



FFA, more than cows and plows

February 4, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — The FFA Cuba Chapter is doing great things at Cuba High School to help students develop college and career readiness skills.

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

According to FFA, they are a dynamic youth organization that changes lives and prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The organization helps to develop its members' potential and helps them discover their talent through hands-on experiences, which provides members the tools to achieve real-world success. The organization is an intracurricular student organization for those interested in agriculture and leadership.

Mariah Johnson, the FFA advisor and agricultural/science teacher at Cuba High School, explained the group currently has a roster of 25 students. She explained the organization is a great way for students to gain leadership, organizational and communication skills.

"FFA is set-up to help you be successful in the future, whether you're looking for a career, if you want to go to college or if you want to do some sort of entrepreneurship," she said.



Some members of the FFA Cuba Chapter pose with some of the recent awards they won Jan. 29, 2020, in Ms. Johnson's class at Cuba High School. Back row, from left: Shaun Morales and Lisette Sanchez. Front row, from left: Eliyana Sanchez, CoyLynn Adams, Trinity Hernandez, Andrea Segura and David Benavidez.

"FFA offers many things to help you."

Johnson explained FFA members get to branch off into different aspects of agriculture and they get to participate in various competitions throughout the year to improve their skills.

She said some competitions can help members gain attention for college scholarships in competitions like wool judging, meat judging and public speaking.

"No matter what we do in life, we are going to have to talk to somebody

at some point," she said about honing public speaking skills. "It helps [members] in that aspect as well."

Johnson also explained there are many benefits to being a member of the FFA.

"Students get a bigger look at agriculture in our community. If they are in a farming family, they get to learn more about what helps their plants grow and how to market their crops better," she said. "If [members] are interested in the forestry aspect, they

get to learn more about the forestry industry, wildlife and environmental impacts – good or bad. They get to learn about traditional agriculture and what is coming up and what is new in agriculture for modernization."

Johnson said their biggest goals this year is recruitment.

"We would like people to come in and join us, take different trips, see what their skill sets are, see what they

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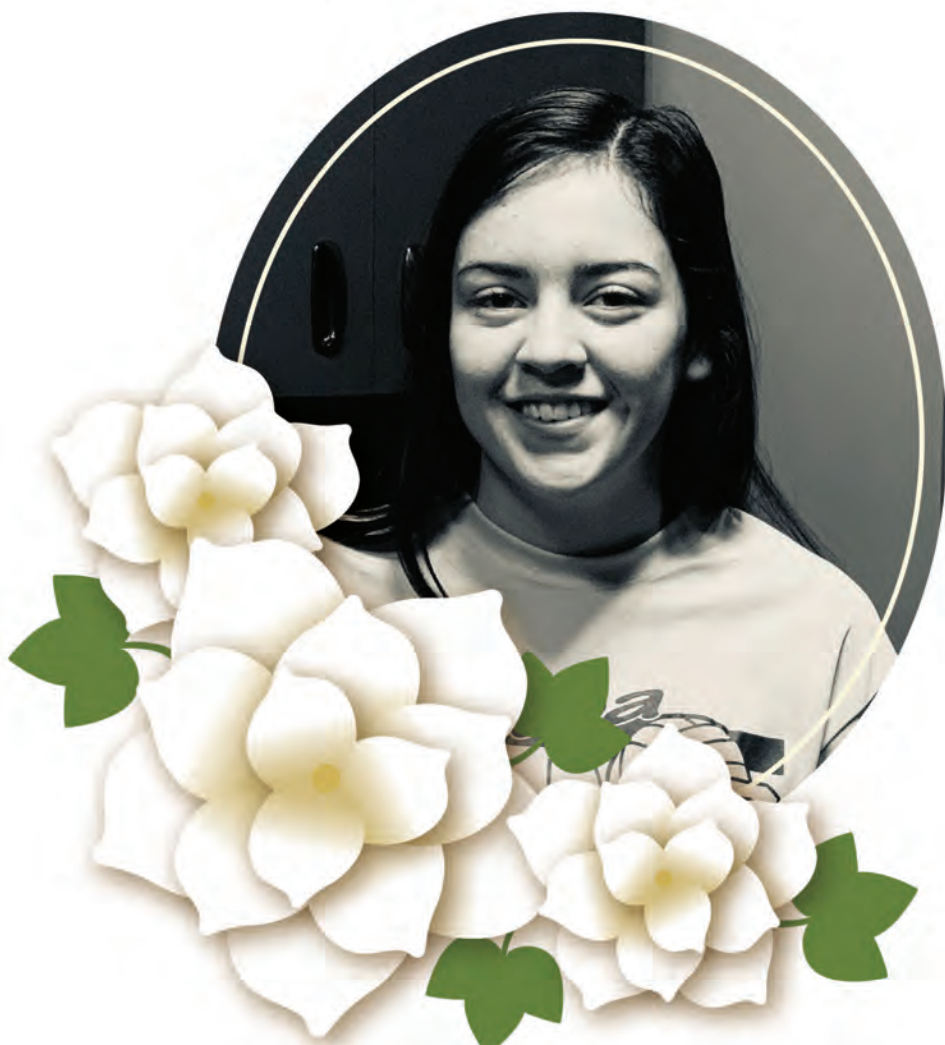
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In Loving Memory

9/27/02 — 12/16/19

The family of Adrianna "Adri" Cordova would like to thank everyone for the outpouring of community support.

