

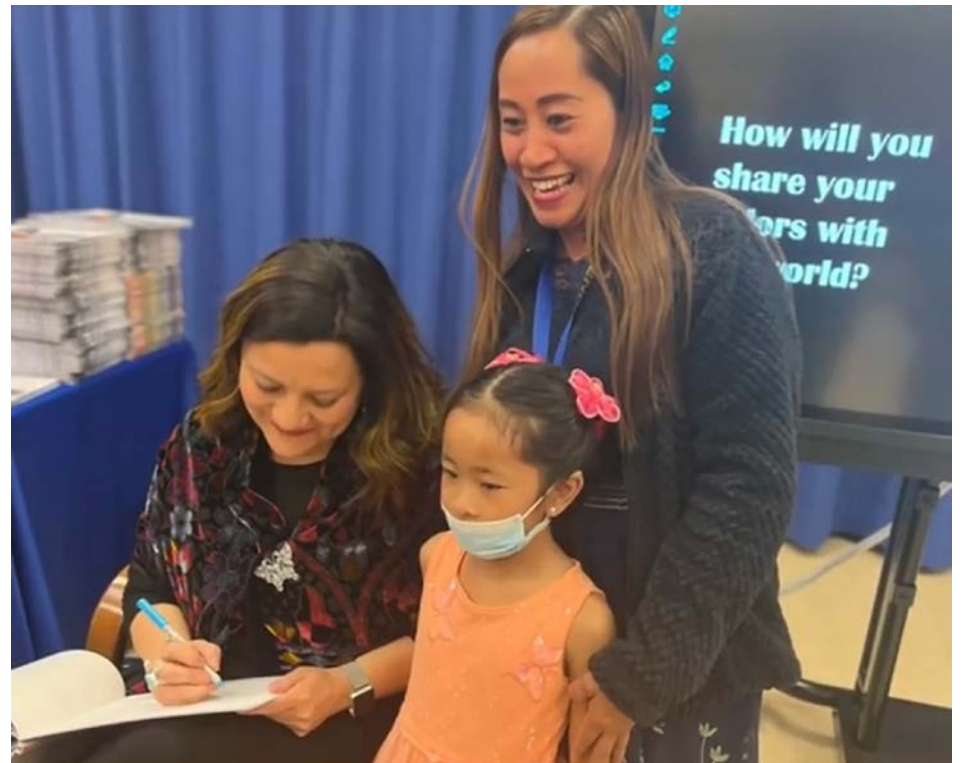


RAM COUNTRY NEWS

Spring Edition

CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 2022



Book author visits Cuba Elementary School, reads *Mariposa, Where Did You Get Your Colors?*

April 10, 2022

Dr. Virginia Padilla-Vigil, author of the book — *Mariposa, Where Did You Get Your Colors?* — visited Cuba Elementary School and read her book to students as part of Read Across America Week.

Judy Atencio, school principal, said Dr. Padilla-Vigil autographed and wrote special messages to each of the elementary school students.

“Each student shared with her how they wanted to share their colors with

the world,” she said. “The elementary school’s foyer and hallway was also decorated [with colored cut-outs of butterflies and flowers] to welcome Dr. Padilla-Vigil.”

According to the publisher, Condor Publishing, Inc., the book is a story that captures the essence of possibility and the role that significant adults can play in children’s lives through helping them discover their gifts and talents, their colors, and encouraging them to share them with the world. It is also a story of diversity and the many colors

we bring to our world, creating a rich tapestry of strength, unity, and collective wisdom.

Condor Publishing, Inc., also features a short biography about Padilla-Vigil, it states:

“Padilla-Vigil was born and raised in northern New Mexico and is a life-long educator. She earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary education, her master’s degree in counseling from the College of Santa Fe, and her Ph.D. in Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies at the University of New

Mexico. She has a deep passion for teaching. She served as an elementary teacher for six years in the Pojoaque Valley Schools and has taught for over 25 years in colleges and universities across New Mexico and Colorado in counseling, leadership, and teacher education. Her childhood dream was to write and publish a children’s book.”

The book is also illustrated by Nanibah Chacon, a local born in New Mexico. 🐏

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CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Cuba Cares busier than ever in new location

April 9, 2022

The Cuba Cares program has come a long way since it started in 2020 out of necessity and it has grown exponentially according to Victoria Dominguez, the community schools director. The program now has a new space located in the former school district office, which is a modular building just east of the current administration center.

Dominguez encourages people to “come check it out.”

“Some people have told us, we look like a Goodwill. We have clothing for babies, newborns, men, women, we have formal wear, [and] we have casual wear,” she said. “We have hygiene products, household items, and we also have food and water.”

Dominguez said so far this year, they have distributed more than 1,200 boxes of food and clothes from August 2021 to April.

“The community has been so awe-

some in supporting this new endeavor. We get a lot of teachers and staff who donate, as well as outside organizations who have heard about Cuba Cares,” she added. “We’re providing resources, some of those basic resources for our students and families. The cool thing about Cuba Cares is we have all this really cool stuff and it’s not just for student, it’s for families, it’s for community members, so everybody is welcome to come in here and take what they want... as much as they want.”

Cuba Cares was born out of necessity in March 2020 when students were forced to do remote learning and school buildings ordered closed because of the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

With students at home a majority of the time, remote learning became challenging. A team of teachers and school administrators began brainstorming of ways to improve communication and to check on students. A major component was to provide

support to students that needed it the most.

Victoria Dominguez, then a school counselor and social worker at Cuba Independent School District, lead the charge in the creation of Cuba Cares. She explained some students were not participating in school anymore and so they needed a way to support them.

The program has grown from a small room in the gymnasium to an entire building. The visitation to Cuba Cares has been consistent but busy.

“We are getting people in every single day. At first, we were thinking of maybe only having it open three days [a week], but people from Cuba... La Jara... Torreon... Counselor... everybody is coming in now,” she said. “We are now open five days a week. It’s been really awesome!”

“If students need it... then parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or whoever’s raising the kid could probably use it too,” said Dominguez about clothes and other items they have on hand.

“[Cuba Cares] is a very welcoming environment. Don’t feel embarrassed... come on in.. get whatever you need, as much as you need... we’re happy to help...”

“Sometimes people come in here three times in the same day,” she added. “It’s been really cool to watch everything unfold, because now people are coming in. It’s just a commonplace, come to hang out, come to have a cup of coffee, and search the racks, and look for items they’re needing. It’s been cool to see.”

Dominguez said they are there to help families and they just recently added a homeless liaison to help with services. They help families with housing applications, whether it’s a Navajo Housing Authority (NHA) application or a local housing application.

