementary campuses. The Boys and Girls Club also offers transportation/van service from Eutimio T. Salazar, Tony E. Quintana and James H. Rodriguez elementary schools to its Center in Santa Cruz.

EPS Programs Include:

21st Century Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs. We receive almost \$1M per year to provide quality afterschool programs at nine of our 11 elementary schools, as well as the middle school and we also offer summer programs at several schools under this federally grant-funded initiative.

Results Driven Accountability Grant:

Both San Juan and Alcalde elementary schools have a Results Driven Accountability Grant (RDA). RDA supports schools as they prepare students for the high expectations of instruction based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Schools across the State and nation are currently administering the PARCC assessment based on those standards.

Comprehensive School Improvement Grant at Carlos F. Vigil Middle School

Carlos F. Vigil Middle School students are clearly underperforming their peers statewide in ELA and Math. The root cause identified through our 90-Day Planning is that teachers are under-resourced and in need of professional development focused on delivering a rigorous, Common Core State Standards based curriculum. By under-resourced, I mean our teachers are in need of more training and support. It is not a criticism of their abilities, but a symptom that the district has not always provided the resources, support and training necessary for teachers to accomplish their work with our students.

Intensive professional development for teachers in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics will support them in developing rigorous, engaging, standards-based units of study. Training in “Capturing Kids’ Hearts” will support teachers in strengthening positive classroom management and relationship/rapport building. Training in implementing intervention programs with fidelity, including ongoing progress monitoring and data analysis, will allow teachers to monitor and adjust their instruction based on student progress. Ongoing collaboration will provide a collegial setting for measuring progress toward grade level, department and overall school goals.

We believe if we implement with fidelity the above evidence-based strategies, then we would expect reasonable gains in ELA and mathematics, schoolwide.

High School Redesign Initiative at EVHS

We were fortunate to be one of nine high schools selected out of 50+ applications by the Public Education Department to participate in the High School Redesign Initiative which encourages a “rethinking of the high school learning experience, and challenges schools to” do the following:

- Redesign academic content and instructional practices
- Personalize learning opportunities
- Provide academic and wrap-around support services
- Provide high-quality career and college exploration and counseling
- Offer opportunities to earn postsecondary credit
- Provide career-related experiences or competencies
- Strategically use learning time in more meaningful ways
- Provide evidence-based professional development

Our “think partners” associated with this initiative are experts in the field of education from Johns Hopkins University. We meet regularly with the other high schools involved in the initiative in reconvening meetings which are normally held in Santa Fe or Albuquerque. We are scheduled to receive about \$100K per year for three years as we work through design and implementation. Funding supports, not only the work of the Redesign Team at EVHS, but training and professional development for teachers, and in some instances students.

Bilingual and Multicultural Education Program (BMEP)

EPS offers Bilingual and Multicultural Education programs, to the extent possible, given the challenges with finding certified Bilingual and ESL teachers to support students in English Language Development, Heritage home language and Enrichment languages in Spanish and Tewa. The Espanola Public Schools Bilingual Multicultural Education Program strives to ensure children have access to effective bilingual multicultural education programs providing culturally and linguistically responsive, rigorous instructional programming that supports all students—including immigrant and/ or English learners (ELs)—to become bilingual and biliterate, meet and exceed all content area standards, demonstrate academic excellence, and experience school success, such that students are prepared beyond the classroom to lead productive, purposeful lives in service to the larger community.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Today's students are preparing to enter a world in which colleges and businesses are demanding more than ever before. To ensure all students are ready for success after high school, the Common Core State Standards establish clear, consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade. The standards also provide a way for teachers to measure student progress throughout the school year and ensure that students are on the pathway to success in their academic careers. EPS provides extensive training for staff and administrators to implement and shift to CCSS. Curriculum and testing are aligned with CCSS.

Federal Programs

The Mission of the EPS Title I/Federal Programs Department is to improve student literacy and math achievement, by providing customer service to all stakeholders through quality process and effective communication. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Espanola Public Schools provides school-wide Title I services to all K-8 students and targeted assistance to students in grades 9-12. Title I programs support Tier II interventions for students at-risk through school-wide during, after school, and summer school services.

