



SCHOOL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

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Work session of the Las Cruces Board of Education
October 2, 2018

The following are highlights of the LCPS Board of Education meeting. The meeting can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://bit.ly/LCPS100218>

Las Cruces Veterans Day Parade

At the Oct. 2 work session, former Las Cruces City Councilor and Mayor Pro Tem Dolores Archuleta, representing the Las Cruces Veterans Day Parade Committee, updated board members on this year's parade. The parade will take place on Saturday, Nov. 10, along Main Street in Downtown Las Cruces.

For the first time this year, the parade will have a theme — "A Salute to Women Veterans" — Archuleta said. The parade will honor female veterans, the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population, according to the Veterans Administration.

"In New Mexico, out of the 159,000 veterans, 17,000 are women," Archuleta told the school board. There are more than 2 million female veterans nationwide.

For additional information about the parade, contact committee chair Bill Hawkins at 575-521-7002, or visit www.lascrucesvetday.org/.

NMSU General Obligation Bond Update

New Mexico State University President John Floros provided the board with an update on the university's General Obligation Bond, which will be on the ballot on Nov. 6.

The bond, which is voted upon every couple of years, will support higher education across the state, Floros said. For the first time in recent memory, NMSU will be the largest beneficiary in the state. If approved, a total of \$31.2 million will go to the NMSU system — \$25 million to help fund the construction of three buildings on the main campus, and another \$1.2 million for projects at Doña Ana Community College.

Floros said the three buildings will include:

- A Food Science, Security and Safety Facility
- An Animal Nutrition and Feed Manufacturing Facility
- A Biomedical Research Center

Additionally, a portion of the funds will be used to improve libraries around the state.

If approved, Floros told board members that

the passage of the bond will not increase property taxes.

"This is a decision that the people will make, to distribute the money to higher-education related activities around the state," Floros said.



New Mexico State University President John Floros provides the LCPS Board of Education with information on the upcoming General Obligation Bond, which will be on the ballot Nov. 9.

Human Resources Recruitment Efforts

Dr. Miguel Serrano, Chief of Human Resources, updated the school board on recruitment efforts to fill vacancies throughout the district.

Serrano said his department has redoubled its efforts to build a close, face-to-face partnership with NMSU. Student-teaching opportunities provide the district the chance to provide mentorship for NMSU students, but also the chance to build relationships and recruitment opportunities.

In August, LCPS hired 50 substitute teachers, which is the most for any month in the past three years, Serrano said.

The district is using Facebook to promote job fairs, which has been very successful, Serrano told the board. Additionally, the HR Department recently created a Twitter account and a Facebook page to help spread the word about job postings and vacancies.

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LCPS has also attended job fairs at NMSU, the University of Texas at El Paso, and has made arrangements to attend future job fairs at Eastern New Mexico University and Western New Mexico University.

The district has also recently advertised with the Las Cruces Sun-News and the El Paso Times, which has also posted the positions to Career Builder.

Serrano has also made several media appearances, promoting positions and hard-to-fill vacancies, which he said has also been successful.

Compared to other districts of similar size, LCPS has fewer teacher vacancies than other districts, Serrano said. As of Tuesday's meeting, LCPS had 28 teacher vacancies, compared to Santa Fe Public Schools, which had 76, Gadsden Independent School District, which had 24 (but only 14,000 students), and Rio Rancho Public Schools, which had 29 vacancies.

"This recruiting is really helping," Serrano said.

Return to Work Resolution

The school board unanimously approved a [Return to Work Resolution](#), which calls upon legislators to revise requirements for teachers who have retired and return to work. The resolution, aimed at addressing a need to fill teaching vacancies on an emergency basis, requests that the New Mexico School Boards Association "support a legislative platform that would allow a local education agency the opportunity to to secure the professional services of a retired teacher and other licensed professionals with less than the currently-required 12-month wait out period to fill critical vacancies without requiring the retired member compromise their return to work status."

NEA-LC Update

David Greenberg provided the board with a brief update on the organization's recent activities. Greenberg said that members have been very busy with the group's non-partisan voter-registration drive.

The organization's Education Leadership and Learning Labs (EL³), under the leadership of David Morales, has had two presentations — one on mindfulness and another on finding a work/life balance for educators — which were both successful, Greenberg said.

Local representatives will attend the statewide Delegate Council on Oct. 27, Greenberg said, and national NEA President Lily Eskelsen García, is expected to attend.

Every Kid in a Park

Patrick Nolan, Executive Director of Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, which is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the national monument, as well as education about the monument, Nolan said.

Nolan and his colleagues provided the board with an update on the "Every Kid in a Park" program, which aims to get fourth-grade students into national parks and monuments. The project is a joint effort with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Nolan said.

As part of the program, Friends of OMDP hosted a girls camp over the summer, providing ten young women from Sunrise Elementary with a weeklong camp, during which they visited several parks and monuments in the surrounding areas. Camp participants visited Prehistoric Trackways, OMDP, the Lincoln National Forest and White Sands National Monument.

"They learn about the ecology of the places," Nolan said. "We talked about conservation principals. Why is it important to protect these places? Why is it important to protect public lands, and why do public lands matter?"



Patrick Nolan, Executive Director of Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, tells board members about the "Every Kid in a Park" program.