Cuba Cares is open five days a week from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. during school hours. 🐏

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego, Ed.D
Superintendent

Bruce Hatch
Principal, Cuba High School

Gilbert Dominguez, Jr.
Principal, Cuba Middle School

Judy Atencio
Principal, Cuba Elementary School

Arsenio Jacquez
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CONTACT

Cuba Independent School District
50 County Road 13 | P.O. Box 70
Cuba, N.M. 87013

(575) 289-3211 | Fax (575) 289-3314



Haircuts spiffing up students at Cuba Schools

April 9, 2022

Students at Cuba Schools can get a free haircut thanks to a program initiated by Victoria Dominguez, the community schools director.

Dominguez explained the new program started this year to bring haircuts to students. The master barber is Joshua “Josh” Sandoval, a 2010 Cuba High School alumni, who also happens to own his own barber shop, Southwest Barbers, in Farmington, New Mexico.

“The first haircut was on January 25 this school year,” said Dominguez. “We wanted to provide a resource for the kiddos, for them to come to school and get a haircut free of charge.”

The school district pays for the haircutting service through school district funds, mainly ESSER funds received.

“It’s been a really cool thing to watch it all unfold,” she added. “Sometimes the kiddos will get in the seat and man... once they’re finished with their haircut... they’re smiling for ear to ear. So, it’s been really, really cool to see... to watch everything unfold.”

The barber has been to Cuba Schools several times this year already, he gave haircuts in January, February, March, and he will be there in April, May, and June to provide haircuts to any student with a signed parent permission slip. Dominguez stressed parent permission is needed.

“Parent permission is always re-

quired,” she said. “[Parents] are able to tell us what kind of haircuts they want [for their child] on the permission slips and [parents] can also let us know if they want to be present or not.”

“So, for the months of April and May, we’re going to bring [the barber] back onto campus two times per month,” Dominguez said. “Just because we’re getting such a high number of kiddos. At first... the first time, I think there were 17 kiddos that signed up [for haircuts]... and since... we have at least 26 students sign up.”

Dominguez praised Josh the barber because she enjoys seeing former alumni return to help their community.

“What a cool way to bring alumni back onto campus?!” she said. “Man! He does some pretty snazzy haircuts and the kids... they just love it. They’re smiling ear-to-ear once they get off that chair.”

The haircuts program started when staff noticed students were not taking off their hoods for whatever reason, perhaps a bad home haircut or just a bad hair day.

“So, we thought, ‘What if we brought a resource to Cuba?’” said Dominguez. “Sometimes, parents or guardians, they’re not able to get out and take their kiddos to the barber-shop. So, if they can’t go to the barber-shop, why can’t we bring the barber-



shop to them?”

This turned out to be a great idea and there has only been positive feedback.

“Josh is awesome! He’s super friendly with the kids and when he does haircuts, it’s a barbershop setup,” she said. “He brings his chair and a booster chair, he has all the clippers, his scissors, all his cool gels and stuff, and he puts his [music] speakers out. So, it really has that barbershop atmosphere experience for the kids.”

One important aspect of the barber’s practice is cultural sensitivity. Dominguez explained the barber is aware of the diversity of the school district and

he is familiar with Navajo practices with haircuts. If parents request it, the barber will bag up the student’s hair and send it home with them.

Josh the barber will be on campus again on April 21, 2022. Parents can call to schedule an appointment by calling their child’s school. Contact the high school at 505-290-4412 or email verolivas@cuba.k12.nm.us, the middle school at 505-290-0551 or email momontoya@cuba.k12.nm.us, or the elementary school at aromero@cuba.k12.nm.us. 🙌

Donnica Dunlap is the new homeless liaison at Cuba Schools

April 9, 2022

Donnica Dunlap is the new homeless liaison for Cuba Independent School District. She started in her new position January 2022 and she brings a wealth of varying experience that includes work in government, corporate, and non-profit entities.

Prior to coming to Cuba Schools, she was the training coordinator for the Albuquerque Indian Center, assistant director for Fort Story Youth Center located on a military installation facility, a facilitator for Running Start for Careers – an educational initiative under Albuquerque Mayor Richard J. Berry’s administration, and the AISES internship coordinator where she negotiated internships with the CDC in Atlanta and DOT in Washington, D.C.

“Being in the education sector has

been very fulfilling,” she said. “As a former parent educator for the FACE Program on a Native American reservation, being involved in the community is key to building capacity and legacies. Community builds lives and creates an economic base where everyone can benefit.”

As the homeless liaison, her work is to provide support to students and families that may have housing issues and need assistance.

Dunlap is thankful for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 1987 which is a federal law that helps to remove barriers to education.

“As the homeless liaison, my core duty is to ensure access to school stability, academic support to in-

**CONTINUED PAGE 5 /
Dunlap**



Abram "Abie" Cordova is enjoying his work at the greenhouse

April 2, 2022

The new greenhouse on the campus of Cuba Independent School District is coming along and Abram "Abie" Cordova was recently hired to assist Raymond Sisneros with maintaining it.

Gardening is nothing new for Cordova. Prior to coming to the greenhouse, he was helping with landscaping in-and-around the school district, and he also grew up gardening and ranching.

"My family did a lot of gardening when we were growing up, so I'm used to this kind of work," he said. "We did gardening out of necessity... so we could have food back then."

Cordova explained the greenhouse is fully operational and it is running smoothly. They just recently transplanted many herbs and plants that were contained in small containers to individual plant trays so they can continue to grow.

The greenhouse has several large platforms lined up in two rows on either side of the greenhouse, all filled with individual potted plants. They are growing many things, many of the potted plants were labeled with names as identifiers, which were written by students that come in daily to help to care for them.

As you peruse the potted plants, you can't help but read the labels to see what it is. There's a large variety of chili peppers, such as Sandia chili, chili Barker. There is a good variety of herbs and flowers, such as pansy, violas, pansy swiss giant, petunia hybrid, oregano, Italian oregano, parsley, mesclun, nasturtium, Mexican sunflower, alyssum white, lavender, aloe vera, and many other herbs. There were also a large variety of vegetables, such as tomatoes, big daddy tomatoes, Black Krim tomatoes, Rutgers tomatoes, cabbage, different types of lettuce, okra, cucumbers, carrots, onion, beans, squash, radishes, hummus, and strawberries.

There were also some trees growing in pots that will eventually be planted, there were several peach and apple trees that when ready, will be planted outside in a garden. On several tables, a variety of house plants, flowers, and cactus were potted as well. Another table had several rose bushes growing.

"The peach trees take a long time to grow," said Cordova. "We also have

grapes that will grow... they're just starting now... we transplanted them about three weeks ago. The grapes are local and they're from Mr. Cisneros' backyard."

Another table had small plants that were unrecognizable, but Cordova explained they were strawberries which were also brought in from Cisneros's backyard garden and transplanted.

"We went and dug up the [strawberries] the other day and brought them here and potted them," he said. "There were tiny when we brought them... so they look like they're doing well now and they're really progressing fast."