Fine Arts Education Act Funding

EPS elementary schools participate in NM PED sponsored fine arts programs. The Fine Arts Education Act (FAEA) was enacted to provide funding to encourage school districts to offer opportunities for elementary school students to participate in arts education programs, including visual arts, music, theatre, and dance. Arts programs encourage cognitive and affective development by: focusing on a variety of learning styles and engaging students through success; training students in complex thinking and learning; helping students to devise creative solutions for problems; providing students with new challenges; and teaching students to work cooperatively with others and to understand and value diverse cultures. EPS offers music instruction, dance and theatre instruction thru a partnership with the National Dance Institute, and a wide range of art opportunities through visiting artists contracted services and field trips.

Poets-in-the Schools

New in the spring, we will offer Poet's in-the-Schools (PITS). PITS will engage professional poets working with our high school students to enhance our Language Arts curriculum. We're grateful to Alex Traube for partnering with us to bring this gift of "poetry" to our students, and I can't wait to invite you to our first Poetry Slam! I promise it will be stellar!

New Mexico to Prevent Gun Violence

New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence support our district through numerous initiatives to prevent gun violence. This past year we created an amazing mural at EVHS to reflect our student pledge against gun violence, and we'll soon engage our students in a Pledge Against Gun Violence with the release of a new project in Cameron's memory.

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)

In New Mexico, students who are determined to be gifted are considered "exceptional." They are served through applicable state rules for special education (Tier 3). EPS provides a comprehensive GATE program for qualifying students. Northern New Mexico Inquiry Science Education Consortia (ISEC) Española Public Schools is a member ISEC. Our kindergarten-grade 6 students participate in inquiry based, hands-on science, through teacher facilitated guidance in activities found in science kits. The lessons and activities are aligned with the recently released Next Generation Science Standards.

PAXIS Good Behavior Games

Our elementary schools have embraced the PAX Good Behavior Game the past few years.

The PAX Good Behavior Game is a powerful evidence-based practice, consisting of proven instructional and behavioral health strategies used daily by teachers and students in the classroom. This universal preventive approach not only improves classroom behavior and academics, but also provides lifetime of benefits for every child by improving self-regulation and co-regulation with peers. Children, their families, teachers, and society benefit for decades as result. And if you've ever visited San Juan or TEQ, you learn quickly about "spleems and tootles."

Other Special Programs and Partnerships:

- K-3 Plus; 4-5 Plus
- Las Cumbres
- Los Alamos National Laboratories Education Programs
- New Mexico Pre-K
- Rachel's Challenge
- Rio Arriba County Sheltered Literacy, Rio Arriba RAC Stop, and Rio Arriba Youth Services Advisory Board
- Rio Arriba County Sheriff's Department
- City of Espanola Police Department
- The City of Espanola's Mayor's Implementation Team has created an opportunity for us to develop great partnerships through various agencies at both the local and state levels as well as some of our faith-based organizations such as Youth for Christ and Care-Net—and Project YES (Youth Empowered Strong) initiative
- Another great partnership for us has been our work with the Rio Grande Mindfulness Institute and their training known as the Heart of Teaching.
We have been blessed to benefit from teacher/educator scholarships, as well as work to bring the Mindfulness Institute here to Espanola. Our educators will tell you it is "the best professional development they've ever had!"
- The YMCA has also been incredible helpful in working with students from our district, and I love the "can do" attitude of the staff at the Y.
- New Mexico Activities Association assists and guides us in so many ways, and we appreciate their help and support, and even when we have our challenges, they help to keep us focused on competing with class.
- We created a formal partnership this year with Teach for America and they are helping us with our teacher recruitment efforts here in Espanola
- Somos Sum Pueblo Unido has been a great organization to work with and this past year our Board passed a Resolution declaring Espanola Public Schools a safe haven for our new to country students and families
- Numerous partnerships for sports such as EVCA, YAFL, Little League...and the list goes on.

Our Business Partners

We have some great business partners in the community and I know I am going to forget some, and that is not intentional, but in naming a few, we are appreciative of the tremendous support we receive from:

Century Bank
Zia Credit Union
Los Alamos Credit Union
Pizza 9

KDCE Radio

...and many more; and in partnership with the EPS Board of Education we have started to formalize our Business Partnerships through Board Resolution; we have completed a few, but certainly not all and will continue to honor our businesses through Resolution.

I thought it was very important to spend some time discussing our partnerships because there are many organizations that want to help and support the district, and all we have to do is open the door our ask because at the end of the day it takes all of us in the community working together to educate and support our young people, and this tremendous responsibility is not about the schools, but it is about the schools working with the community.

