

Message from the APS Board of Education President

Public educators are the most optimistic people I know. They firmly believe that every child has a right to a public education. They believe in doing whatever it takes to teach a student skills that will make him or her successful. But it's becoming increasingly difficult for them – and us as vanguards of public education – to maintain this optimism because of funding cuts, increased costs and political agendas that fail to support students.

Funding for early childhood education, educational technology and distance learning, and professional development for teachers and principals is more critical now than ever. Meanwhile, we need continued funding for programs, instructional materials, transportation services and ever-increasing fixed costs.

I celebrate the diversity our state offers, which also means we recognize the important role charter schools have in offering unique opportunities to students and families. As a charter school authorizer, the APS Board of Education supports important amendments to the Charter School Act that serve to strengthen the educational community for New Mexico's students and their families.

I remain optimistic despite these challenges because, you – like us – want the best for our children. We want them to succeed and to reach their potential, a potential that is nourished through quality public education by quality educators. I believe we can do this together.

Paula Maes,
President, Board of Education



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Accelerate Progress for Students

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ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent
Winston Brooks

2012 New Mexico Legislative Session



APS Board of Education

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Message from the Superintendent

One thing is clear as we head into 2012 – there is more at stake for New Mexico children than ever before. We are committed to the fact that every child has the right to a high-quality public education, and every student has the right to expect to be safe in our schools.

With that in mind, we embrace thoughtful efforts to change the way we educate our children that will improve their academic success. We understand that these changes are not easy to make. Reforms require community acceptance and input of educational experts. We ask that you support local school boards and districts in making informed, research-based decisions on reform programs and initiatives that best fit the unique communities of New Mexico. We then welcome you to hold us accountable for those decisions.

The education of our students comes at a price, and reforms require proper resources for implementation. As our partners in public education, we ask that you support Albuquerque Public Schools students and provide sufficient funding for public schools. Budget decisions have been difficult for all of us, and we honor the work the State of New Mexico has done to protect students as much as possible. But we urge you to replace funds that are so desperately needed for public schools to complete their mission and educate our students.

Finally, we urge you to recognize an independent police department authorized by the APS Board of Education and overseen by me as superintendent. It's crucial that students and families are confident that their schools are safe and know that safety issues are addressed by a police force that is sensitive to the special environments of schools.

Sincerely,
Winston Brooks,
Superintendent



APS 2012 Legislative Agenda

Sufficient Funding for New Mexico's Public Schools

Recognizing the New Mexico State Constitution, APS requests the legislature sufficiently and adequately fund public education. APS believes sufficient funding includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- adequate program support
- increases in fixed costs
- early childhood education
- professional development for teachers and principals
- transportation services
- instructional materials
- education technology and distance learning

To ensure school districts are able to educate New Mexico's children to the best of their ability, APS also requests there be no new state-mandated, unfunded educational programs.

State Funded, Locally Driven Reform Initiatives

APS works to make sure every student receives an education that will give them the tools for a successful life. Every community in New Mexico is unique and Albuquerque is no exception. Consequently, local school boards and superintendents should be responsible for selecting reform programs and initiatives.

APS supports adequately funded, appropriate district-selected interventions for struggling students. APS also supports a *pilot* program, which would use multiple measures, to tie teacher and principal evaluations to their effectiveness.



Amend the Charter Schools Act

APS recognizes that charter schools offer a unique opportunity for students and families in New Mexico. However, to ensure successful charter schools, APS supports amendments to the Charter School Act that include:

- clarification regarding capital responsibilities, per-membership distribution of funds, local district responsibilities to provide capital resources to state-authorized charter schools and prioritization in the authorizer's capital master plan
- banning virtual charter schools that enroll students from across the state and/or the United States
- a formal process for suspending the authority of a current and future charter school's governing body for failing to meet provisions of state law

Recognize APS Police Department as an Independent Police Department

The safety of our students and families is the top priority of APS and our police department. APS Police is currently commissioned by the Bernalillo County Sheriff. For appropriate execution of duties and to better protect our students, APS requests that APS Police be recognized as an independent police department authorized by the Board of Education and overseen by the superintendent.