

# Local Wisdom for Local Schools

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A vision for the future



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## ABSTRACT

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This report highlights key milestones and work areas of the New Mexico Center for School Leadership (the Center). The Center is a New Mexico nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the educational landscape with input from those who have the most at stake in the success of our communities, including students, families, community members, and business leaders. The Center's work—comprised of technical assistance to schools, incubation of new schools, and policy advocacy—makes the case that education must be personalized to meet the needs of 21st century students. The Center's work is grounded in two core philosophies: local wisdom for local schools, or the understanding that local communities are assets in designing schools that support students to succeed in a fast-changing world; and a three-pillar model of learning by doing, community engagement, and student support to guide student success. This unique approach combining a three-pillar model with local wisdom is shaping the education landscape for impactful, engaging learning for every single student.



## A Note from the Executive Director

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Dear Friends,

Five years ago we established a vision to provide the best education for the students who need it the most. Troubling graduation rates, disengagement, and stark workforce-development challenges indicated a great need in our community for highly impactful, relevant schools that prepare our youth for their future. Over the past years the New Mexico Center for School Leadership has partnered with school, community, and business leaders to identify solutions to some of our state's most pressing challenges.

The New Mexico Center for School Leadership has its roots in the Leadership High School Network. We were launched from within ACE Leadership High School, and our proximity to real-time learning and every day engagement with students, teachers, and administrators has been essential to our development and practice. We are inspired every day by our colleagues and our goal is to contribute in fundamental ways to creating great schools in our community.

In 2015 the Center transitioned to become an independent 501 (c)3. Through this transition we are committed to building the capacity of the Leadership High School Network, helping to create deeper and more meaningful connections among member schools, teachers and administrators, and broadening our work to share expertise with school leaders outside of the Leadership High School Network. We are thrilled to see that there is so much pent up demand for new solutions to persistent problems, and we are confident our approach is a critical component of our local solution.

The original vision for charter schools was that they would inspire innovation in the traditional system; we are thrilled to have the chance to do just that in the coming years. As we go forward, we promise to continue creating solutions that work backward from the experiences of our communities, the business sector, and our partners. We are breaking a cycle, in which yesterday's solutions are applied to today's problems.

I hope you will continue to support our efforts as we go forward building bridges between traditional and charter schools, employers and educators, and schools and communities. This is thrilling work and we are honored to be a part of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Monfietto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tony" and last name "Monfietto" clearly legible.

Tony Monfietto

## Lay of the Land

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We are at the beginning of a change in thinking about schools; the community is searching for answers to some of our most vexing problems. Faced with challenges such as slow economic growth, high unemployment, and taxing realities for our communities' health, the New Mexico Center for School Leadership is dedicated to exploring how schools can be re-imagined to adapt to and meet the dynamic needs of our communities.

New Mexico is one region where high school completion and transition into college and careers is an especially difficult path; in 2014 31.5% of our state's young people did not graduate from high school, according to the New Mexico Public Education Department.<sup>1</sup>

The Center seeks to bridge this gap by fostering school and policy environments that provide New Mexico students with excellent educational opportunities that are relevant, rigorous, engaging, and most importantly, that prepare them for their future. The Center convenes leaders across the educational and business spectrum to contribute to the development of the Leadership High School Network, to transform the policy environment to enable the best education for the students who need it the most, and to provide high quality technical assistance and professional development to educators who can be catalysts for change in New Mexico.



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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer C. Kerr "High school graduation rates data released," Albuquerque Journal, October 19, 2015, <http://www.abqjournal.com/662179/news/most-states-but-not-nm-show-increase-in-high-school-graduation-rates.html>.

# Center Timeline

## The beginning.

New Mexico Building Branch of the Associated General Contractors (AGC) reaches out to develop a strategy to solve their workforce pipeline issues. Workforce needs became the seed from which the Center's three-pillar model and the Leadership High School Network grew.

## School leader in residence program begins.

The Center begins the school leader in residence program with the future leader of Health Leadership High School.