Our Local NEA-ESPANOLA Employee Union

We're also working on a new initiative with NEA-Espanola to advance student achievement through Labor Relations and interest-based bargaining. We are excited about the work and believe it can help in taking down the ever-proverbial barriers of "us" and "them" when it comes to labor relations. I would like to thank NEA-Espanola for working closely with the district to bring forward the issues and seek resolutions for complex, and often complicated problems and issues that arise in our district.

Our Student Achievement

Percent proficient is the sum of Levels 4 and 5 on the 2018 PARCC results.
Percent not proficient is the sum of Levels 1, 2, and 3 on the 2018 PARCC results.
All schools in the district are 100% economically disadvantaged.

PARCC English Language Arts Summative Data Analysis

The state's GAP analysis offers a lot of detail to our student achievement and PARCC scores, but the thing to know is this:

In comparing state ELA proficiency rates with the district, the district ELA proficiency rates were much lower for grades 3-10. For grade 11, the state follows the same trend as the district with the state 11th graders at 46.4% proficient in ELA. District 11th graders were only slightly lower than the state at 44.6% proficient.

2018 PARCC ELA proficiency increased for most grades from 2017 PARCC results. Grade 11 performances made a significant increase from 28.7% to 44.6% while there were decreases observed in 9th and 10th grades. Grade 6 ELA proficiency only decreased by 0.2% from 2017 to 2018. Grade 8 proficiency in ELA remained flat at 10.7%. And while these numbers seem somewhat depressing, we did increase ELA Rates by 2% this past year, which was actually a much greater rate than many districts in our state.

PARCC Math Summative Data Analysis

Gap analysis of 2018 PARCC Math data show that students across all grade levels, are less than 20% proficient in Math.

Statewide Math proficiencies appear significantly higher than in Espanola Public Schools. The largest gaps are seen in Algebra I and Geometry. In Algebra I, state student performance was 20.3% proficiency compared to the district at 5.3%, a 15% gap. In Geometry, students statewide were 16.5% proficient compared to the district's students at 1.2%, a 14.3% gap.

The bottom line...we have a lot of work to do with our students in math proficiency.

Graduation Rates

I am pleased to see that our graduation rates in Espanola continue to rise, but we still have much work to do especially in the areas of Career-Technical Education, and in ensuring our students are graduating from high school, *college and career*

ready. We cannot ignore the fact that locally and statewide a large percentage of students require remedial classes upon entering college or technical career classes, and our graduation rates are still well-below the state average of almost 72%. Our graduation rates for the class of 2018 will not be available for a few more months, but our Four-year Trend Data for All Students in Espanola Public Schools reflects the following:

2016-17 66.54%

2015-16 64%

2014-15 63.5%

2013-14 55.5%

So the good news is that in four short years, the district has raised his graduation rates slightly over 11%.

Additionally, we have raised our ATC scores over the past five years from 16.8% to 17.5% in 2018, but we're still below the state average of 19.4%. Our students are below the average needed to not have to enroll in remedial coursework upon entering college.

Also, during this time, our drop-out rates continue to be high and many students opt to obtain their GED rather than stay in school, and we use more online coursework than ever before as a way to offer credit recovery as well as instruction as the teacher shortage in New Mexico is alive and well and much higher in the norther part of the state than in the southern part of the state. The number of students who leave our schools without a trace have increased where in the past many would transfer to other schools or seek their GED's; and I would be lying if I didn't share the fact that we lose students to surrounding district's and Santa Fe, especially at the secondary level as there is a perception that the Pojoaque Valley Schools or the Santa Fe Schools are better, and yet, when we look at the demographic data, and overall achievement it is about the same...which tells me we have a public perception problem to overcome and much more education to do in the community about the good things happening in our schools. Our district consistently experiences a decline of approximately 75-100 students per year, which encompasses, not only losing students to other school districts, but an aging and declining population in smaller communities which is a national trend.

Our Daily Operations

We have a fleet of 20 "to and from" route buses; five activity buses; 23 drivers, and five bus assistants that drive more than 560,000 miles per year. We transport 2,500 students to and from school each day throughout the Espanola Valley and surrounding communities within the district. Students benefit from approximately 200 educational field trips throughout the year thanks to the hard work and efforts of our wonderful transportation department and drivers. We also transport 400 student athletes from the middle and high schools, annually, across the state for numerous games, meetings, and competitions. And in the words of our Transportation Manager, *"If we can put a man on the moon, we can figure out this trip or route."*

Once at school, our dedicated teachers and support staff takes over and provides each of our students with instruction, and in many cases feeds our students breakfast, lunch, and dinner at some schools. Daily in Espanola schools we serve breakfast to 1,665 students; at lunch we serve 2,636 students; and we also serve 450 students dinner, most days. 100% of our students are eligible for free meals as we have been identified as a CEP District. CEP is the acronym for the Community Eligibility Provision, a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Several schools are able to serve dinner through 21st Century programming.