We are beyond grateful for everyone's love, support and prayers through this difficult time.

FFA

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like and what they don't like," she said. "Students should join FFA because it is a great opportunity to meet new people, to see other parts of the state and to see what they are really interested in. There are a lot of things that are offered and it's just not cows and plows. There's a whole world out there that they could open up and become interested in while developing leadership skills through growth."

"As my personal goal, I want to help our kids reach higher levels through FFA," she added.

Johnson explained the very basic level is the Greenhand FFA Degree and the highest level is the American FFA Degree and she would like to help more students achieve the highest degree possible because it opens up scholarship opportunities for them.

The FFA participates in various competitions throughout the year.

In the fall, they participated in their LDEs or Leadership Development Events where they had an opportunity to develop their college and career readiness skills. They had two students

that participated in the extemporaneous speaking competition and placed, so they continue onto the state level competition in June.

Extemporaneous speaking is simply a persuasive or informative speech on a particular subject which students randomly pick out of a hat and they have 20 minutes to write a speech and it has to be four to six minutes in length.

"We placed second and third at the district contest, so we are going to the state contest in June," said Johnson. "The two students who advanced are 10th-Grader Adrianna Casaus and 12th grader Coylynn Adams."

This spring, FFA will participate in the CDEs or Career Development Events at various invitationals across the state. Some competitions include farm business management, forestry, homesite evaluation, soil profiling, horse judging, livestock judging, horticulture produce, land, milk and poultry.

David Benavidez, 17, a senior and president of the FFA Cuba Chapter, said he has been a member for two years now and he was attracted to the opportunity to build upon his social, leadership and public speaking skills.



"It has really broadened my aspect and helped me gain leadership abilities," he said.

Benavidez also said he likes the traveling and the opportunity of meeting new people.

He also encouraged students to consider joining FFA. For new members, he encourages them to start their freshman year and obtain their Greenhand FFA medal and go on from there.

"The longer you're with FFA, the more you will like it, and the more you'll be able to be active and involved with everything," he said.

The FFA has their meetings in Ms. Johnson's classroom on the first Wednesday of the month. 🐏



Celia Chavez



David Benavidez

Celia Chavez, David Benavidez selected as candidates to 2020 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

February 12, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — Cuba High School seniors Celia Chavez and David Benavidez were selected as candidates for the highly competitive 2020 United States Presidential Scholars Program.

The two students were notified Jan. 21 by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the U.S. Department of Education.

According to the notification, their candidacy was based on one of the following: outstanding performance on the ACT Assessment or the College Board SAT; nomination by their Chief State School Officer or by one of the partner recognition organizations.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars also indicates of the nearly 3.6 million high school seniors graduating this year, the candidates are one of approximately 4,500 students to receive the invitation to apply for the prestigious honor.

In the spring, the commission names up to 161 distinguished graduating high school seniors as U.S. Presidential Scholars. Being selected as

a scholar is one of the highest honors our nation's high school students may receive, according to the commission.

The honorees receive a Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House during the National Recognition Program in Washington, D.C. As guests of the commission, students receive an expense-paid trip to D.C. and will attend a series of events held in their honor tentatively scheduled June 16-18, 2020, according to the commission.

Candidates must submit their application to the program by Feb. 25 for consideration.

The commission states the Scholars Program was established in 1964 to recognize some of the most distinguished graduating seniors for their accomplishments in many areas of academic success, leadership and service to school and to community. In 1979, it was expanded to also recognize students who demonstrated exceptional scholarship and talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Then in 2015, the program expanded again to include students who demonstrated



A photo of a United States Presidential Scholars medallion.
(Photo: Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's website)

ability and accomplishment in the career and technical fields. 🍀



June Vigil enjoys helping students succeed

February 12, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — June Vigil loves working with her students and she said she would not trade it for anything else in the world.

“I love my students and I learn more from them than they will ever learn from me,” she said. “Every day is a new adventure and I enjoy learning alongside them.”

She said she enjoys her job because she has the opportunity to teach her students skills that they can use throughout their lives.

“I love that I’m touching the future,” she said. “If I could teach them or show them how to acquire skills that they need, they will be successful in any situation.”

Vigil is a very busy teacher at Cuba Middle School where she teaches mathematics, Spanish Language Arts and creative writing to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. On top of that, she is also the yearbook club’s advisor.

She is also a participant of the Math Teacher Leader Network at Cuba Schools. According to the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the network is an association of math teacher leaders and their principals. The Laboratory’s Math and Science Academy is designed to facilitate and strengthen high quality mathematics teaching and learning in elementary and middle schools in northern New Mexico.

She is also working on her master’s degree in educational leadership and mathematics with the leader network which is through New Mexico Highlands University.

Vigil explained her main focus is elementary education. She has a bachelor’s of science degree in elementary education from New Mexico State University; she also has a bilingual endorsement from the University of New Mexico and New Mexico Highlands University.

She has been teaching for 23 years and 19 of those years were in Taos, New Mexico, where she is from. She is in her second year with Cuba Schools.

