



# Los Alamos Public Schools

P.O. Box 90  
2075 Trinity Drive  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### New Instructional Coaches Support LAPS Teachers

At the most recent Los Alamos Public Schools' board meeting, the new LAPS Instructional Coaches presented an overview of how they are supporting teachers as they plan and deliver effective lessons to students at LAPS. The coaches, Nila Montoya, Sharon Fogle, Kati Steinberg, and Leslie Clark, explained the role of their team and highlighted a few of their accomplishments since the start of the school year.



The coaching model is not new to the district; it's been done before in different ways. The program has now evolved into a team of four instructional coaches that each have a specific but unified role in supporting teachers. Their role, which reflects the focus areas of Teacher/Staff Well-Being and Excellence as well as Student Learning in the LAPS Strategic Plan, is to assist teachers in a variety of ways throughout the district.

The coaches created a 'menu' to share with teachers as a fun and easy way to digest the variety of services they offer. The menu includes 'entrées' such as co-planning lessons, technology support, classroom management, instructional resources, team building, conferencing, embedded professional development and much more.

One way the coaches support teachers is by helping them reflect on their lessons and instructional practices, which are components of NMTech, New Mexico's teacher evaluation program. Fogle recalled collaborating with a teacher to develop a lesson for one of her annual observations. Together they reviewed the evaluation rubric and strategically incorporated "highly effective" strategies into the lesson plan. Because of the teacher's knowledge and skills, she was able to deliver a successful lesson that raised her evaluation scores to the next level. But more importantly, the teacher received positive feedback from her students and saw that they were more engaged and enthusiastic during the lesson. Based on this experience, this teacher's attitude about the teacher evaluation process has changed for the better. "She now feels empowered to make better instructional decisions," said Fogle.

Another aspect of the coaches' support is embedded professional development, which is working alongside teachers during the school day to plan and teach together in order to practice and implement new strategies in the classroom. When professional development is delivered outside of the classroom setting, many teachers struggle to find time and ways to incorporate the new ideas they learned into their daily routines. The practice of job-embedded professional development encourages teachers to try new techniques by working with the support and assistance of a coach.

Montoya stated that the strength of coaching comes from collaboration. When teachers utilize a coach, great ideas can be shared with others across the district and across grade levels. "We are successful

because we collaborate with teachers, and we share what we know with others,” she said. They build on what works and provide teachers with another way to connect and build networks.

The coaches have received positive feedback on their work this year. Out of 52 responses to a brief survey regarding their work this semester, 98% of the teachers indicated that they know about the coaches, and 79% said that they have worked with a coach.

Building upon the district’s goal for the school year, the coaches believe that when teachers thrive, students thrive. Overall, the School Board members unanimously agreed that the coaches are making a positive impact on teachers and student learning.

##

For more information, please contact:

Superintendent Kurt Steinhaus  
Los Alamos Public Schools  
Office: 505-663-2230, Mobile: 505-470-3478  
[k.steinhaus@laschools.net](mailto:k.steinhaus@laschools.net)