## New Metrics Initiative launches.

The McCune Charitable Foundation provides funding to implement a work group to develop new metrics to accurately measure school and student success.

## Health Leadership High School opens!

"We feel confident that the graduates of Health Leadership High School will be well-rounded, and community-grounded young people who know more about health and what it means to be a community health leader than most people coming out of college and vocational training programs. We will be lucky to hire graduates who have already made a difference in their community through HLHS."

### Michelle Melendez

Fund Development Director  
First Choice Community Healthcare  
Industry Partner, Health Leadership High School

2008

2009

2010

2011

## ACE Leadership High School's charter approved.

The New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC) approves ACE (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) Leadership High School.

## ACE Leadership High School opens!

Seed funds from AGC New Mexico Building Branch, the Daniels Fund, the McCune Charitable Foundation, and Partners for Developing Futures support the launch of the school.

## School replication begins.

The WK Kellogg Foundation makes a seed gift to begin replicating schools and to fund the NM Center for School Leadership. First grant funds the Center Director and School Leader in Residence Positions and helps plan and incubate Health Leadership High School, thus expanding the Leadership High School Network to two schools.

## The Center convenes its first local design summit for Health Leadership High School.

In partnership with national experts, the Center hosts a two-day long design summit with local health professionals, educators, and community leaders to create a health (industry) framework that can be applied to the three-pillar model for the Health Leadership School to respond to unprecedented changes in the healthcare industry.

## Health Leadership High School's charter approved.

The New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC) approves Health Leadership High School.



**The Center launches policy advocacy work.**

In partnership with ACE Leadership High School and UNM, the Center presents to the Legislative Education Study Committee on performance assessment and introduces legislation to fund research on performance assessment.

The Center and ACE Leadership High School convene a group of legislators, state education officials, employers, and students to present policy options around creating alternative performance assessment.

**The Center convenes design summits for Technology Leadership High School.**

In partnership with national experts the Center convenes two daylong design summits to respond to the shortage of technology professionals locally and nationally. The Center convenes local tech professionals, educators, and community leaders to create a technology (industry) framework.

**Technology Leadership High School's charter approved.**

The New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC) approves Technology Leadership High School.

**School leader in residence program begins for Technology Leadership High School.**

The Center hires future school leader for Technology Leadership for a one-year residency.

**New Metrics work continues.**

Work group develops indicators for successful school learning.

2012

2013

2014

2015

**The Center convenes design summit for Siembra Leadership High School.**

In partnership with national experts, the Center convenes a daylong design summit with local entrepreneurs, educators, and community leaders to create an entrepreneurship industry framework that can be applied to the three-pillar model for Siembra Leadership High School.

**School leader in residence program begins for Siembra Leadership High School.**

The Center hires future Siembra school leader for a one-year residency.

**The New Mexico Center for School Leadership becomes independent 501(c)3.**

**Technology Leadership High School Opens!**

**Siembra Leadership High School charter is approved.**

Albuquerque Public School Board approves new Leadership High School.

"This marks a great opportunity for our city to build relevant and exciting learning opportunities for our students. At Siembra Leadership High School we will focus on entrepreneurship as a growing sector in our city and provide students who otherwise might be disengaged from their education with the skills and support they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. It is such an honor to have the opportunity to open a school like this in the heart of the South Valley, my home."

Moises Padilla  
School Leader in Residence  
NM Center for School Leadership

# The Three Pillar Model and Personalized Learning

Imagine how much stronger our schools and communities will be when we consult our local experts—from employers, to parents and students, to civic and nonprofit leaders—to help work backward from the some of the most challenging dilemmas our communities face.