She jokingly said that she almost did



June Vigil takes a moment to help one of her students. (Photos by Alejandro Ortega)

not become a school teacher. When she was younger, she wanted to be a civil engineer but changed her mind after a glimpse into a classroom during her work study tenure.

“My father once told me to think about my career and to choose a job that I would be happy with and one that I will be happy to wake up every morning for—for the next 30 years,” she said. “He then asked me, ‘Are you sure civil engineering is that job?’”

After some deep thought, she said she fell in love with

the students and the classroom environment.

“So I thought, ‘I need to be a teacher, this is something I can do for 30

“**It’s all about student success, that is why we are here.**”

— June Vigil



years,” she said. “Knock on wood, after 23 years, I am still excited to get up and come to work every day. Working with children is awesome!”

She also said her colleagues are also wonderful to work with and she praised them.

“At Cuba Middle School, everybody works together. If somebody goes home sick, everybody jumps in to

help where needed,” she said. “More importantly, we can come together for students that are struggling and find ways to help them succeed. We all get together, intervene, analyze data, look at technology, meet with parents and help our students in need.”

“It’s all about student success, that is why we are here,” she said. 🐏



Sebastian Hernandez was honored as an Eagle Scout and for his Eagle Project on Jan .27, 2020, on the floor of the New Mexico House of Representatives. He is pictured with State Rep. Jason Harper and other Scouts on “Scout Day” in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Sebastian is pictured ninth from left. (Photo courtesy of Jason Harper)

Sebastian Hernandez earns Eagle Scout, recognized by New Mexico House of Representatives

February 12, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — Sebastian Hernandez recently earned his ranking as an Eagle Scout with the Boys Scouts of America and was also recognized on Scout Day on the floor of the New Mexico House of Representatives Jan. 27 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Eagle Scout is the highest achievement and rank attainable in the Boys Scouts of America and it carries special significance. Sebastian represents only four percent of Scouts that earn the ranking which requires a lengthy review process. It is also reported that 2.5 million youth have earned the rank since its inception in 1912.

According to the Boys Scouts of America, the award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years. Not every boy who joins a Boy Scouts troop earns the Eagle Scout rank.

Sebastian had to conduct his Eagle Project which he titled, the “Chujillie Conservation Project,” which con-

trolled erosion in an area just west of Cuba. The project helped to stabilize existing erosion and protected a water line that was of great importance because it provides water for wildlife and livestock.

Further, the project required Sebastian to coordinate heavy equipment, equipment operation, manpower and materials to stabilize the erosion.

“The Bureau of Land Management reviewed the project and found the work to be exceptional,” said Rep. Jason Harper, a member of the New Mexico House of Representatives who reviewed the project. “Almost a year later, the project has stood the test of time and the elements, and it will benefit and protect the area for years to come.”

Because of this significant feat, Rep. Jason Harper invited him to the floor of the state legislature to be recognized for his work.

“We invited Eagle Scouts and their families from the Great Southwest Council to come and be recognized,” said Rep. Harper. “I was able to briefly mention each of their Eagle Projects

and they all received a rare standing ovation.”

“Congrats to these great young men and their families,” he added. “I know this is just the beginning of the great good they will do!”

Sebastian’s father, John Hernandez, accompanied his son to Santa Fe for the recognition.

“Oh man, every parent wants the best for their child. I am extremely proud of him,” he said. “Sebastian started with the Boys Scouts when he was 8-years-old. To achieve Eagle Scout, it takes a long time. He has 20 to 30 merit badges and he was required to go to summer camps to achieve what he did.”

Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego also commended Sebastian for his achievement.

“We are very proud of Sebastian, not only for receiving the honor of Eagle Scout and for the recognition at the state legislature but for being the young man that he is,” said Dr. Griego. “His commitment to his classmates, his community, his heritage and his support of others is to be admired.”

“He is a quite leader, one who does

without seeking recognition,” she added. “It has been a pleasure to watch him grow as a leader in his community. I am excited to see what this young man does in the future. He embraces the lessons from his father and mother.” 🙌

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Pat Chavez, teaching welding skills at Cuba High School

February 11, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — Pat John Chavez is teaching life skills through welding and fabrication at Cuba High School.

Chavez has been teaching for two years now and he enjoys every minute of it. His goal is to provide his students with some valuable skills before they leave high school with hopes they may find a job and have some experience under their belt.

“Not all the kids will go off to college,” he said. “With welding skills, they can go out there and seek a job right away. Our kids need to understand they have value here.”

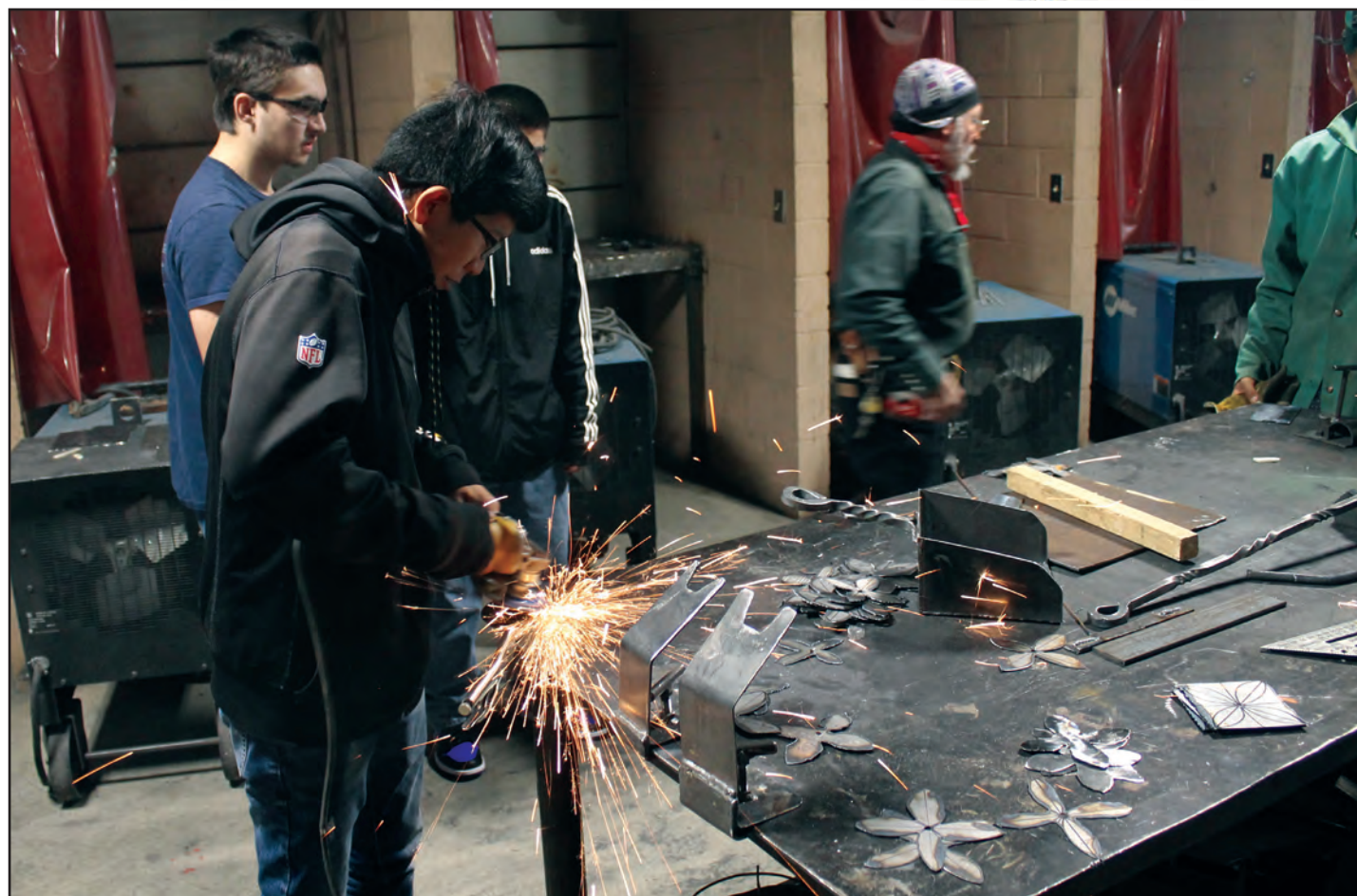
Chavez teaches high school-aged kids and he currently has 37 students in his Welding 1, 2 and 3 classes.

“The students learn the manipulation of steel or metal,” he explained. “We teach mainly steel welding. We start them off with oxygen acetylene and they work their way up to stick welding. We teach MIG welding and if they develop their skills like my seniors do, they get into TIG welding.”

Chavez explained there are many misconceptions about welding just being welding and not incorporating anything else.

“There is actually a lot of science involved in welding,” he said. “The students work with gases, we also teach them engineering and how to build things which requires a lot of math.”

Fabrication is the skill of turning steel into usable products and that is exactly what the students have done. This year, the students worked on sev-



Top: Phoenix Gordo, 14, a freshman student, grinds sheets of metal to create rose petals to complete his metal roses Jan. 29, 2020, in Pat Chavez’s welding class at Cuba High School in Cuba, New Mexico. Bottom: Pat Chavez, welding teacher at Cuba High School.

eral projects that involved drawing out their projects by hand which required precise measurements and using mathematical equations.

“We do a lot,” he added as he showed the various projects his students worked on.

Chavez said the students built several livestock feeders that could be used for horses which they plan to sell.

They also built a metal woodstove for the new traditional Navajo hogan that was built on campus recently.

The woodstove features the initials of the students that built it so they can take credit for it in years to come and they also made an ash shovel for the woodstove. They also built metal work tables and metal carts used in their

shop.

Chavez said he loves working with the students and teaching them these skills.

“I enjoy working with the kids and helping them realize that they have value, that they have a skill and they could make a really good living with it,” he said.

Chavez admitted he is a tough teacher and he has very high standards.

“I don’t let anything go, it has to be to my standard,” he said in reference to the end products his students produce.

Phoenix Gordo, 14, a freshman



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ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego, Ed.D
Superintendent

Dr. Matthew Williams, Ph.D
Assistant Superintendent/Federal Programs Director

Dr. Pedro “Pete” Vallejo, Ph.D
Principal, Cuba High School

Arsenio Jacquez
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Cuba Schools providing a safer learning, working environment with added security

February 11, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — Security is being beefed up at Cuba Independent School District in an effort to provide a safer learning and working environment for students and staff.

If you have been on the campus lately, you will notice a few differences. One noticeable difference is the fencing that is being erected around the entire campus which is about 90 percent complete and is currently under construction.

Another noticeable difference is the locked front doors and you have to be buzzed in by the front office personnel. All staff are also required to wear their identification badges which also allows them to swipe it as a key card to enter buildings across the campus.

Once you get buzzed in, visitors must check-in at the front office where they are required to swipe their driver's license into a new scanning system called Ident-a-kid visitor management. The system instantly reads their name and date of birth, and performs a sexual offender check. The scanner improves the speed of check-in by eliminating the need to manually enter information.

"All schools have the Ident-a-kid system," said Arsenio "Archie" Jacquez, principal of Cuba Middle School who is also designated as the security director for the school district. "The system flags any person that comes in that may have a felony or is not supposed to be around children. If there are any red flags, they will not be allowed into the school."

"The new scanning system has been in place for about a month now," he said. "We just got them installed recently."

As an added layer of security at the school entrances, Jacquez said they are also planning to re-do the front entrances of the school buildings. Right now, when a person gets buzzed in, they go directly to the front office but they also have access to go down the hallways of the schools. To address this, they plan to re-do the front entrance so they go to the front office and they have to be buzzed into the school a second time by the front office personnel only after they have been properly checked-in.

"Those are security precautions that we have and that we have planned," said Jacquez.

Jacquez also explained the school district is also purchasing new radios



TOP: Arsenio Jacquez, principal at Cuba Middle School, demonstrates how the new Ident-a-kid visitor management system works Jan. 29, 2020, at Cuba Middle School. BOTTOM: A visitor's sign displayed on the front door of Cuba Middle School.

that will be stationed at all the schools and for now, certain personnel will carry them until they order more.

"Every custodian will have a radio, every principal, the IT Department and every building will have a radio so that we can all communicate," he said. "We just got a new intercom system installed and the radios will be compatible to the intercom system."

"The goal is for every teacher to have a radio," he said. "We are purchasing them and distributing them in phases right now."

Jacquez said as an example, if a teacher is out within the campus

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SECURITY**





Custodial staff provide a clean, safe and healthy learning environment

February 13, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — The school custodians are the unsung heroes that contribute to student learning by helping to create a clean, safe and healthy learning and working environment for everyone that comes through the school buildings.

Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego commended the custodial and maintenance staff for helping in this effort.

“Maintenance and custodial staff are an integral part of the health and safety of the school district,” she said. “They keep our schools clean and safe. We appreciate all they do for our students and staff. We honor them.” 🐾

From left: Custodians Martin Maestas, Bridget Anderson, Darita Tsosie, Bea Montoya and Tim Rivera.



SECURITY

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and sees suspicious activity, they can quickly notify others instantaneously and lock down the school or campus if needed.

Jacques also explained the school district does not have security officers but they did have some last year. Instead, the school district is planning to hire a full-time SRO or school resource officer. The SRO is usually a

sworn law enforcement officer responsible for the safety and crime prevention at schools.

Lastly, Jacques said they plan to install more cameras at the schools and front office personnel will have access to monitor the cameras.

For now, the security effort is a work in progress and Jacques said it will take time for it to all be in operation and he stressed that it was for the safety of students and staff. 🐾



CHAVEZ

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

student, was using a grinder to grind down some sheets of metal to create metal rose petals to complete his metal roses. There were several he made already sitting on the work table.

“He is practicing with the grinder,” said Chavez. “It helps him learn how to weld.”

Another student, Carl Werito, a freshman, was doing oxygen acetylene welding and preparing some components for another project they are working on.

Chavez also ensures his students understand leveling which is measuring objects horizontally to make sure objects have a flat and even surface. He also teaches them about plumb measurement which measures straight up

and down, which is commonly used to measure the walls of buildings.

“A lot of people don’t know the difference between leveling and plumb, so I teach them,” he said. “I tell them, if you can make this, you can build this building our shop is in. It’s the same principles; it’s just on a grander scale.”

Chavez said his work at Cuba High School is rewarding and he enjoys teaching his students skills that they can take with them onto the workforce.

“It’s confidence—that’s what I teach them,” he said. 🐾

Carl Werito, a freshman welding student, practices his oxygen acetylene welding Jan. 29, 2020, at Cuba High School.



iReady Benchmark Assessment Data shows student gains across school district

February 3, 2020

By Dr. Donna Navarrete

To assess students' academic progress this school year, the Cuba Independent School District (CISD) is using iReady, a computer-based assessment program for monitoring students' progress in reading and mathematics at three different times throughout the school year: fall, winter and spring.

Last September, CISD students in grades K-12 took the first round of the iReady math and reading assessments, followed by a second round of assessments in December 2019. Students are provided with a score after each assessment is completed. For each subject, the score identifies a grade placement level for each student and provides information about how each student is performing relative to expectations set by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Academic Growth

To measure academic growth across the school district, Dr. Donna Navarrete, the high school turnaround specialist, matched and compared students' iReady scores from the September 2019 baseline math and reading assessments to same students' iReady scores earned on December 2019 assessments.

Dr. Navarrete considered any iReady scores that increased in December 2019 by one or more points over September 2019 baseline scores as measures of academic growth. At the beginning of the school year, the CISD set a year-end goal to show 100% academic growth across the entire school district on iReady assessments for both reading and math.

In December 2019, iReady results showed that 64% of all CISD students achieved academic growth in reading while 66% achieved academic growth in math (see figure below).

Cuba Elementary School showed the highest percentages of students who achieved academic growth in reading 79% and math 82% in December 2019, following by Cuba Middle School at 68% and 72%, respectively. The iReady assessment results for Cuba High School, however, showed comparably lower academic growth rate of 49% for both subjects in December 2019.

Unfortunately, the iReady program flagged a significant number of high school students who rushed through their iReady assessments in December 2019, very possibly earning them much lower iReady scores than their true skill level, thereby negatively affecting the high school's overall academic growth rate.

Nonetheless, all CISD schools are continuing to strive to increase academic growth towards the set goal of 100% and are developing new strategies to keep students vested in the measure of their academic growth for the end-of-school iReady assessment term in May 2020.

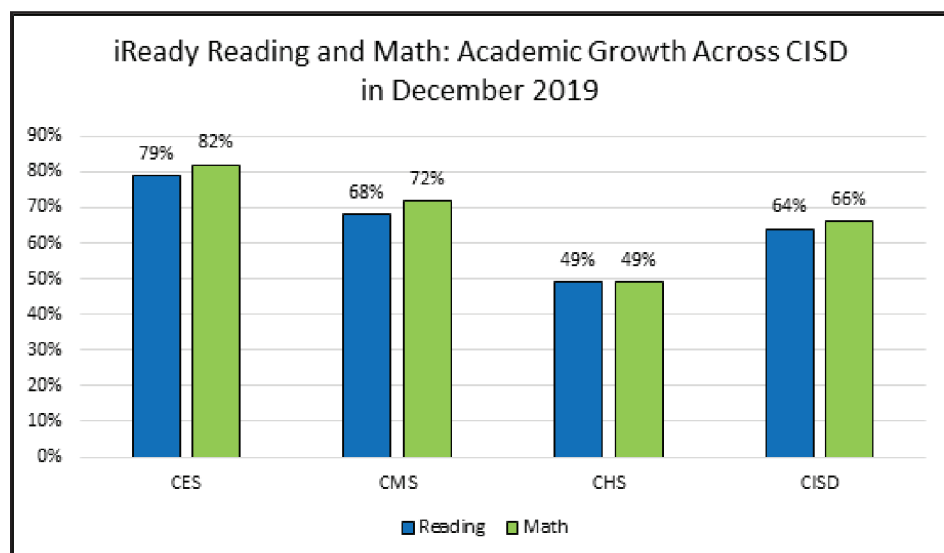


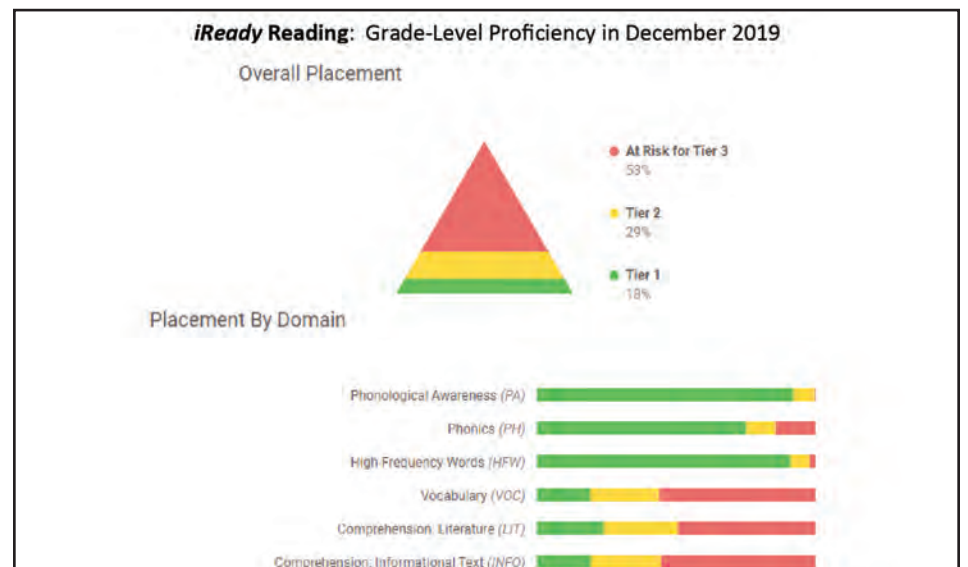
Figure shows the percentage of students in each school and district who earned higher scores (by 1+ points) on iReady reading and math assessments in December 2019 vs. September 2019.

Grade Level Proficiency in Reading

An iReady score also identifies a grade placement level by tiers for each student, where Tier 1 is on or above grade level (proficient), Tier 2 is one grade level below, and Tier 3 is two or more grade levels below.

The iReady graph below, for reading, represents the overall grade placement in December 2019 for the entire CISD, where 18% of students are at Tier 1, 29% of students are at Tier 2 and the majority (53%) of students are at risk for Tier 3.

The bar chart below indicates CISD students' grade placement level according to six reading domains. Three reading domains with the highest percentages of CISD students at Tier 1 (proficient) are phonological awareness (92%), phonics (75%) and high-frequency words (91%); reading domains with the lowest percentages at Tier 1 (proficient) are vocabulary (19%), literature comprehension (24%) and comprehension of informational text (19%).

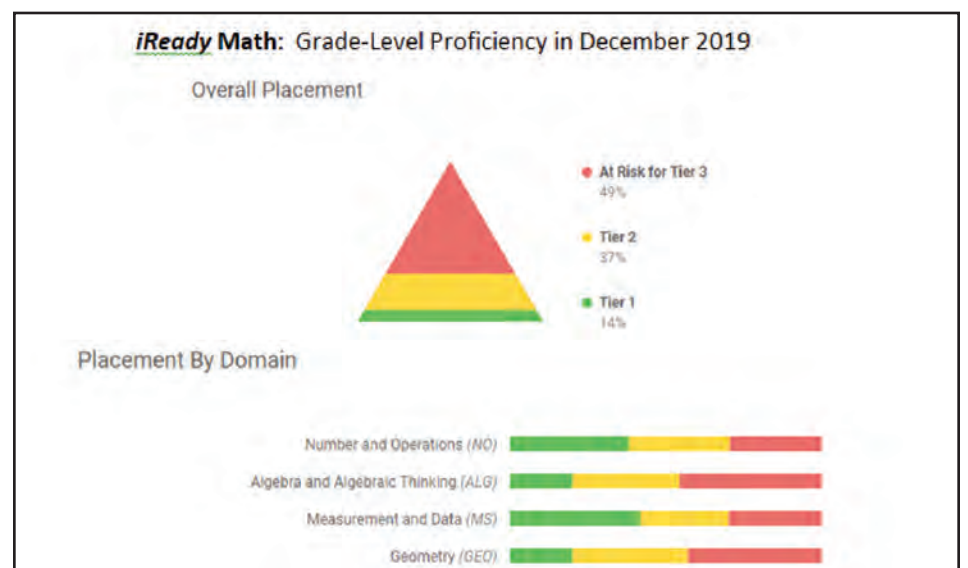


Grade Level Proficiency in Math

As stated above, an iReady score identifies a grade placement level by tiers for each student, where Tier 1 is on or above grade level (proficient), Tier 2 is one grade level below, and Tier 3 is two or more grade levels below.

The iReady graph below for math represents the overall grade placement in December 2019 for the entire CISD, where 14% of students are at Tier 1, 37% of students are at Tier 2 and the majority (49%) of students are at risk for Tier 3.

The bar chart below indicates CISD students' grade placement level according to four math domains. Two math domains with the highest percentages of CISD students at Tier 1 (proficient) are numbers and operations (38%), and measurement and data (42%); the two remaining math domains have the lowest percentages of CISD students at Tier 1 (proficient): algebra and algebraic thinking (20%) and geometry (20%).





February 5, 2020

A Message from the Indian Education Department

The Indian Education Department at Cuba Independent School District is excited to announce they will begin their community engagement work in the month of February.

Through the Indigenous Education Initiative from the New Mexico Public Education Department, we have been given the opportunity to collaborate with our communities to create a school environment that is student-centered. We strive to, not only inform our community of this amazing opportunity, but we want them to be involved in this opportunity with us.

During this three-year venture, we want to hear from our students, staff, parents, and community members. We will be hosting events in the communities of Torreon, Rincon Marquez, Ojo Encino, Counselor, and at our schools in Cuba.

Traditionally in all cultures, the best way to bring people together and discuss important matters is to break bread around a table. Therefore, we will be in our communities to come together, hear your voices, and we will be providing food at these events.

The events will be held at public community centers, such as chapter houses or senior citizen centers. The dates and times will be determined by tribal officials in your area.

We welcome all community members to join us, whether you have children who attend Cuba Independent School District or not. However, please be prepared to discuss with us your ideas of education and how we can make our school system better for our children. We are fluent in Navajo and welcome any and all ideas—so don't be shy!

Future dates and locations will be announced so please tune in to KNDN, check our CISD website, Facebook page, or marquee in the middle of Cuba, NM. Also, please subscribe to our text messaging service to keep up-to-date on all events at CISD!

Ahé'hee', we look forward to meeting with you!

Cuba Independent School District Indian Education Department

cuba.k12.nm.us



Lavern Wagner, new Transformational Community Engagement Coordinator

February 12, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — Lavern Wagner was recently promoted to the Transformational Community Engagement Coordinator for the Cuba Independent School District.

In her new position, Wagner will facilitate and coordinate a robust community-led engagement design process with a focus on building relationships with nearby communities Rincon Marquez, Torreon, Ojo Encino, Counselor and Cuba.

Her goals are to help increase positive student academic and social outcomes; help increase readiness for college, career and life; and encourage committed and involved communities, tribes and families.

"I am enthusiastic about my new role because I will have the opportunity to work with the whole student population, pre-K to 12th grades," she said.