"The kids help here with a lot of the soil planting," said Cordova. "The kids do a lot of the work from planting the seeds, taking care of the plants... the new growth... they tray them... and then they transplant them into small buckets."

Cordova said the students come in every morning to water and care for the plants as well.

"[The kids] have a class in here... in the greenhouse," he said. "I know they are working to get more kids to come and work during the summer."

A lot of the vegetables were growing quite well and looked healthy. Cordova looked through the radishes and pulled a couple of them out, and he said they were ready to eat after they are washed.

The greenhouse environment was humid and warm, that is so the plants and vegetables can thrive in a controlled environment. Cordova said the greenhouse can also operate in the cold winter months as well.

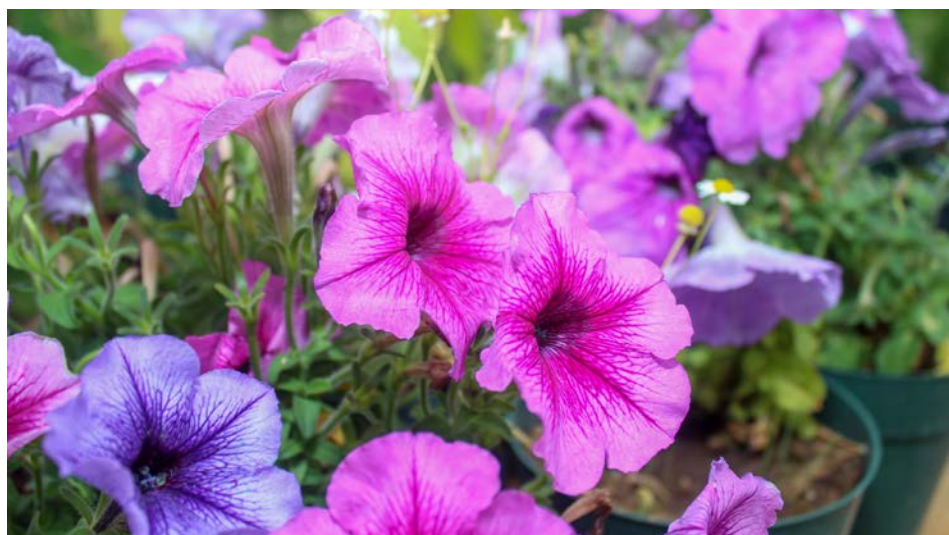
Cordova explained most of the soil came from Cisneros's property.

"We brought [the soil] from there. It's good soil, very good," he said. "We used that kind of soil when we were growing up... we have good soil up near the mountain."

Cordova is happy with the progress of the greenhouse thus far and he is happy a greenhouse was established on the campus. He is also happy students are learning how to garden and to take care of plants.

"I'm enjoying my work here, I love it!" said Cordova.

He said he is excited for the forthcoming months, and he is eager to see the plants grow and mature. 🐏



U.S. History, World History students build model villages

April 7, 2022

Marcellino E. Crespin, along with her educational assistant, Cathy Romero, teach 7th grade U.S. History and 8th grade World History, and their recent student projects involved rock, mud, wood, animals, trees, paint, and whatever you can imagine to build model villages.

Crespin explained her 7th and 8th grade students built 18th century villages, the time frame of 1700 to 1800. The U.S History classes were assigned to build their villages to include five huts, one church, and two Native American long houses.

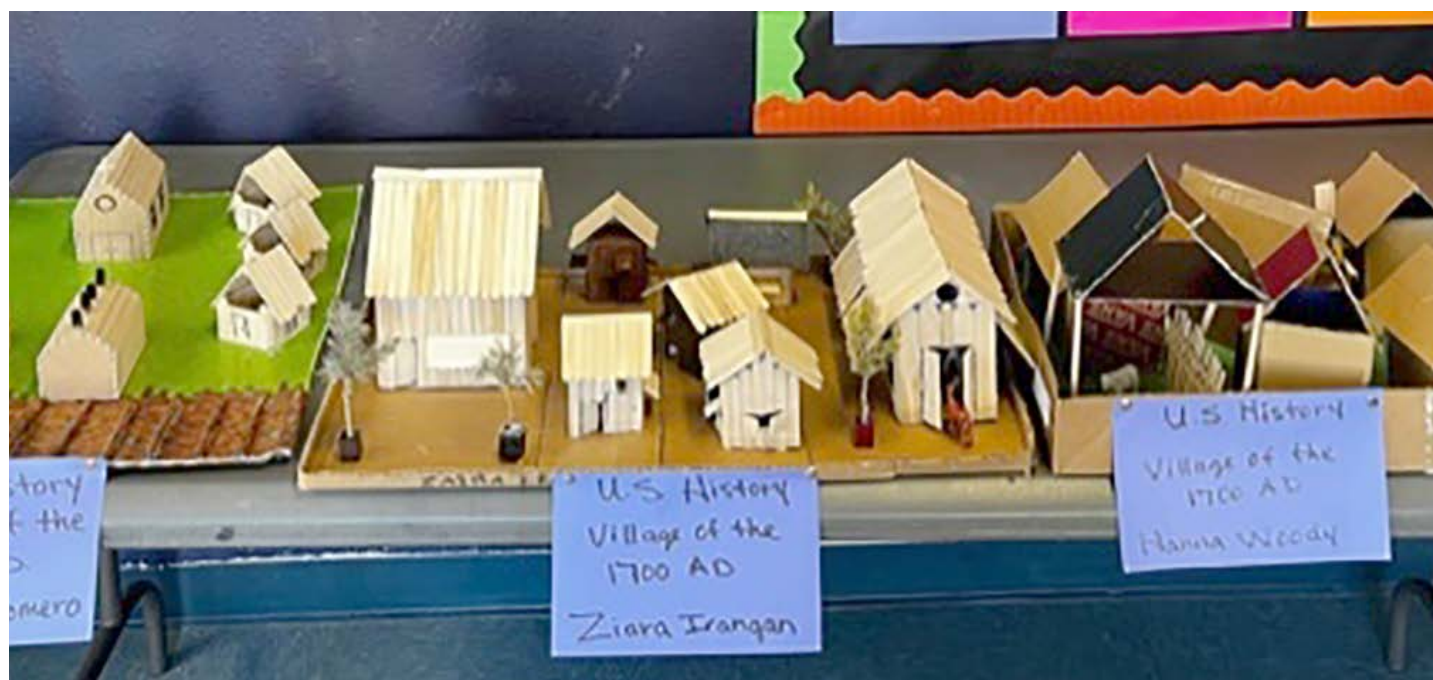
“The Native American homes were an indication the colonists and the Native Americans got along for the most part,” Crespin explained.

The World History classes were assigned to build a European village with five huts, one church, one castle, and a rock wall around the village for protection.

“The whole purpose for the projects was to allow for a hands-on lesson, so students could understand what a 1700s village may have looked like, and how the people of the time may have lived,” said Crespin. “Students were allowed to use just about any materials to build their village. However, the more elaborate projects were built with rock, mud, wood, animals, trees, and others were painted with great detail.”