This is where the Center begins its work:

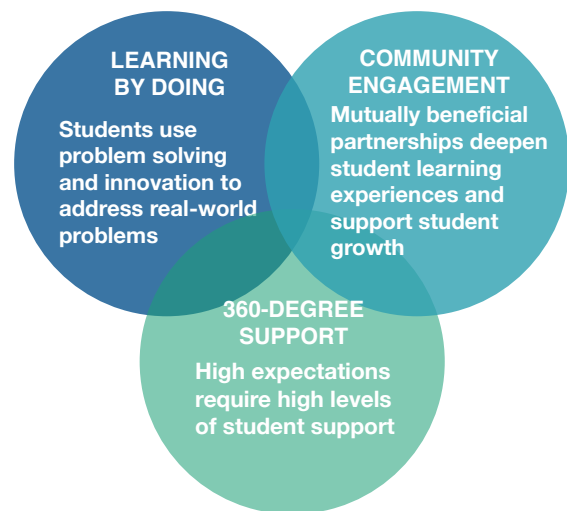
## Local Wisdom for Local Schools

Local wisdom is the accumulation of experiences that are used in daily life and are transmitted from generation to generation. The Center believes that communities are experts in their own experiences and needs, and that an understanding of local wisdom is essential to creating relevant, long-term educational solutions that work.

## The Three-Pillar Model

The three-pillar model was drawn from a variety of schools and community based youth development models; it represents the synthesis of research around what works for youth across the country. This model combines learning by doing, 360-degree student support, and community engagement to create a dynamic, personalized approach to student learning that meets students where they are at and prepares them to positively impact their community.

While these pillars are often a subtext in some of the best schools, the Center has made them explicit to its educational theory. Student well being and advancement is everyone's responsibility. We hope to make the pillars a more prominent part of school design. The power of this model is exponential when social workers, teachers, and community engagement professionals work across boundaries and collaborate to meet the individual needs of students.



“Eagle Rock’s mission is to increase high school student engagement nationally. We choose to work with other mission-focused organizations whose practice holds the most hope for student reengagement. The Center has a unique model of engaging the most important stakeholders in developing schools where students thrive. The Center engages students and families, community members, and employers in school design from the ground up, and strives to harvest local wisdom to develop solutions that work best for New Mexico. Eagle Rock similarly works with local wisdom through our asset based facilitation model.”

**Michael Soguero**

Director, Professional Development  
Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center



## Learning By Doing



### Students use problem solving and innovation to address real-world problems

Learning by doing, also known as project-based or hands-on learning, promotes deep thinking and problem-solving skills, developing students' nuanced ability to engage in lifelong learning. Learning by doing keeps schools on the cutting edge of education; curriculum is adaptable, relevant, and always student-focused, and student learning is demonstrated through a variety of performance assessments as opposed to traditional "grading."



"Kids are just like adults. We learn and master things if we're looking for it, if we want to learn it—like how to change a tire or how to bake cookies. You learn [the skill] and you master it as much as you can because it is useful and applicable in your life."

**Lucy Alfonso**  
Project Teacher at ACE Leadership High School



## 360-degree Student Support

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### High expectations require high levels of student support

The 360-degree student support pillar recognizes that students have diverse needs that, when unmet, may interfere with learning and overall wellbeing. This approach takes into account students' mental and physical health needs, including fitness and nutrition, to ensure they are at their best each day. This pillar ensures that positive youth development practices are deployed, so that each institution has high academic expectations while maintaining school environments and cultures that are physically and emotionally nurturing for students.



"We're highly visible and we're available to students. We're constantly walking around during passing periods, we're with them in class, we're involved in the morning workout, we're greeting students when they come in the door, we do lunch duty... So we're constantly visible in case a student needs us."

**Steve Sanchez**  
Student Support at ACE Leadership High School

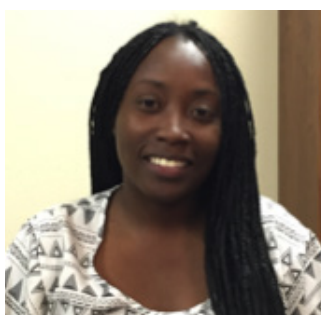


## Community Engagement

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Creating and leveraging mutually beneficial partnerships to deepen student learning experiences

The underlying intent of community engagement is to shift the dialogue from speaking about what others should do, to speaking about what we, as a community, can create. The community engagement pillar is responsible for creating and leveraging mutually beneficial partnerships that are attentive to community and school needs, while working to prepare young people for a prosperous future. This pillar is designed so that community partners share their expertise and resources to support teachers and the school curriculum, while student involvement in the community allows students to participate in authentic learning experiences, to build their reputations, and to develop the skills and character necessary to become successful leaders in their communities and in their future professions. Ultimately, this approach supports communities to be more connected, integrated, and better places to live.