"A beautiful African proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child,' is a reminder that it is important for our communities to participate and interact with the education of children," she said. "So that they experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment to reach their highest potential, and by working together, we can make a meaningful contribution to their success."

Wagner said she looks forward to working with everyone to help build a strong networking system.

"Come out and let's have a cup of coffee," she said. 

Lady Rams remain positive as basketball season winds down

February 10, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — The Cuba High School Lady Rams are winding down their season and are looking forward to post district action.

As of Feb. 11, the Lady Rams are 1-4 in district play and 6-11 overall.

Gilbert Dominguez, head coach for the Lady Rams and a health/P.E. teacher at Cuba High School, explained he has 10 girls on his roster this year and a majority of them are juniors and sophomores with only four seniors.

At the time of the interview with Dominguez, the Lady Rams were right in the middle of district play.

“Our season has been up and down due to various factors, some of them weather-related, some of them personnel issues,” he said.

Dominguez explained this year’s team is very young but they are very hard-working.

“They like to play,” he said. “They enjoy playing the game and they come to work every day and they come to practice and play hard during the games.”

Dominguez said the toughest game of the season thus far was the Estancia game because of the tragedy of the passing of one of their students on Dec. 16 who was a good friend to many of the players.

“We were just trying to bring everybody back together,” he said. “That was the hardest game for us.”

Aleisha Keith, a junior and captain of the team, agreed the Estancia game was one of the toughest for them. The other tough game was against Zuni High School on Jan. 14 which they lost 51-47.

“It was a close game against Zuni, we lost by four points and they are a pretty good team,” said Keith.

Despite the challenges and tough match-ups, Keith remains positive for the remainder of the season and is enjoying her time with her teammates.

“My teammates are great, they are all very good at basketball,” she said.

“They know what to do, we like to have fun, and we hang out on and off the floor. It’s a fun season... it’s good.”

“We are going to have a good finish at the end,” she added.



Aleisha Keith, junior and team captain of the Lady Rams, and Coach Gilbert Dominguez chat about the season and the tough match-ups ahead.

Dominguez praised his team and said he has a great group of girls on the basketball team this season.

port and I hope to see you at the game and we’ll be ready to play,” he said. 🐺

“Thanks to everyone for their sup-

Sports Roundup with Bruce Hatch

February 10, 2020

CUBA, N.M. — Winter sports at Cuba Independent School District is slowly winding down as basketball teams complete their seasons.

Bruce Hatch, athletic director at Cuba Schools, explained basketball began in the fall with fifth and sixth graders, and now the seventh and eighth graders and high school levels are now playing.

He said the middle school basketball season concluded right after Christmas when the middle school girls played at the Striking Eagle Basketball Tournament where they received second place.

“The Middle School girls ended their season on a really good high note,” said Hatch. “They had a lot of girls out participating this year.”

As for the middle school boys, they started their season at the Striking Eagle Basketball Tournament where they went 1-2 but have since found their stride and are doing much better right now.

“The middle school boys have lost only one other game since the tournament,” said Hatch. “So they are doing a really good job right now—they have a

bunch of good kids playing.”

On the high school side, the high school girls are having a back-and-forth season trying to find their groove.

“The high school girls have lost a couple of games due to weather and they were not able to be rescheduled,” he said.

The high school JV girls had a really good season.

“They have only lost a couple of games and they have done a tremendous job building that program for the future,” said Hatch.

For the boys, Hatch explained the high school C-Team has only played six or seven games thus far because they are having a hard time finding games for them to play but they continue to try and secure games for them.

The high school boys’ basketball JV team, like the girls JV team, is playing well.

“The JV boys are having a really good season and are doing a really good job,” said Hatch. “They are win-

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SPORTS**



(Photos by Alejandro Ortega)



SPORTS

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ning most of their games and they are not even close games.”

The varsity boys' basketball team is doing well.

“The varsity boys' record is not as good as their team is,” said Hatch.

“The boys have played a lot of upper division opponents and their record now sits at 8-10 but more importantly, their district record is 3-0.”

As of Feb. 11, the varsity boy's record was 4-1 in district and 10-11 overall.

Hatch explained the varsity boys went to top-rated team Bosque High School Jan. 23 and beat them at their place 80-74.

“We also just came off a win last night against Laguna Acoma High School in Laguna,” said Hatch about the 76-69 overtime win against Laguna Acoma on Jan. 28. “Right now, even if the record doesn't show it, the boys and the girls are really playing good

basketball and are making that push to get into the state playoffs.”

“We have to finish well in district play and do well in the district tournament,” added Hatch. “Both boys and girls teams are looking good right now at qualifying for the state tournament.”

Hatch said the district tournament is always played at the higher seed and so the teams will finish strong and their seeding will determine if they get a home game or not.

“So right now, it looks like the boys and girls should earn at least one game at home and then from there, it depends on who wins here and there,” he said.

Hatch said one huge highlight this season was the varsity girls winning the Cuba Invitational Tournament and the varsity boys finishing as runner-ups.

The district tournament is scheduled Feb. 24, 26, and 28 for the girls' teams and Feb. 25, 27, and 29 for the boys' teams. 🐏



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