Crespin said Romero did a great job setting up the projects to be judged. The judges included Olivia Casaus, June Vigil, Tricia Delgado, and Gilbert Dominguez.

“A big thanks to Cathy [Romero] and our judges! We are looking forward to summer camp where the students will continue to do more hands-on projects,” Crespin said. 🐉



Cuba School's graduation rate the highest percentage in years

April 10, 2022

Graduation rates for Cuba Schools this past year was 95.2%, the highest percentage in the last four years, according to Superintendent Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego.

Anna Brown, student success advisor at Cuba High School, is proud of the 2021 graduates.

“[They pushed through the adversity of their junior and senior years, and the chaos of the pandemic to meet their graduation requirements,” said

Brown. “They showed a lot of determination and resilience, and we were so proud to see them walk across the stage at graduation and cross the finish line!”

Brown explained it takes a lot of determination, communication, and collaboration with students, parents, teachers, and support staff to reach graduation.

“So, the high graduation rate [that] we were able to achieve was definitely a group effort and something we should all be proud of,” Brown said.

Dunlap

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

crease educational success of homeless children and youth,” she said. “These barriers may include homelessness, insufficient clothing, lack of stable transportation, no access to medical [or] mental health, or any other appropriate services as necessary... yet it doesn't stop at the basic level.”

“Adhering to basic needs is just the tip of the iceberg. Creating spaces to network with agencies and other facilities is what gives people a hand up in life... [that] is what I do best,” she added. “Be creating and building partnerships with other agencies and facilities... this helps others to see other perspectives on possibilities.”

Dunlap said it's a sheer joy to have this space right now.

“Planting a solid foundation and then passing the baton will only enhance the richness and history of Cuba,” she said.

When not working, she enjoys reading, languages, and she has a passion for traveling.

“Having lived domestically and internationally... gives me insight and new perspectives on life, people, and a global mindset,” she said.

She does not have any children, but she helps to care for an older sibling with Down syndrome after her father transitioned.

“We are both active travelers domestically and internationally, she is my second shadow,” she said about her older sibling. “We are both active in showing others one can live a vibrant life when siblings care for one another... no matter the situation.”

She is from Chicago, Illinois. 🐉



Senior Highlight, Tyra Pinto

April 8, 2022

Tyra Pinto, a Cuba High School senior, is planning to go to college after high school to study nursing, and eventually become a traveling nurse or flight nurse.

"I find these jobs really interesting because they get to assist people who aren't able to reach emergency medical services," said Tyra, "and they get to do all the training that you would get in the hospital setting, but in the air on a helicopter."

Tyra is excited for what her future holds.

"Hopefully after a couple of years doing the adrenaline rush, I would like to settle down, have a family, and be able to still be happy just like the younger me..." she said.

But before her future takes off, Tyra is fully concentrated on finishing up high school and graduating in May. She is anxious to finish high school and move on, she said her senior year had its "ups and downs."

"It's not an easy place to be... there are times when you want to give up and not care anymore, but that's the most exciting part about it," she said. "Everything is a learning experience and there will be times when you'll have to be willing to take a risk... and to look back... and say that this was something that I personally experi-

enced... and not being that one person who wished to be something or someone else."

Tyra is thankful for all her challenges and experiences because she can teach others about them, to talk about them, and to learn from others.

"With things getting closer to graduation, the stress is definitely packing on, sometimes I tend to forget important things, but that's just me," she said. "As the more nervous I get, it seems like more opportunities are available to me."

She said she is also emotional about turning the page to another chapter of her life, and although she did not acknowledge a favorite teacher, she had a favorite staff member.

"Throughout my entire high school career, I really never had favorite [teachers], but I would have to say that my favorite counselor would be Ms. Anna Brown," said Tyra. "[Ms. Brown] has known me ever since I was in elementary school, and she was my bus driver. Now she has seen me grow up and about to see me graduate... so it's all really emotional."

Tyra is now counting down the days to graduation, and she is excited, happy, nervous, and emotional. She is excited about her future.

Tyra is from the community Ojo Encino, New Mexico. 🐉



Senior Highlight, Tony Trujillo

April 6, 2022

Cuba High School Senior, Tony Trujillo, 18, said his last year of high school has been "pretty good" and he has nothing to complain about despite the COVID-19 challenges and restrictions that negatively impacted everyone across the world.

As the end of his high school career comes to an end, Tony said he is feeling nervous.

"I'm just nervous about leaving high school and going out to college," he said, "it's just going to be something that's new and something that I'm not used to at all."

Tony plans to attend Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and he plans to study civil engineering. He said civil engineering just "caught my eye."

"We look at papers and everything... suggestions of what we could do with our careers, and nothing really pointed out to me like civil engineering," he said. "So, it's just something that's piqued my interest... it's just something I want to try."

He is interested in being part of

roads development, bridge development, and city planning.

He will miss high school and he will certainly miss the many teachers that helped him get to this point of his education. He especially thanks

Mariah Johnson, his favorite teacher who taught science but now teaches welding and agriculture.

"[Ms. Johnson] engages with students and she actually talks to them and gets along with them, and she's more personable with students," said Tony. "She's just a real friendly person and she'll help you when she can... and if she

can't, she'll get to you later."

Tony is from the community of Ojo Encino, New Mexico, on the Navajo Nation. He is a Navajo tribal member, and his clans are Bilagáana (Anglo-White), he is born to the Hasht'ishnii (Mud People Clan), his maternal grandfather's clan is Tódich'ii'nii (Bitter Water), and his paternal grandfather's clan is Kinyaa'aanii (Towering House People). His parents are Tammy Herrera and Tracy Trujillo.



I'm just nervous about leaving high school and going out to college
- Tony Trujillo



Senior Highlight, Samuel Toney

April 6, 2022

Samuel Toney, 18, a senior at Cuba High School, said his last year of high school is going “good.”

From many enduring the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, remote learning, and now back to in-person learning, Toney said it was something he is used to because he was homeschooled for years.

“[It] hasn’t been difficult for me, but for some people, it has been,” Samuel said.

Samuel said he is originally from Montana and moved to Cuba in 2018 during his freshman year of high school, and he also lived in Texas for a while.

Out of all the places he has lived, he said Cuba Schools has been great.

“Between all the different school district I’ve been through, like Texas... Montana... I think for me... this is a very good school district,” said Samuel. “I’ve been to so many [schools] where principals just didn’t care or were just generally horrible... teachers as well.

So, I like [Cuba] because they care.”

One of those caring teachers was Alejandro Ortega, geometry and computer science teacher at Cuba High School. Samuel said he likes Ortega’s teaching methods because he feels it is

useful lessons for his future dream career, and he is always available for assistance and support on assignments.