LCPD Community Policing

Ofc. Israel Rodriguez, a human resources coordinator, provided the board with an update on Las Cruces Police Department's community policing efforts.

Wearing a uniform donning the letters "TNT," which stands for Targeting Neighborhood Threats, part of the department's Street Crimes Unit.

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“We do everything from blowing up balloons at your kid’s birthday parties to riding bicycles with your kids at your events,” Rodriguez said. “Anything that you would have us go to — such as a Council meeting, an event, a ribbon cutting — we’re very community police driven.



Ofc. Israel Rodriguez, a member of the Las Cruces Police Department’s ‘Targeting Neighborhood Threats’ Unit, updates the school board on the department’s community policing efforts.

Rodriguez, an alumni of Mayfield High School, Vista Middle School, Columbia Elementary and Jornada Elementary, became involved with LCPD after a two-year internship with the Excel Program.

“I wouldn’t change any of my Las Cruces Public Schools career,” Rodriguez told the board. “If I had it to do it all over again, I wouldn’t change a thing.”

Rodriguez said the department seeks to build a closer relationship with the students and staff of Las Cruces Public Schools.

Operation Trailblazer

Lieutenant Ron Schulmeister of the Las Cruces Fire Department, a member of the City of Las Cruces Emergency Planning Committee, updated the school board on Operation Trailblazer, a full-scale, active-shooter exercise planned for Jan. 9, 2019, at Arrowhead Park Early College High School. The multi-agency training exercise will involve LCPD, LCPS, DASO, New Mexico State Police, LCFD, the FBI, the NMSU Police Department, NMSU Fire Department, Mesilla Marshals, U.S. Border Patrol, the AMR ambulance service, NativeAir medevac helicopters, Memorial Medical Center and MountainView Regional Medical Center.

The planned exercise is consistent with Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program guidelines, as approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Planning for the exercise, which began in 2013,

has included a tabletop exercise based on

Mesa Middle School in January 2014, three days after the shooting at Berrendo Middle School in Roswell, Schulmeister said. 102 people participated.

“If we don’t train for this sort of thing, we won’t be ready when this type of thing happens here,” Schulmeister said.

During Operation Trailblazer, an actor will show up at the school and exit his vehicle with a large duffle bag, perhaps with a weapon showing. The actor will be a certified law enforcement officer, a SWAT member with the New Mexico State Police. The actor will enter the school and begin “firing;” 911 will be called. (Blanks will be used.)

Police and fire will respond; Faculty, staff and students will act based on LCPS plans and training. First responders will arrive, addressing the threat and treating and transporting all “victims,” which will create a “trauma surge” at both area hospitals.

“We are not testing, in any of this, any people,” Schulmeister said. “No one is under the gun. Nobody is being scrutinized. We are testing policy, plans and procedures. We’ll identify gaps, which can be addressed later.”

Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority’s reverse 911 service will be activated, providing them with the opportunity to test that feature. More than 40 Public Information Officers will be involved in the exercise, to include LCPS, LCPD, the City of Las Cruces, DASO, both hospitals and U.S. Border Patrol.

Advance notice of the training exercise will be given, and students and staff will be given the opportunity to “opt-out.” Parental waivers will be provided for all students, and no live ammunition or simunitions will be used. Faculty and staff will be advised in advance through faculty and staff meetings, informational meetings with parents are in the works, and student assemblies will help to prepare students for the exercise, Schulmeister said.

“No one will be forced to go through this,” Schulmeister told the board. “They can stay home that morning, and come to school for the afternoon session. We’re not going to make anyone go through this.”

No responding officers will be allowed to take a live weapon into the school. A perimeter of law enforcement officers will be set up around the entire campus. More than 100 law enforcement officers are expected to participate. Streets around the school will be closed, and the “injured” will all be outside volunteers.

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A debriefing will reinforce good actions, and address any concerns that may come to light during the exercise.

Constant contact will be maintained with the “shooter” throughout the exercise, and the entire exercise will be supervised from the Exercise Control Room, where “VIP’s” and members of the media will be invited to participate and view the training.

The initial incident — aside from victim triage and reunification efforts — is expected to last from three to five minutes. All efforts will be made to mitigate any stress to students, Schulmeister said, and counselors from the NMSU Counseling Center and school counselors will be available to help students process any emotional effects the training

may have on them.

“I think this is awesome,” board member Ray Jaramillo told Schulmeister. “Let us know how we can help.”

Policy Updates

The school board heard a first reading First Reading of [Policy BEDH](#), Public Participation at Board Meetings, which seeks to bring consistency to when Public Input takes place in regular meetings and work sessions.

The board also heard a second reading of [Policy ILD](#), Educational Surveys and Research, which will be brought forth for a third and final reading and approval at the next meeting of the board.

Policies under review are available on the district’s website, and public input is both welcome and encouraged.



Las Cruces Board of Education: (from left to right) Ed Frank, District 5; Maria A. Flores, District 3; Maury Castro, District 4; Terrie Dallman, District 2; and Ray Jaramillo, District 1.

LCPS Superintendent:
Dr. Gregory Ewing

The LCPS School Board Highlights newsletter is produced by the LCPS Communications Department. Questions about the newsletter can be sent to: dwillis@lcps.net.