“Individuals are eager to work with our students and that’s awesome. It is amazing when you can rely on and work side-by-side with community partners to support the educational experiences of students.”

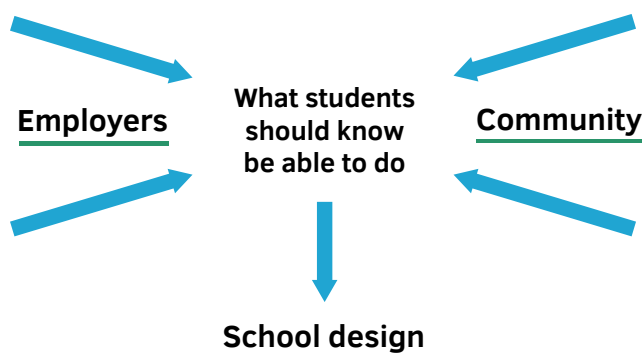
**Moneka Stevens-Cordova**  
Community Engagement Director at Health Leadership High School

# Incubating New Schools

The New Mexico Center for School Leadership's work is shaping the education landscape in New Mexico through the careful incubation of new Leadership High School Network schools.

## The Center's incubation process, step-by-step:

- 1.)** Convene the community and identify the workforce and community development needs. The Center begins by asking community members to share their vision for the future. They ask community members what skills and abilities students need to succeed upon graduation. This approach helps tap into the local wisdom and ensure responsive design.
- 2.)** Determine the industry focus for the new school. The Center work with local employers to create projects that give young people the experiences they need to develop the leadership skills of the future.
- 3.)** Apply the three-pillar model. All Leadership High School Network schools are designed with the common thread of the three-pillar model, taking into account local wisdom and community vision. The model is adapted so that it is customized to an industry such as technology or construction, or a community like the South Valley or the International District.
- 4.)** Hire new school leader for residency at the Center for School Leadership. The Center works directly with the School Leader in Residence to co-develop and submit the new school charter.
- 5.)** Open school and provide ongoing support. The incoming school leader is coached through the critical path to opening new school—including hiring, curriculum development, board development, facilities acquisition, student recruitment, etc. Ongoing professional support is provided by the Center and its partners.



"If we did not have the fundraising [assistance], Tech Leadership High School would not exist. The Center was able to use their background knowledge about what amount needed to be raised and the best educational foundations that would support the school."

**Kara Cortazzo**  
Executive Director Tech Leadership High School

"In writing the charter for Siembra Leadership High School, the Center created linkages between academic standards and real-world challenges in entrepreneurship, embedding career development and motivation deeply into the school culture and curriculum."

**Moises Padilla**  
School Leader in Residence NM Center for School Leadership



# Improving Practice Through Networks

## The Leadership High School Network

The Leadership High School Network (LHSN) is a network of cutting-edge, industry-focused schools in Albuquerque. It is deliberately built on the three-pillar model and is rooted in deep intellectual rigor and relevancy. Leadership High Schools are dynamic and flexible to provide customized solutions to the individual needs of students. Leadership High Schools maintain high retention rates; young people are engaged in school because projects are connected to the community and they are supported to take healthy intellectual risks. Leadership High Schools target the 40% of students who are currently underserved or not served by the traditional public school system.

The Center's ultimate goal is to create and support Leadership High Schools that serve more than 2,000 students through partnerships with the most robust local employment sectors. All of these schools are rooted in disenfranchised communities and they will be a bridge to prosperity for the students and their families. The Center facilitates professional development and networking among each Leadership High School to propel innovation and ensure best practice, impactful learning, and better outcomes.