And I bet you didn't necessarily realize we have a fair number of "students and families in transition," meaning they are homeless. We began our official program less than one year ago and to date, have well over 60 students/families identified, and for the first time this year, our district received McKinney-Vento funds to aid families and students that are without a home. I want to commend Anna Gutierrez and the Student Services team for providing such great support to our students

in need; and interestingly, our demographics suggest we should have about 240 students in need of assistance and eligible for benefits from McKinney-Vento funds, and I have no doubt we will get our students identified that are eligible for these funds with the assistance from our liaisons new positions in all of our school communities.

So, I have spent a lot of time this afternoon talking about the great things in our district, and many of the things were are very proud of in the Espanola Public Schools, but I would be remiss if I didn't share with you some of our challenges.

Technology:

Technology is our number #1 challenge in the district. We do not have the staffing or the money to run the Technology department efficiently, and keep up with the fast and ever-changing world of technology. We recently had the department independently assessed and evaluated and we have a 50-page report that outlines everything we need to do to correct many of the problems we have in the department, which means we may have to make some hard decisions related to budget. The problems and issues have been prioritized into categories of Highly Critical, Critical and High Priority. While I do not have time to go into detail this afternoon, I can say to reconfigure and reorganize the department is going to take more money, and we're hopeful of renewing our Tech Notes grant in the coming year in order to address many of the needs in this department.

PED Management of our Finances

The Public Education Department took over our finances about two years ago; unfortunately, the first model within reform efforts and the contractor hired by PED to straighten out the district finances was unable to complete the assignment; we now have a new management firm, schoolAbility, to help us with this challenge, but we still have a distance to go in earning back the trust of the PED to manage our own finances. In short, the Board lost its financial authority and PED determines how we spend our money. The process for approval of the simplest of things is slow and laborious as any purchase over \$1,000 is scrutinized by PED before we are permitted to make the purchase. Our goal is to regain control of our finances by July 1, 2020, as we have six areas we are working to refine and improve within our Financial Improvement Plan.

General Obligation Bond-Capital Funds

The district has now expended all of its capital money from the 2011 Bond Election, and we're in the beginning stages of planning another bond election for the coming year once we undergo Facilities Master Planning in the spring; I also know we have some school communities that are not supportive of a bond as they did not receive what they were supposed to as defined by the last capital campaign, so we still have much work to do in restoring the community's trust prior to another election.

But let me share this, and I can tell you, we have, in many instances, very old and aging facilities, and to have a deliberate failed election is failing our young people and failing our schools to an even greater extent.

We'll talk more about this in coming months, and I am hopeful we can change the views and attitudes of many in the community when it comes to the capital needs of our facilities, as well as the needs of our school district.

Our Context for Change in the Espanola Public Schools

In wrapping up today, I want to leave you with these thoughts. Change is not a bad thing, and when it comes to improving schools, if we want better results we have to do things differently. To do things differently takes courage. Courage on the part of our state and local leaders; courage on the part of school board members, superintendents, executive staffs, principals, directors and most importantly teachers. What we need in the state of New Mexico, as well as Espanola Public Schools is academic excellence for every child regardless of their circumstance and we are not there yet. To achieve this we must step-out of our comfort levels from the board room to the classroom.

It will mean exploring new ways of doing business. In some cases it will require that we break the mold. To deny this is to deny the problem. The cost of not effectively educating our children in the community is significant. In an analysis of our

drop-out rates and in losing our students to other school districts, we are losing about \$650K per year in funding. This is unacceptable to me, as well as our Board of Education and our community, but in order to break this mold, we must work together as a community. The cost of not educating all students well is much more significant than just school funding. The economic costs are apparent in unemployment and underemployment rates and welfare, health and human services and corrections.

