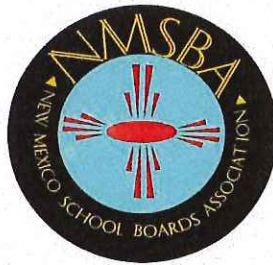


2026 Recognition Awards Nominations



24 Year Service Award
Mary Lou Kern (Maxwell)
Darrell Roberts (Mountainair)

Hall of Fame
Inez Rodriguez (Portales)

Board Member of the Year Nominations
Priscilla Benally (Gallup McKinley)
Patrick Cohn (Silver)
Adan Delgado (Cuba)
Amanda Galbraith (Rio Rancho)

Board of the Year Nominations
Cuba – Small District
Lordsburg – Small District
Pojoaque – Large District



24 Year Service Award

Criteria for Judging Award

24 years of Service (not necessarily consecutive) on the local school board.

Successful candidates must receive a positive vote from two-thirds majority of the voting Board of Directors. There will be no competition between 24 Year Service Award nominees.

Nomination Form

Nominee Name: Mary Lou Kern

Nominee Address: 411 Parque Ave
Maxwell, NM 87728

Please submit:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board member's accomplishments
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting documents

Nominator Name: Amy Roble

Nominator School District: Maxwell Municipal Schools

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Deadline for Submission: Friday, September 18, 2026



Maxwell Municipal Schools
Prepare and inspire students to achieve their full potential.

Nomination for the 24 Years of Service Award

Dear Awards Committee,

It is my sincere honor to nominate **Mary Lou Kern** for the **24 Years of Service Award** in recognition of her extraordinary dedication and commitment to public education and to the students, staff, families, and community of **Maxwell Municipal Schools**.

For an incredible 24 years, Ms. Kern has faithfully served as a member of the Maxwell Municipal Schools Board of Education. During that time, she held the office of President for more than 20 years. Twenty-four years of service is an extraordinary accomplishment, representing countless hours spent attending board meetings, reviewing policies and budgets, participating in training and professional development, listening to community members, and making thoughtful decisions on behalf of students.

Throughout her tenure, Ms. Kern has demonstrated what it truly means to be a school board member. She has approached her responsibilities with integrity, compassion, dedication, and a genuine belief that every decision should ultimately be made in the best interest of students. Her longevity on the board is a testament not only to her commitment, but also to the trust and respect she has earned within the community.

Over the course of 24 years, she has witnessed tremendous changes in education, in our community, and within the district. Through those changes, she has remained a steady and dependable voice. She has helped guide the district through challenges and opportunities alike, always willing to listen, ask difficult questions, consider different perspectives, and work collaboratively toward what is best for our schools.

Her service extends far beyond the hours spent in the boardroom. She has been a visible and committed supporter of school activities, students, staff, and community events. She understands that a strong school district is at the heart of a strong community, and she has devoted more than two decades to helping ensure that our schools remain a place where students can learn, grow, and succeed.

As a woman who has dedicated 24 years to public service, Ms. Kern also serves as an example to others of the difference one person can make through perseverance and commitment. Her willingness to continue serving year after year demonstrates an exceptional level of dedication to the children and families of this community.

The impact of 24 years of service cannot be measured simply by the number of meetings attended or decisions made. It can be measured in the students whose educational experiences have been strengthened, the staff members who have been supported, the families who have been heard, and the community that has benefited from her leadership.



411 Parque Avenue - PO Box 275 - Maxwell, NM 87728
P 575-375-2371 F 575-375-2375 www.maxwellpl2.com





Maxwell Municipal Schools
Prepare and inspire students to achieve their full potential.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly nominate **Mary Lou Kern** for the **24 Years of Service Award**. Her 24 years of dedicated service represent an extraordinary contribution to public education, and she is highly deserving of this recognition.

Thank you for considering this nomination and for recognizing individuals like Ms. Kern who give so generously of their time and talents in service to our schools and communities.

Sincerely,

Amy Roble

Amy Roble
Superintendent
Maxwell Municipal Schools



411 Parque Avenue - PO Box 275 - Maxwell, NM 87728
P 575-375-2371 F 575-375-2375 www.maxwellp12.com



MARY LOU KERN

51 Highline Rd.; PO Box 303, Maxwell, NM 87728 | C: 575-447-2969 | lkern@bacavalley.com

CAREER FOCUS

To continue thriving in a career that utilizes my education and public service experience.

SKILLS

- Demonstrated track record of problem solving
- Adept at analytical overview
- Proven leadership skills
- Strength in communicating with diverse public and private sector
- Senior level financial management skills
- Excellent at reading people and interpersonal skills
- Futuristic vision for policy development

EXPERIENCE

01/2023-present

Colfax County Commissioner, District 2

Act as the county's chief legislative and administrative body, managing budgets, setting tax rates, adopting county laws (ordinances), overseeing public services (roads, health, waste), and appointing key officials like the County Manager.

Approve construction bids and contracts.

Ensure quality of life for residents

Run the county government, balancing budgets, managing county property, and represent citizens' needs.

03/2016 -3/2022

Colfax County Manager

Colfax County – Raton, New Mexico

- Reports directly to and is evaluated by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Implementation and enforcement all ordinances, rules, regulations, and policies enacted by the County Commission.
- Represents the County in regard to local, regional, state, and Federal activities of concern to the County.
- Develops and submits the annual budget, prepares supporting justification for presentation to the commission, advise the commission on the financial statute and needs of the county.
- Attends all meetings of the commission, serves as an ex-officio member of such boards, commission, committees or authorities as directed by the commission.
- Serves as Public Information Officer.
- Oversight of the Colfax County Airport at Angel Fire.
- Oversight of the Vigil Maldonado Detention Center in Raton.
- Contracts and grant preparation.

- Planning, organizing, and directing of programs and services.
- Providing guidance on matters of program, personnel management, budget and legal responsibility.
- Establishment and maintenance of relationships with other community organizations, government agencies, non profit organizations and individuals.
- Planning and implementation of effective personnel management system with a strong emphasis on team building.
- Proven leadership abilities with strong persuasiveness and presentation skills.

11/1987 to Current

Owner/Operator

Kern Ranch – Maxwell, New Mexico

- Makes day to day decisions in all areas of cow calf and stocker operations, including breeding program, stocking rates, nutrition program and marketing.
- Responsible for all financial decisions and budgets.
- Purchase and maintain all equipment.
- