



RAM COUNTRY NEWS

CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

AUGUST 2021

Heleen Archuleta was Sen. Lujan's guest for President Biden's first joint address, participates in panel discussion



CUBA, N.M. – U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) invited Cuba High School 10th grader, Heleen Archuleta, to join him as a virtual guest during U.S. President Joe Biden's first joint address to the U.S. Congress, as well as the rare opportunity to participate in a panel discussion with the senator and others on technology access equality for students.

On April 27, Sen. Lujan announced he invited Archuleta, a Navajo Nation tribal member, to be his virtual guest for the joint address and she gladly accepted.

Archuleta has been distance learning since April 2020. During her panel discussion with the senator, she spoke about the need for Wi-Fi on school buses because of the long travel time and commutes for those who live within his congressional district, as well as access to technology while remote learning from home.

According to an April 27 press release from Sen. Lujan's office, "Under the American Rescue Plan, New Mexico schools will receive \$979 million to address learning loss, provide edu-

cation technology, implement public health measures, and meet other critical needs... [Sen. Lujan] recently introduced bipartisan legislation to expand eligibility for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) E-Rate program to reimburse schools that equip school buses with Wi-Fi technology. This proposal would make Ms. Archuleta's two-hour commute to and from school prime time for completing homework assignments and doing research."

With dreams of becoming a nurse

technician, Archuleta is doing all she can to assure proper technology access for herself and all her fellow students so that no student lacks access to any aspect of their education.

Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego, superintendent, commended Archuleta for her great advocacy.

"She did an amazing job," said Griego. "Thank you to her and also to Ms. Anna Brown for working with her in preparation of the questions. [Ms. Brown] did a wonderful job supporting her." 🐏

IN THIS ISSUE



Extra precautions being taken... Page 2



CTE students adapted to remote learning... Page 3



School secretaries during pandemic... Page 4



Extra precautions being taken to keep students, staff safe

May 10, 2021

CUBA, N.M. – As COVID-19 variants become a point of concern for many across the world, Cuba Independent School District is prepared for a new normal for students this school year.

Arsenio Jaquez, principal of Cuba Middle School, said that the most important thing is safety, and they made some noticeable changes at his school.

“We marked the hallways... they’re striped... kind of like a highway. They have one way that you walk, so kids cannot just run into each other,” he said. “The cafeterias have been set up for social distancing, and they have plexiglass between the seating. The students were all issued masks and they have to wear masks at all times.”

Jaquez also mentioned that there are entrances set up at each of the schools to take student temperatures as they

arrive. If temperatures are too high, students will be escorted to another room so the school nurse can assess them.

In further efforts to ensure all students can return safely to school but still maintain some sense of normalcy, Jaquez said that school schedules are staying the same. However, the most significant changes are happening in how the school is set up to keep students at safe distances from each other while maintaining equal access to proper education. For example, classrooms will be set up according to guidelines, students will only be let into bathrooms in limited numbers and teachers will remain on alert to ensure students are appropriately distanced from each other whether they are in the classrooms or walking through the halls. Even the libraries have been set up with plexiglass to

ensure students can make use of the room while remaining separated and important offices and study rooms that students need access to.

When asked if the school would continue to offer a remote learning option, Jaquez noted that remote learning would still be an option.

“[Students] will also have the opportunity of a hybrid model, so if you want to send your kid for two days a week and then keep them remote for three days, that will be an option as well,” he said.

While all these changes have been a lot of work for the school district, Jaquez says that keeping students safe is far and beyond their top priority.

“The safety of the kids is the most important thing for us to provide a quality education. We need to provide a safe learning environment for our kids. We need to provide a safe work-

ing environment for all the employees there, so that’s why we went through this, through all these changes,” he added.

Jaquez also mentioned they are working to ensure a safe environment on school district transportation and buses. He noted that they were considering taking students’ temperatures before they board the buses, but they were still working on those details as of his statement in May.

“We felt that if we have these changes, parents will feel more comfortable sending their kids to our buildings in order for there to be onsite learning,” said Jaquez. “We feel like remote learning in some cases will benefit the kids, but we want to really encourage all of our students to be onsite, so we just need to take every precaution possible to ensure their safety.” 🐏



FIND US ONLINE

f
@cuba.schools

🐦
@cubaisd

💻
www.cuba.k12.nm.us

School registration was done online for the 2021-2022 School Year

May 20, 2021

CUBA, N.M. – Registration for the 2021-2022 School Year is now closed at Cuba Independent School District and school administrators say this year’s process was easier than ever before.

Joby Wallace, counselor at Cuba High School, said registration for the entire district was done online and it allowed students to register for classes from the comfort and safety of their home. Wallace also helps to coordi-

nate scheduling for the entire school district.

“Registration [was] online, and [students just had] go to the Cuba High School website. There [was] a link that [said] registration for the 10th to 12th grade, so the students [clicked] the link and followed all those instructions,” she said. “They’re very detailed instructions, and [they registered] for the grade level that they’re going to be in for the next school year.”

Wallace also mentioned once the deadline had passed, students would

not be able to register, and that the computer would automatically select their classes and electives for them.

Wallace explained the process is different for all divisions. For example, students in the 9th grade have totally different classes, so their registration process is done separately from the 10th to 12th grade students. The middle school students also registered on their website and similarly with the elementary schools.

Wallace also noted that the final registration deadline was Monday, May

17, and that date was set so the school district could have plenty of time to schedule classes for all students across various schools.

For any students with additional questions or issues, Wallace said that they could reach out to her via email or to Anna Brown. Similarly, if middle school students had problems or concerns, they can contact their counselor, Trish Delgado. 🐏

Exceptional needs students provided extra support during pandemic, new school year

May 10, 2021

CUBA, N.M. – The special education staff at Cuba Schools is working hard to appropriately adjust their services to support all of their exceptional needs students.

Laura Saucedo, special education director, said the needs for students has shifted dramatically throughout the pandemic. As a result, it required special education staff to significantly alter their strategies toward providing quality educational services to those in need. Saucedo noted once the pandemic was underway, many parents were reluctant to continue with their programs, but their staff worked tire-

lessly to overcome these hesitations for the sake of the students and continue to provide needed services such as occupational, physical, speech and recreational therapy, as well as psychological and social work services.

“When either the school got closed down or the parent didn’t feel comfortable to send their child, we would, of course, use Zoom and many times we had to work with the parents so that they would understand how to get onto the Zoom classes, Google classrooms and things like that,” said Saucedo. “The staff had to also work with the parents to make sure that they could help their child to get into the Zooms and so that the teachers and

the staff could provide that service for the students.”

Saucedo also mentioned the special education staff conducted many home visits with families during the pandemic, which provided an additional challenge in terms of keeping all parties safe.

Along with traditional students, the exceptional needs students will also have the option of continuing to rely on remote learning where needed, but with that comes additional challenges. Before COVID-19, each student’s individual needs had to be determined to put proper educational plans in place. Now in the age of the pandemic, that is even more true.

“We have to look at individual needs,” explained Saucedo. “It’s not just a blanketed thing for special education students. For some students, it’s best if they come in-person, especially for the therapies that are difficult to do on Zoom.”

She explained that it will take a great deal of planning to determine which students will require Zoom-style learning and what teachers will be available to facilitate that learning.

Currently, there are 95 students in the special education program between pre-K to 12th grade, with eight staff members. Saucedo said they are ready to provide much-needed support to their students. 🤝

CTE program adapted to remote learning, built garage models

May 7, 2021

CUBA, N.M. – When schools across New Mexico closed last spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program adapted quickly to remote learning despite difficulty.