“There is emerging research about the collaborative power of people and networks. The whole world is moving away from top-down structures and decision-making. We are realizing the power of convening people with similar values and similar goals to propel innovation in education. The Center is committed to growing networks in New Mexico.”

Justin Trager  
Director of School Networks Center for School Leadership

**“Troubling graduation rates that have persisted statewide between 60 and 70 percent over the past decade are one indicator of the challenge we face in preparing students for college and careers in New Mexico.”**

## Growing a Network of Schools

The Center is expanding its network to include traditional public schools and other charter schools to bring people together and facilitate cross-learning that encourages best practice and impactful schools. This work convenes educators who are committed to personalized learning to share and grow educational practice. The approach is rooted in the Center's three-pillar model, and in getting the right people in the room to work together and encourage education transformation across our city and our state.

Some of the initial projects in the Center's expanded network include working with Atrisco Heritage Academy to create a project for their freshman learning community, and working with traditional high schools across the state to develop highly impactful Senior Capstone Projects. Both initiatives are focused on responding to community needs.

# The New Metrics Initiative

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Across the country and throughout New Mexico, people are recognizing that standardized tests alone are incapable of assessing or encouraging the sophisticated learning needed to succeed in the future. They emphasize a narrow skill set that does not promote adaptability, complex thinking, problem solving, and other critical 21st century skills.

With support from the McCune Charitable Foundation, the New Mexico Center for School Leadership is spearheading a local work group to develop new and rigorous alternative metrics that measure student growth and preparation for the future.

The Center has convened education experts and leaders to develop new metrics to measure authentic student achievement and 21st century skills. Our partners in this initiative include the Leadership High School Network and seven additional schools (South Valley Academy, Amy Biehl High School, Media Arts Charter School, Albuquerque Sign Language Academy, Atrisco Heritage Academy and Nex+Gen Academy).

The initiative began in 2013 with six schools and expanded to ten in 2015. The work group has developed collective design principles that are essential components to high quality schools. In addition, the group is creating indicators that will demonstrate and track the application of design principles in schools. These principles and indicators express a different vision and a higher standard for what our students should be able to achieve and also suggest a new approach to measuring student achievement. This is about creating more thrilling, impactful learning for students.