“It’s very nice to know someone who really knows the business too, instead of just teaching and not knowing a thing,” Samuel added about Ortega’s teaching meth-

ods.

As graduation nears, Samuel is hopeful he will be accepted to the University of New Mexico, but he said he has not been accepted yet.

Samuel is interested in studying computer science and computer engineering, an interest he developed by playing a lot of video games through the years.

“I’m interested in doing game development,” he said. 🐉

This is a very good school district.

- Samuel Toney



Senior Highlight, Angelica Chavez

April 5, 2022

Angelica Chavez, 18, is a senior at Cuba High School and she is counting down the days to graduation in a little over a month.

Angelica said her senior year has been good thus far.

“It’s been fun... being a senior... it’s fun,” she said. “[It’s my] last year and [I’m] the older person in the school.”

As the days are counting down fast, Angelica said she is getting excited about going to New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where she wants to continue her education.

She said she wants to study physical therapy and eventually become a physical therapist.

Angelica has many highlights that she recalls over the last four years at

Cuba High School, but her major highlights include sports.

“Basketball is like my main thing. We have a big tournament every year called the Cuba Invitational,” she said. “That’s one of the biggest highlights

[for me] ... it’s fun to play in that [tournament].”

She said her favorite teacher over the last four years was Ms. Mariah Johnson.

“She used to teach science classes, but now she’s [teaching] welding,” Angelica said.

For now, Angelica is fully con-

centrated on completing her assignments and projects, and she is getting anxious for graduation. 🐉

It’s been fun... being a senior

- Angelica Chavez



FFA busy with competitions, welcomed middle school students to participate this year

April 10, 2022

Mariah Johnson is the welding teacher and agriculture education teacher at Cuba High School, and she is also the sponsor of the local FFA Cuba Chapter that helps students develop college and career readiness skills.

FFA stands for the National FFA Organization, formerly the Future Farmers of America, but they were rebranded in the 1990s to include all branches of agriculture and not just production.

Johnson said FFA is doing great this year and it “has been really big.” They recently brought in middle school students for the first time.

“Getting our middle schoolers involved has been a big highlight, because it gives them that extra couple of years [to] really learn different things and figure out what they like to do and hone in on [those] skill in high school,” she said. “Giving them

that extra opportunity builds on their resume as well.”

She said they are right in the midst of their career development event season.

“[The] kids are working on different contests that they can take and use towards careers,” she said. “So, for example, our forest team is learning skills that they could take to the forest service and work at the forest service once they get out of high school.”

They have 10 different teams participating in the various contests right now in forestry, food science, milk quality, home site, horse evaluation, horticulture produce, and wildlife.

Johnson said they are also gearing up for the state level competitions which occurred April 6.

“The kids are going to Las Cruces to compete at the state level, and all those teams have qualified to compete,” she said. “We will find out results on Friday, April 7.”

Johnson also said she worked with Raphaelita Phillips with the Indian Education Department at Cuba Schools, and they identified funding to pay for every student’s \$15 class fees for their welding class, a horticulture class, or an agriculture class. Since this was done, Johnson has seen an increase in participation to these classes.

“That’s been a big plus,” she added. “It might not have been possible [for some kids] before, because of financial hardship. Ms. Phillips has been great... working with me to get that funding.”

For public speaking events, Johnson explained they had seven kids participate this year.

“We normally only have three [participants], so we’ve doubled that!” she said. “With these career development events, we normally have about 10 to 12 kids, and we actually had 19 kids participate [recently] and 18 [are] going to the state level [to compete].”

Johnson previously taught science

before taking on the new position of teaching welding and agriculture.

“This is my first-year teaching welding and it’s been good. It’s definitely a learning curve, but I really [like] seeing kids do hands-on [projects],” she said. “The kids really excel, because they get to actually build and use those other skills.”

Her new post as a welding and agriculture teacher relates heavily to FFA.

“Not only are they learning about the agricultural powers and systems, but there’s actually a connection with the fabrication and the unions. The FFA works closely with them as well to get those kids trained, so they can walk into jobs as soon as they graduate high school and be making decent money instead of struggling.”

Johnson’s work is heavily concentrated on helping students be college and career ready. 🐏



Martial Arts Club visit dojo in Albuquerque

April 10, 2022

The Martial Arts Club at Cuba Middle School went on a field trip to the Sandia Budokan Karate Dojo on April 4 in Albuquerque.

Richard Armentrout, club sponsor, explained Sandia Budokan is a Japanese-style studio or dojo that offers classes in Karate, Aikido, and Kenjutsu, which is the general Japanese term meaning swordsmanship.

The nine club members, which consists of 6th and 8th graders, participated in a karate class taught by David Hamilton, who happens to be a 9th dan and red belt, which is based on the ranking system in Japanese martial arts. A red belt distinction is usually reserved for exemplary masters

of martial arts and is sometimes above the black belt.

“Also in attendance was yellow belt and education assistant, Damian Sequera,” said Armentrout, who also accompanied the club members and is a black belt. “Students participated in kata, patterns of movement and karate drills.”

“They also watched Senseis Hamilton and Armentrout demonstrate the five animal fighting waza or forms. After the class, the students went shopping at the Ta Lin International Market, followed by a picnic in Hidden Park near Lomas,” added Armentrout. “Students announced the field trip was a success and the day was one that they would never forget.” 🐉



Sports Update with Bruce Hatch

April 10, 2022

Bruce Hatch, principal and athletic director at Cuba High School, provided a sports update. Hatch reported basketball season ended at the beginning of March.

“Our boys’ team did not make the state tournament but the girls [team] did,” he said. “The girls came out [as] district runners-up, [and they] made it to the state tournament, [and] ended up playing a good game against Tohatchi but ended up coming up a little bit short. The girls’ basketball team had a good season, [and] they have a lot to be proud [of].”

Right now, track season is underway as of April 1.

“Today, April 1, the kids are headed out to Aztec for a track meet. Right now, we have one kid qualified for state... Davian Lechuga is qualified

for state in throwing... and [we] plan to get more [state qualifiers] between now and the state track meet.”

The district track meet is scheduled April 30, and the state track meet is the following week, the first week in May.

The track head coach is Marti Toledo, her assistant coaches are Jennifer Gauna-Casaus and Epi Atencio, and Ricky Toledo and Isaac Montoya help as well according to Hatch.

“We’ve got some people that are helping out, [they are] really doing a great job... got a ton of kids out... got almost 50 kids out... I think 45 is where we’re at right now between the boys and girls... which is a huge chunk of our population,” said Hatch. “So, it’s exciting... the kids are out there... they’re having a good time and things are going well.” 🐉



A brief update on the 2022-2023 proposed budget

April 10, 2022

Rhiannon Chavez, director of Finance at Cuba Independent School District, provided a brief update to the proposed budget for the 2022-2023 school year.

