



# Los Alamos Public Schools

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

## LAPS Board Approves 6% Raise for All Staff

The Los Alamos Public School Board met for a regular school board meeting on Tuesday, May 14; here are the highlights of what was discussed.

To begin, LAPS teachers Melissa Kinman and Scott Johnson were presented plaques from the New Mexico School Board Association for supporting excellence in student achievement. Eight outstanding teachers were nominated by their peers, and LAPS board members selected Kinman and Johnson as this year's award recipients.



The main topic of discussion Tuesday evening was the 2019-20 budget, which was approved by the school board with a 6% raise for all staff. Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Lisa Montoya said, "Just over \$31 million is what we will receive from the state of New Mexico to run our program." The approved budget meets all legislative and legal requirements.

"Next year's budget is designed to maximize funding in the classroom and reduce administrative costs while providing all of the necessary supports for student success," said Superintendent Kurt Steinhaus. "Support includes staff well-being, building maintenance, custodians and positive leadership."

The budget development process, which began before the legislative session was over, included requesting input from a variety of stakeholders including students, parents, staff and the community. Their feedback was reviewed and voted on by the LAPS Budget Committee and the top priorities are reflected in the budget. LAPS staff member Kristine Coblenz thanked those involved with the budget development process for offering a clear and simple procedure to propose budget ideas and suggestions.

After that, the school board moved forward on a proposal to ask Los Alamos voters in November to approve the next round of GO Bonds. This request will support ongoing building upgrades and remodeling across the district. The proposal will not raise taxes for Los Alamos residents.

Bond Construction Administrator Herb McLean then requested approval from the board to purchase furniture for the new Barranca classrooms. Barranca teacher Laura Haynes shared her experience from a teacher's perspective, and said she was grateful that the teachers' voices were given careful consideration. "Overall the teachers are very pleased with the final selection." Steinhaus thanked the Barranca staff for their thoughtful selection of furniture that supports learning and positive, safe environments. The board approved this proposal.

Finally, two important grant applications were approved: the 2019-2020 Fine Arts Education Act (FAEA) and

the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-B). The lead for this application, Chamisa art teacher Renee Mitsunaga, explained that the funds received from the FAEA allow LAPS to continue to support the fine arts programs and current staffing levels at each elementary school. "We appreciate that we are able to continue offering strong music and art programs in Los Alamos," said Steinhaus.

The IDEA-B application provides supplemental funding for students with disabilities in the district and helps LAPS make purchases such as software and specialized equipment. Student Services Director Karla Crane explained that these funds will also be used for additional special programs in the upcoming school year. "We are planning a more vigorous parent training program as part of the budget. Our behavior specialist will provide parent training sessions for parents of students with autism or preschool students with disabilities."

The next school board work session is May 23 at Mountain Elementary School. The next regular school board meeting is June 11 in the Los Alamos Administration Board Room.

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