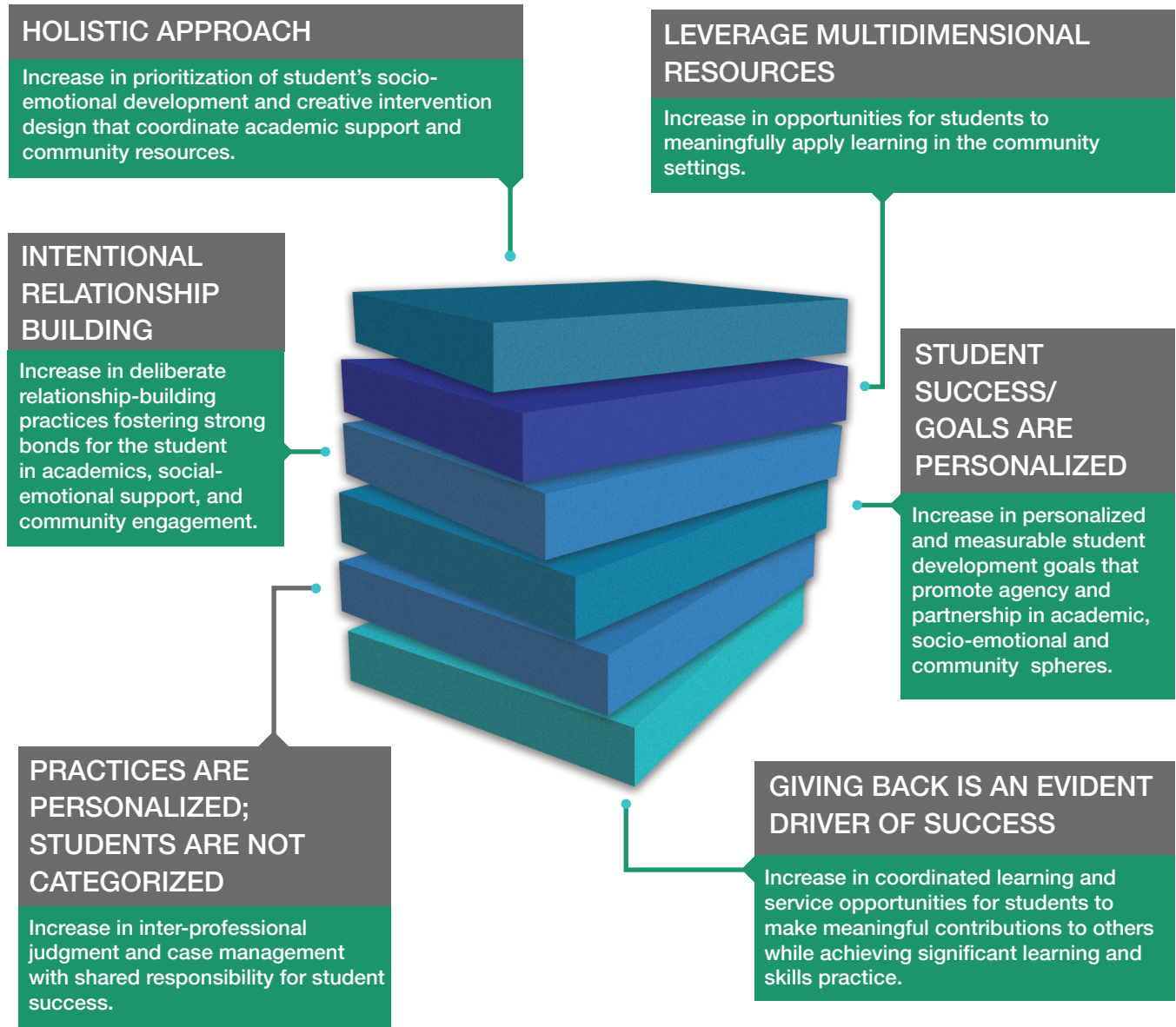
“Evaluation of innovative work requires new measurement tools. For innovative schools to continue, they need to be held accountable, and acknowledged, for the nuanced and personalized work they do for their communities. The new metrics work includes looking thoughtfully and critically at the student, teacher and school level in a way that allows for the most enduring work of community engagement, performance assessment and social/emotional support to be held up equally to academic success. The Center worked with McCune to gather their portfolio of schools to begin the work. The Center also brought in the main facilitator of the new metrics work.”

**Tori Stephens-Shauger**

Co-Founder, Executive Director and Principal  
ACE Leadership High School



# Design Principles and Indicators



# Who We Are

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## Catalysts for Change and Innovation in Schools

The New Mexico Center for School Leadership is comprised of a large network. Below you will see a list of staff, board and the consultants who support building schools that respond to the needs of local communities.

### Center Staff:

**Tony Monfiletto**, Executive Director

**Moises Padilla**, School Leader in Residence, Center for School Leadership and Executive Director of Siembra Leadership High School

**Justin Trager**, Director of School Networks

**Mistie Gallegos**, School Development Manager

**Laurel Meister**, Intern

### Center Board:

**Kathy Davis**, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Presbyterian Healthcare Services

**Shannon Groves**, Senior Health Policy Analyst, Blue Cross Blue Shield New Mexico

**Shad James**, President and COO, Jaynes Corporation

**Elizabeth Kistin-Keller**, Sandia National Laboratories (Advisory)

**Wendy Lewis**, Executive Director, McCune Charitable Foundation (Advisory)

**Michelle Melendez**, Fund Development Director, First Choice Community Health

**John Mierzwa**, Director of STEMulus Initiatives, CNM's STEMulus Center

**JoAnne Newton**, Vice President, External Affairs and Customer Services, PNM Resources

**Adrian Pedroza**, Executive Director, Partnership for Community Action

**Mike Puelle**, Chief Executive Officer, Associated General Contractors

**Center Consultants:** Larry Myatt, Co-founder of the Education Resources Consortium; Michael Soguero, Director of Professional Development, and Dan Condon, Associate Director at the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center; Tim Kubik, Kubik Perspectives; Everette Hill, Social Innovation Strategies Group