She explained the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) and the New Mexico Association of School Business Officials (NMASBO) are having their spring budget conference which “kicks off” the start of the school budget season. It is after these sessions, more information relative to the Cuba School’s budget will be available in May.

Chavez presented what she could think this month.

SB1 or Senate Bill 1 is the new “Junior Bill,” which was SB48 that the governor vetoed. It was introduced at the New Mexico Legislature’s special session on April 5. This bill was reworked to the satisfaction of legisla-

tors and the governor. The bill passed both the senate and house on April 5 and is now on the governor’s desk for signature. The intent of SB1 for Cuba Schools is to allocate \$80,000 for the purpose of computers and internet-related equipment and goods.

In the legislature’s regular session, SB212 funded \$75,000 for Cuba School projects which include the planning, design, construction, improvement, furnishing, and equipment in buildings and grounds. This also includes a health clinic, fencing, security features, and information technology and related equipment and infrastructure.

Chavez said Cuba Schools sends a big thank you to New Mexico State Rep. Susan Herrera and Sen. Benny Shendo for their efforts with SB212.

In other activity, the NMPED Secretary of Education set the Initial Unit Value for the 2022-2023 school year at \$5,450.92, an increase of \$587.92 from the 2021-2022 Final Unit Value

of \$4,863.00, or an increase of approximately 12.09%. This [increase] will assist school districts in funding the mandated minimum salary increases for teachers: \$50,000 for Level 1; \$60,000 for Level 2, and \$70,000 for Level 3, as well as setting the minimum wage for school district employees at \$15 per hour.

“We hope to bring teacher salaries above these minimums,” Chavez said.

The budget committee met on March 31 and will meet again at 6 p.m. on April 13 in the governing board room.

As of July 1, 2022, Chavez will change roles at Cuba Schools and will be the Associate Superintendent of Business & Finance. 🐏

CUBA HIGH SCHOOL TUTORING

WHEN: Tuesdays and Thursdays
3:45 - 5 PM

WHERE: Cuba High School

Transportation: Students will be able to ride the activity bus. Drop off points are Ojo Encino Chapter House, Torreon Store, and Counselor Store.

Herrera is easing into his new position in purchasing at Cuba Schools

April 9, 2022

Zackery Herrera works in the business office at Cuba Independent School District doing purchasing. He started in his new role March 2021.

Herrera is not new to Cuba, he grew up in Cuba and he graduated from Cuba High School in 2010, and he also graduated from New Mexico State University in 2014 and pursued a master’s degree in social work but now wants to pursue an MBA degree.

He has given back to the community and the youth by being actively involved in the community. Prior to coming to the district office, he worked at Cuba Elementary School as the dean of students and academic advisor.

“I was a counselor working with the kids and getting them registered into classes and [helping them] with their social, emotional, behavioral [needs],” he said. “Prior to coming to the school district, I also worked for major sports teams and convention centers throughout the U.S. I’ve lived in Alaska, Colorado, Las Vegas, Nevada, Ohio, Phoenix, and Seattle.”

Herrera said he is still easing into his new position.

“The educational part is pretty new to me. My background has been more in the sports and entertainment

industry, and that’s mainly dealing with multimillion dollar clients and owners,” he said. “Here in the school district, in the business office, I’m only a weekend into this position.”

His job duties entail ensuring the school district has enough funding to pay its bills and to grow, so they can continue to provide education to its students and community.

Herrera also said when he first started at the school district, he started the first LGBTQ+ organization, which was very new to the school district and community.

“[That is] something I wish we would’ve had when I was growing up as a young adult,” he said. “It’s new to everybody, it’s untreaded waters. It’s been in place for about eight months now and it’s posted on our website.”

He was wearing a rainbow-colored pin with the Cuba Schools logo imprinted on it, and he explained the pin signifies support for the LGBTQ+ individuals.

“[Anyone] who wears a pin, it doesn’t mean you’re LGBTQ+, it just means that you’re an ally for the district and making sure that it’s a safe zone for our kids here and for our staff,” he said.

Aside from his work with the school district, he was recently elected to the city council for the Village of Cuba. He



is happy for his new role as a council member, and he wants to ensure the community continues to progress and

move forward while working together as a community. 🐏

Janelle Casaus, new business specialist at the business office

April 6, 2022

Janelle Casaus started in her new positions as the new business specialist in the business office at Cuba Independent School District on March 29. She is from Cuba and is an alumna of Cuba High School, and she attended Cuba Schools from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Casaus brings her experience to Cuba Schools.

“My job experience comes from helping my family run a local business, working throughout college, and getting my MBA,” she said.

Before coming to the business office, she was an online educator teaching English, and she was also a culinary arts teacher at Cuba High School.

In her current job as business specialist, she will assist all members of the business office.

“I will be assisting purchasing and accounts payable with some of their

duties, I will assist human resources when needed, and I will assist the finance director with annual budgets, reports, audits, and whatever she may need [assistance with],” she said.

Casaus explained her position helps the students and school community by ensuring that all members of the business office are supported.

“Together, we are able to keep the [school] district running smoothly,” she said.

Aside from her day job, she is also the “momma of two beautiful boys,” the eldest will be starting pre-K in the next year or two. As for hobbies, she enjoys crocheting, cooking, and baking.

She is happy to be back in Cuba.

“I always wanted to come home and help the community in some way,” she said. “I am excited at the opportunity to be back in the school district and serve in a different capacity.” 🐏



Eric R. Arpelar, new assistant principal at Cuba High School

Arpelar explained he grew up in southeastern Oklahoma, and he was born to a Chickasaw father and a Caucasian mother. He was heavily active in Indian education while in Oklahoma, and he attended Southeast Oklahoma where he received his associate’s degree. He went on to complete his undergraduate degree in Nashville, Tennessee.

“I have a background in... actual-

ly... live events... deejaying... I was in a couple of movies,” he said. “I taught technical theater shop... professional communications and I taught as well, and I have a very heavy technology background. I’ve been in administration now for over a decade.”

Before coming to Cuba Independent School District, Arpelar was a principal at Ignacio High School in Ignacio, Colorado. He was also the vice prin-

icipal, athletic director, and district assistant athletic director in Aztec, New Mexico. He also worked in Newcomb, New Mexico, as the vice principal of activities and the athletic director for both the middle school and high school. He also served as the high school principal and middle school principal at Ovilla Christian School in south Dallas, Texas.

Arpelar started at Cuba Indepen-

dent School District in January, and he is enjoying his time here.

“It’s [been] fantastic! It’s fun,” he said. “Living in Farmington, I have no problem driving 100 miles to come to work.”

“I love the kids... I love working with the teachers,” he added. “I just want to be able to serve the school, the kids, and the community.” 🐏

Jacob Lineberry teaching construction, building to young people

Jacob Lineberry is the new vocational teacher at Cuba High School, and he teaches construction trades, such as Introduction to Construction and Carpentry.