Richard Prudencio, the CTE instructor at Cuba High School, explained CTE instruction is usually hands-on with equipment and field-work but that had to change quickly. They adjusted to a virtual format that was not ideal, but it had to work.

“My students started working on garage models which were perfect for Project Based Learning (PBL) along

with Google classroom assignments in construction and carpentry,” he said. “For the CTE program, at least some face-to-face instruction is ideal or even necessary for knowledge and skill development, and hand-on practice.”

“That task was not easy,” he added.

Prior to the pandemic, Prudencio explained Cuba Schools already adapted teaching some aspects of remote learning through E-Days to provide equitable access to more learners.

“The pandemic’s impact on the CTE program led me to rethink how I will deliver instruction for construction and carpentry classes with the help of technology,” Prudencio said. 🤝





Internship program at Cuba Schools helps student gain work experience

May 11, 2021

CUBA, N.M. – For students planning their future careers, Cuba Schools is coordinating internships of all kinds to give them a jump start.

Jeanette Marie Paiz, a retired educator and the current internship coordinator for Cuba Schools, said for the past 30 years, the program has been pushing students to go to college, and she shared that this internship program has made a significant impact on this mission.

“[Students are] coming out of college and high school without any type of real experience,” she said. “Academically, they’ve done really well, and they’ve graduated but they don’t have any real work experience.”

Paiz noted when talking to employers and universities, they frequently look for students with two to three years’ worth of job experience, but very rarely do the average students have that.

“That is why mentorships and internships are so important because they do need the academics, but they also need the experience, and through internships, they find if it’s really something that they want to do or something that they’d have interest in,” she explained.

While Paiz noted that internships have been a bit difficult to coordinate during the pandemic, they have been able to coordinate virtual internships for their students as well. Some of the internships they have been able

to coordinate included mental health and community health work, including mentorships in the medical field, building a summer program through the University of New Mexico (UNM) and filmmaking workshops.

“They can see what the professional world looks like... We were able to get some kids to work with the fire department, we had some students placed at a physical therapy clinic, we had some at Rio Rancho Regional Hospital through UNM, but when COVID-19 came, we had to pull everybody out... we had to move everything to virtual,” she said.

Paiz hopes to get the internships back to in-person this fall, so they can return to their college readiness plans.

Elvira Sanchez, a junior at Cuba High School, said she participated in the mental health internship with Paiz and that it helped her solidify some of her future career plans.

“We [met] to discuss mental health and how it [effected] people, espe-

cially during COVID-19. We [got] on Zoom with our friends, and we [did] activities or [made] arts and crafts just to help with our own mental health as well,” said Sanchez. “We made a PowerPoint discussing mental health with COVID and things to help with mental health... We had lots of fun.”

Sanchez said the program was helpful for her because it helped her learn how to better deal with her mental health and how to help others, especially during the pandemic. Once she graduates from Cuba High School, she plans to attend UNM in Albuquerque to study nursing and she said this internship helped prepare her for her future studies.

“I think they find out about themselves. They find out about the real world out there,” said Paiz. “I think it’s important for them to have paid internships because that also is a part of the learning experience and part of learning what it’s like to go out there and earn some money.” 🐏

School secretaries helped to keep school running during pandemic, in-person school

May 9, 2021

CUBA, N.M. – Throughout the pandemic, staff members throughout Cuba Schools have been working hard, but the work of school secretaries behind the scenes has gone relatively unnoticed.

Alyssa Romero, the administrative assistant at Cuba Elementary School, has been with the school for four years. She noted that on top of her administrative duties, her primary function has been to keep up excellent customer service, answer phones, greet parents and help assist other staff where needed, as well as being a mother of four children of her own.

In the last year, working through the pandemic has been very challenging for Romero and many others. Romero explained the first month was especially hard, she had to get herself situated, set up and plugged in for work in addition to helping her children get set up with Zoom for their remote classes. Her youngest was attending kindergarten at the time.

In addition, she noted she had to also rely on her husband to help at home and he changed his schedule to do so.