# Community Consensus

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## School Must Personalize Instruction to Meet Students' Needs

By Tony Monfiletto

Over the past year the Center for School Leadership has worked with four different local entities that are also wrestling with our city's education challenges: Mission Graduate, the Albuquerque Living Cities Integration Initiative, the Learning Alliance of New Mexico, and the Hispanic Education Act Council. Like the Center, each sees young people as an asset to be nurtured in order to create more prosperous and healthy communities. All of these groups are pushing the boundaries of our current conception of school. Each is asking for a more embedded role for families, employers, and community agencies to engage with young people and help them to become contributors to the health and prosperity of our city. While it is remarkable that the conversations are so similar, it has also become abundantly clear that the pathway to long-term prosperity is through developing our young people.

How did it happen that these initiatives ended up with the same basic theory? I think it's in our nature. We live in a community that is poor in resources but rich in relationships. We grew up in a place where young people really are the future because we all know that no one is going to save us. We offer our help and look to each other for solutions because we know our futures are intertwined.

The time is now for us to bring concrete initiatives to school districts and the state. The recommendations should be concrete and rooted in changing the way we all interact with schools and the way that school interacts with the community. It will mean local wisdom being deployed to shape the experiences of students. It will mean adults outside of the school collaborating with teachers and principals to shape what students learn, how and where they learn, and from whom. It will mean "remodeling" our schools to accommodate a new group of collaborators who are passionate about young people and our community's future. It will mean change, and we hope you'll join us.

We hope you'll join us →

# THANK YOU

## to Steadfast Supporters

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**We could not do our work without you!**

Funders: WK Kellogg Foundation, Daniels Fund, McCune Charitable Foundation, PNM Foundation, Pyramid Peak Foundation, and Eagle Rock Center for Professional Development (in-kind support)

Industry Partners: Associated General Contractors of New Mexico, First Choice Community Healthcare, Maestas and Ward, PNM, Sandia National Labs



“As a major employer and leading philanthropic organization in our state, PNM is committed to the vitality of the communities we serve. We believe in investing in efforts to develop local talent and drive future workforce readiness [...] PNM has been engaged in supporting schools in the Albuquerque area and around our state for many years. We understand the unique challenges and opportunities represented in our communities and we believe that LHSN schools will provide an important option for children and families. We offer our strongest support.”

**JoAnn Newton**

Vice President, External Affairs and Customer  
Services PNM



“School reform is a vital area of interest for the McCune Foundation in New Mexico and we are happy to support initiatives like the New Mexico Center for School Leadership with our philanthropy.”

**Wendy Lewis**

Executive Director  
McCune Charitable Foundation



# Join the Movement

## Participate in education transformation!



### Visit us!

Visit a school, judge an exhibition, collaborate on a community-based project. Email us to schedule a visit:

[tony@leadership-pdc.org](mailto:tony@leadership-pdc.org).



### Stay Informed:

Sign up for our email list. Visit our website [leadership-pdc.org](http://leadership-pdc.org) to sign up for our newsletter.



### Advocate:

Join us in advocating for change with your school board member, legislator, Secretary of Education, and Governor.



### Donate:

When you invest in the Center, you can rest assured that your contribution is improving education in New Mexico for all. To make a tax-deductible contribution, send a check to the New Mexico Center for School Leadership, 200 Broadway Blvd NE, Albuquerque NM 87102. Every dollar helps.

**NEW MEXICO  
CENTER FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**  
BRINGING CHANGE THROUGH NETWORKING & REDESIGN

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