Lineberry explained he started with the Cuba Independent School District on January 4, 2022. He comes to Cuba Schools with a wealth of experience. He previously worked at the construction company, ICON, LLC, he also worked at the Santa Fe Community College where he taught trades math as an adjunct educator, and he also worked at a residential remodeling company, RRR Development.

He has a passion for the trade of construction and building, and he wants to teach the trade to young



people.

“But so far, I enjoy it,” he added.

Lineberry is from Albuquerque, New Mexico. 🐏



Leroy D. Crespin, retired maintenance supervisor passes

April 14, 2022

Submitted by the family of Leroy D. Crespin

Leroy D. Crespin, 74, was called to be with our Lord on April 3, 2022. He was a resident of La Jara, New Mexico, where he spent a majority of his life. He also spent time in Magna, Utah, where he met his wife, Katherine. Together they raised five wonderful children, Stanley, Gary, Nina, Leeann, and Antonio. Leroy was a man of faith and always had a thank you to God for his many blessings which included his love of his wife, children, and grandchildren.

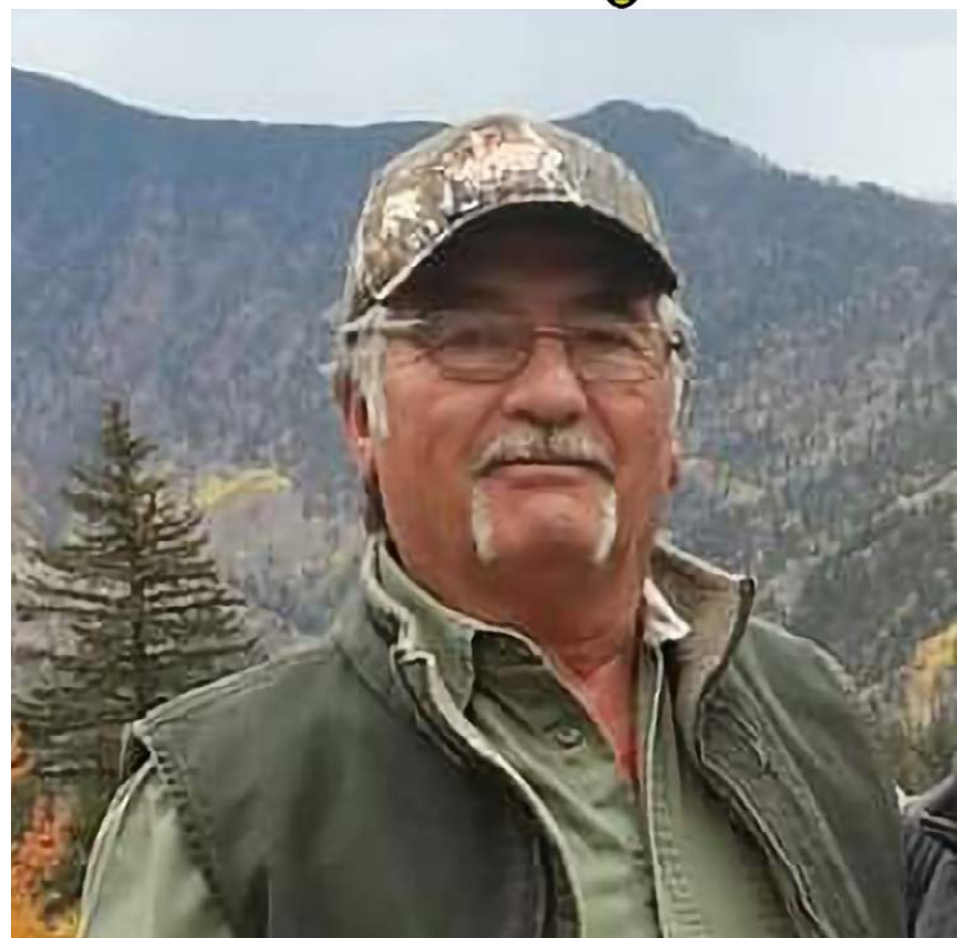
He always lived life to the fullest. He was known to lend a helping hand to anyone in need, whether it be family, friends, or a stranger. It has been said that Leroy was always genuinely happy to see anyone he came across. He worked 21 years with the Cuba Schools in various positions but retiring as Maintenance Supervisor. He started as a janitor, moved to a mechanic, then worked in transportation, not only as a supervisor but he drove a bus as well. He helped maintain the facilities, trained employees, and used his many talents anywhere they were needed. He was known to joke around with everyone from the staff to the kids. He loved to make everyone smile. He made sure the kids had a shoulder to cry on or an ear to listen to for whatever they wanted to talk about. He looked out for all the kids on his route. He made sure they were never left alone on the side of the road and that they were safe, even if it meant longer hours for him. Some of his accomplishments included the creation of the cross-country track which is still used to this day. He was excited and eager to help in any improvements of the schools or the facilities. He was there for the renovations and expansions of all three schools during the years. He facilitated the need for artificial turf on the football field and a bus barn/warehouse that would meet the needs of the district.

Upon his retirement in 2009, he then could take advantage of all his free time to do the things he loved the most. He loved being outdoors camping, hunting, fishing and off roading. He was able to spend time with his children, volunteering as a camp host with the Forest Service in Jemez and Cuba, and travel.

Leroy was preceded in death by his mother, Ignacita Crespin, and his grandpa Antonio Crespin. After their untimely death, when Leroy was very young, his Tia Eugenia Crespin, and many other family members helped raise him.

Leroy is survived by his wife of 53 years, Katherine. Their children Stanley and his wife Lynette, Gary, Nina, Leeann Lovato and her husband Ray, Antonio, eight grandchildren, and two great grandchildren also survive him.

Leroy was laid to rest on April 23, 2022, in La Jara, New Mexico, at the Santa Nino Church. A rosary and mass were held, followed by his burial, and a reception was at Guadalupe Hall in Cuba after the services.. 🐏



Immaculate Conception Parish

P.O. Box 40

Cuba, NM U.S.A 87013-0040

(575)-289-3803

Dear Cuba ISD Students & Community,

My name is Father Cornelius and I am the pastor of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Cuba.

Our parish has always held a send off and good wishes mass for the graduating seniors of Cuba High School, and this year is no different.

What is different this year is that I would like to take the time to formally invite and welcome "all " graduating seniors, and their families to a Graduation Mass to be held on Sunday May 8th 9:00am , Catholic or not I want to invite you to celebrate the lives and futures of the kids in our community together and provide them with a proper send off with prayers and well wishes from our community .

Rev. Cornelius Onyigbuo
Pastoral Administrator



We invite you to join us for summer camp!



Kindergarten

Little campers will learn about the life cycle of chickens. Children will incubate, grow, and interact with chicks and chickens.

1st Grade

Young campers will learn how to take care of a garden while learning about good and bad insects and animals in a garden. They will also design and construct their own bug habitats and pollinator garden.