“The most challenging was having to adjust to be the administrative assistant, a mother and a teacher all at the same time,” she said.

Luckily, Romero was able to return to in-person work April 6.

“It’s been a lot of work,” she said. “We were so used to being at home... I’d rather be at the office doing my work and it’s a lot easier there.”

Romero explained she occasionally met with parents or run off copies for a teacher and it was much more challenging to meet those needs from home, especially without personal access to a copy machine and other office equipment.

Angela Crespin, the special education secretary for the school district, said that working through the pandemic was very interesting.

“It was a whole new job, basically because things had to be done so differently, so it was like learning a whole new job,” said Crespin.

Crespin mentioned one positive of working from home, she got to know a lot of the parents and students better.

“We got to talk to them, get to know them, see how things were going at home, so we got to get to know them a

whole lot better,” she said.

Romero was surprised how difficult working from home was, but she also knows working in-person during a world pandemic also comes with its own challenges. She said working in-person right now comes with extra precautions that involve constant hand washing, using Lysol wipes and wearing a mask but all that is much more manageable for her than working from home.

Romero always wanted to find a job where she could work from home but once it started, she quickly realized how difficult it was — especially with four children home with her. She learned how to change her schedule and her routine several times through the pandemic, and she feels this helped her to better manage many things. Above all and most important, she kept everyone at home safe.

For now, Romero appreciates being back in her office and working in-person again.

“I love working at the elementary,” said Romero. “I love my job. I love the kids. I feel we have a great school. When the pandemic hit, all our administrators were in action. We had our ducks in a row, and by the time we had to go remote, we all knew what was happening and where we needed to be and what we needed to do, and how to help the kids, so I was grateful for that... for our school being on top of everything.” 🐏



CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Cuba High School



CONGRATULATIONS G



CUBA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego, Ed.D
Superintendent

Bruce Hatch
Principal, Cuba High School

Arsenio Jacquez
Principal, Cuba Middle School

Judy Atencio
Principal, Cuba Elementary School

SCHOOL BOARD

Dianna Maestas
*President
District 4*

Vivian Keetso
*Secretary
District 1*

Taylor Pinto
*Vice President
District 2*

Elizabeth Martin
*Member
District 3*

James D. Casaus
*Member
District 5*

CONTACT

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

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





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



DELTA VARIANT IS SURGING: IT HAS QUICKLY GROWN FROM LESS THAN 1% OF CASES IN MAY TO MORE THAN 80% NOW.

- Delta spreads about twice as easily from one person to another compared to previous variants.
- Because new evidence shows some vaccinated people can get or spread Delta, CDC recommends everyone in areas with substantial or high spread wear a mask.
- Most spread is among unvaccinated people and in areas with low vaccination rates. Vaccines help prevent Delta from spreading further.



cdc.gov/coronavirus



APPLY NOW! DEADLINE: SEPT. 15TH, 2021

DESCRIPTION

The Gates Scholarship (TGS) is a highly selective, last-dollar scholarship for outstanding, minority, high school seniors from low-income households. Each year, the scholarship is awarded to 300 of these student leaders, with the intent of helping them realize their maximum potential.

BASIC ELIGIBILITY

To apply, students must be:
A high school senior from at least one of the following ethnicities: African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native*, Asian & Pacific Islander American, and/or Hispanic American. Student must be Pell-eligible and a US citizen, national, or permanent resident who is in good academic standing with a minimum cumulative weighted GPA of 3.3 on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent). Additionally, a student must plan to enroll full-time, in a four-year degree program, at a US accredited, not-for-profit, private or public college or university.

*For American Indian/Alaska Native, proof of tribal enrollment will be required.

To apply, visit: <https://www.thegatescholarship.org/scholarship>

FIND A COVID-19 VACCINE NEAR YOU:

Search <http://vaccines.gov>
Text your ZIP code to **438829**
Call **1-800-232-0233**