I am hopeful through our Strategic Planning process, and I really commend our Board of Education, for recognizing the need to engage in true strategic planning, that we are able to break some molds and look at how we do things differently. I believe strongly in the vision I set forth for our district this year: I believe there is:

- Power in Knowledge
- Liberation through Literacy
- Relevance in Relationships and Changes in Mindset Growth

Over the years, I have learned a lot about leadership. I have learned first and foremost that nothing comes easy, and just because you say, “I expect...” does not mean you get what you expect unless you have the support of your school board, your leadership staff, your teachers, and your school community. Success takes hard work on the part of all parties, and there has to be a belief that “all children can learn.” Secondly, success begins with high expectations; therefore, I see several areas through our strategic planning process where we need to raise the bar in order to get a better return on our investment, and I also believe we have a moral responsibility to do so in order to see our district be successful.

1. We need to raise the bar on expectations, and increase our concern about the academic growth of students at all levels.
2. We need to use data in order to inform all decisions, and create performance frameworks and benchmarks that are measurable.
3. Instruction **MUST** be our first priority in all decisions, not athletics.
4. We need a stronger investment in our human capital and better strategies for recruitment and retention—every child deserves a highly effective teacher.
5. We need more commitment on the part of our secondary schools to graduate students by creating alternative programs and pathways to graduation; completely developing our career pathways or academies; and partnering with our elementary, and middle schools to clearly articulate an aligned curriculum.
6. We also need our high schools to place a stronger emphasis on the support and success of our freshman, and assign our best and brightest teachers to teach our freshmen.
7. Our strategic planning must connect to our facilities master planning process, and schools must be renovated in areas where our students live
8. We must keep pace with current Technology—our public school system is woefully behind
9. We need to develop a different culture for parent involvement and engagement, and demonstrate a willingness at all levels to be better listeners, and culturally sensitive to the needs of our students and parents.
10. Cultural competence needs to be developed and understood at all levels.
11. As a community, we need to be more supportive of our young people.

Reform efforts are not just about tinkering or altering what we have, but taking a good hard look at ourselves through the microscope and asking, “What can we do to make our students more successful...and then doing it!”

This past year we engaged in a School Culture and Climate Survey conducted by an independent company. Surveys suggested the following:

- There was teacher satisfaction at the majority of our schools, but concerns about leadership in a couple of our schools.

- In general, feedback was positive about Central Office Administration, but suggestions were made about ways in which to provide better leadership services.
- Concerns were expressed about “politics” interfering with the work of our school and district administrators which distracts from the work we need to accomplish as a staff for our students.
- Recognition by the staff that we all need to serve students, and not self-interests.

We want students to be proficient in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, math, science and social studies. We want students enrolled in higher level courses in larger numbers. We want Espanola Public Schools to be the first choice for all parents that have children that are of school age. Ultimately, we want to graduate at least 90% of our freshman within four years and give them real choices for college and career. We want to reduce the drop-out rate and provide students with more alternatives than simply dropping out. We want to be the highest-achieving district in the state in five years, and yet, we cannot accomplish any of these things without clear and deliberate change in the way we currently do business, and sometimes change doesn't make everyone happy, but in order to improve we have and will continue to make changes as needed, and that are appropriate, to better meet the needs of our students.

As an educator and community leader, I continue to remain committed to the children and families of Espanola Public Schools. It is important as a community that we work together around these issues. We cannot be bomb throwers and naysayers when it comes to the very real challenges our school district is faced with in these tough times; therefore, I am extending my heart and my hand to the community today as we enter into some uncertainty with the upcoming Gubernatorial election knowing that many things in our state will change including the officials at the Public Education Department.

I am asking each of you here today to become an ambassador to the Espanola Public Schools I ask again that you do this by:

- Telling five people, five accomplishments of the Espanola Public Schools. I've given you many examples today.
- Asking five people you know to write to our new Governor and your local representatives in January about Revenue Enhancements, and to fully fund education and make it a priority in our state.
- If you see a problem or an issue, please offer solutions.
- Becoming a partner or a volunteer with our schools through tutoring, mentoring, and participation. The choices are endless! Staff will be handing out cards for you to provide us with your contact information if you are interested in volunteering.
- If you are a parent, please become involved in your child's school, and ask five parents you know to do the same.

On behalf of the district's students, our Board of Education, Our Executive Team, District Leaders, Classroom Teachers and Support Staff, I give you my heartfelt thanks today and always. It remains an honor and privilege for me to serve as your Superintendent of Schools.

Thank-you!

At this time, I will call on Ruben Archuleta, our Board President, to say a few words.

Afterwards, I invite you to have some refreshments and tour our new facilities here at the Espanola Public Schools Educational Services Center and Warehouse—where we proudly serve and support students!