



For Immediate Release
March 25th, 2021
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**Joint Statement by SFPS Superintendent Dr. Veronica C. Garcia and
NEA-Santa Fe President Ms. Grace Mayer**

Santa Fe, NM - SFPS and NEA-Santa Fe have agreed to a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is in the best interest of all students and faculty/staff and complies with new directives issued by the Governor and the Secretary of Education. The MOU is due to ever-changing knowledge and evolving science regarding COVID-19 and changed guidance and directives from the NM Public Education Department.

“This is a win-win for all parties, but the real winners are the students who will be able to return to in-person instruction. We’ve really upped our game to ensure everyone’s health and safety are prioritized,” said Superintendent Dr. Veronica C. Garcia. “It’s so exciting to bring our students more fully back to campus; we’ve missed them. I’m pleased that we were able to arrive at an amicable agreement and thank Grace Mayer, NEA-Santa Fe president, for her willingness to work toward a fair and legal resolution and Deputy Superintendent Linda Sink for her assistance.

“Like in many districts, district staff and substitute teachers will fill in until staff who are fully vaccinated return on April 19th. KN-95 masks and face shields will be provided to any staff member who wants one. In addition to appropriate ventilation and filtration, the district is providing air purifiers and fans as an extra layer of protection,” she said.

Ms. Mayer added, “Employee and student safety have been a priority for NEA-Santa Fe throughout this process. Educators are eager to return to in-person teaching and learning and meet our students face to face. As professionals, we have met the many challenges of remote learning and will continue to persevere through the new circumstances that lay ahead of us.”

Major elements of the MOU are as follows:

- With K-12 school employees prioritized to receive the vaccine, staff have had ample opportunity to receive their first dose over the last month. Both parties agree that all staff who are fully vaccinated and those who have chosen to not to be vaccinated will return to campus on Tuesday, April 6th.

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- Those who have taken their first dose and are awaiting their second dose will have until Monday, April 19th to return to school. They must show supervisors their immunization card certifying that they have received their first dose.
- All employees will be afforded the option to have their Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation individually reviewed under the new guidance provided to districts. Staff may use the current medical documentation on file with the Human Resources Department to reaffirm their accommodation request.
- On Wednesday, March 31st, all educators and staff will prepare their classrooms and/or offices for the return of students.
- All employees covered under the NEA-Santa Fe bargaining unit will receive a one-time \$1,000 retention payment by no later than April 30th, if budget authority is approved by the Board of Education at its April 1st meeting.
- All educational assistants will be paid \$50 per day, in addition to their hourly rate of pay, if they are left alone to supervise students in a class.

Surveys of staff and students (via their families) show that between 60-80% (variation by school) are ready to be back in person on April 6th.

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Title IX Coordinator- 2195 W. Zia Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87505, Tel. 505-467-3400

Section 504 Coordinator- 1300 Camino Sierra Vista, Santa Fe, NM 87505 Tel. 505-467-2527