2nd Grade

Young campers will learn all about gardening. Children will learn about the importance of fertilizing, composting, watering, and general care of growing a garden.

3rd Grade

Big campers will be introduced and taught how to use musical instruments. Children will also continue to grow a fruit and vegetable garden.

4th Grade

Bigger campers will hatch chicks while helping to grow and maintain their outdoor garden.

5th Grade

Oldest campers will be introduced to careers in water and land conservation. These students will also learn about the importance of water collection in the high desert while engineering their own ways to collect water and irrigate the outdoor garden.



Swimming fun!

Starting: July 1, 2022



Gardening fun!





CUBA SCHOOLS 2022-2023 9 MONTH CALENDAR

Approved
4/20/22b

JULY 2022				
M	TU	W	TH	F
				1 K5+
4	5 K5+	6 K5+	7 K5+	8 K5+
11 K5+	12 K5+	13 K5+	14 K5+	15 K5+
18 K5+	19 K5+	20 K5+	21 K5+	22 K5+
25 K5+	26 K5+	27 K5+	28 K5+	29 K5+

AUGUST 2022 (14)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
1 K5+	2 K5+	3 K5+	4 K5+	5 K5+
8	9	10	11★	12
R	16	17	18♥	19
22	23	24	25	26
R	30			

SEPTEMBER 2022 (21)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9☾
R	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
R	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER 2022 (18)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14☺
R☀	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
R				

NOVEMBER 2022 (18)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10☾	11
R	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
R	29	30		

DECEMBER 2022 (12)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
			1	2
R	6	7	8	9
R	13	14	15	16☺☀
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY 2023 (20)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
R	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
R	24	25	26	27☾
30	31			

FEBRUARY 2023 (19)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
R	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
R	28			

MARCH 2023 (16)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
		1	2	3☺
R☀	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
R	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2023 (17)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
R	4	5	6	7❄
10❄	11	12	13	14☾
R	18	19	20	21
24❄	25	26	27	28

MAY 2023 (18)					
M	TU	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	
R	9	10	11	12	13🎓
15	16	17	18🎓	19🎓	
R	23★	24★	25	26	
29	30	31			

JUNE 2023				
M	TU	W	TH	F
			1	2
			8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

★	First/Last Day of School	●	Indigenous Summer Program	☺	9 Wks Ends	■	PreK Start/End	🎓	8 th Gr. Promo
■	Vacation	■	Half Day	●	CU Boulder Summer Program	☀	Report Card Grades Due	■	Registration
R	Remote Day – Students Learn from Home/Staff PD-4hrs.			❄	Snow Days	🎓	5 th Gr. Fly Up	🎓	Graduation
■	Parent Conferences 8:00am – 7:00pm (No school for students)			★	No School for Elementary		🎓	Extended Learning	
■	Parent Conferences 3:30pm – 7:00pm (Regular School Day)			☾	Progress Report Grades Due		🎓	K5+ Start/End	
■	Full Day Staff In-service (No school for students)			♥	Open House 4:00 – 6:00pm				



CUBA SCHOOLS 2022-2023 12 MONTH CALENDAR

Approved
4/20/22b

JULY 2022 (20)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
				1 K5+
4	5 K5+	6 K5+	7 K5+	8 K5+
11 K5+	12 K5+	13 K5+	14 K5+	15 K5+
18 K5+	19 K5+	20 K5+	21 K5+	22 K5+
25 K5+	26 K5+	27 K5+	28 K5+	29 K5+

AUGUST 2022 (22)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
1 K5+	2 K5+	3 K5+	4 K5+	5 K5+
8	9	10	11★	12
R	16	17	18♥	19
22	23	24	25	26
R	30			

SEPTEMBER 2022 (21)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9☾
R	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
R	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER 2022 (20)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14☺
R☀	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
R				

NOVEMBER 2022 (18)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10☾	11
R	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
R	29	30		

DECEMBER 2022 (15)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
			1	2
R	6	7	8	9
R	13	14	15	16☺☀
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY 2023 (21)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
R	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
R	24	25	26	27☾
30	31			

FEBRUARY 2023 (19)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
R	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
R	28			

MARCH 2023 (21)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
		1	2	3☺
R☀	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
R	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2023 (20)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
R	4	5	6	7☸
10☸	11	12	13	14☾
R	18	19	20	21
24☸	25	26	27	28

MAY 2023 (22)					
M	TU	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	
R	9	10	11	12	13🎓
15	16	17	18🎓	19🎓	
R	23★	24★	25	26	
29	30	31			

JUNE 2023 (22)				
M	TU	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

★	First/Last Day of School	●	Indigenous Summer Program	☺	9 Wks Ends	■	PreK Start/End	🎓	8 th Gr. Promo
■	Vacation	■	Half Day	●	CU Boulder Summer Program	☀	Report Card Grades Due	■	Registration
R	Remote Day – Students Learn from Home/Staff PD-4hrs.			☸	Snow Days	🎓	5th Gr. Fly Up	🎓	Graduation
■	Parent Conferences 8:00am – 7:00pm (No school for students)			★	No School for Elementary		🎓	Extended Learning	
■	Parent Conferences 3:30pm – 7:00pm (Regular School Day)			☾	Progress Report Grades Due		🎓	Learning	
■	Full Day Staff In-service (No school for students)			♥	Open House 4:00 – 6:00pm		K5+ Start/End		

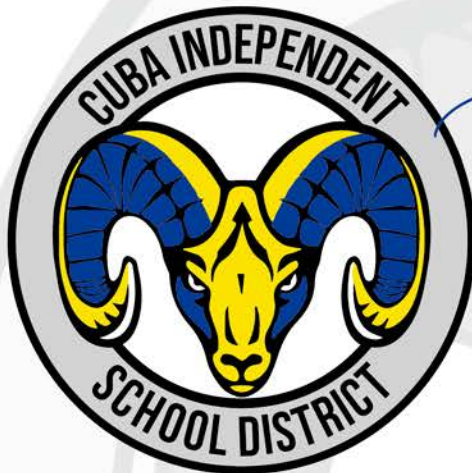


CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

50 County Road 13 | P.O. Box 70
Cuba, N.M. 87013

(575) 289-3211 | Fax (575) 289-3314

www.cuba.k12.nm.us



Thank you

for your years of service

Retirees 2018-2019

ANTONE, DAVID JR.
BROWN, KAREN (Kay)
CASAUS, MARIA L. (Mary)
GARRETT, HELEN F.
GUTIERREZ DE MONTOYA, SARA B.
JAKE, CORRINE J.
LINNEY, THERESA B.
MARTIN, ARRISON G.

MARTIN, GARRISON G.
SANCHEZ, HORACIO
SANCHEZ, LEROY
SANDOVAL, ALFREETA N.
VELASQUEZ, STEVEN E.
VIGIL, JUNE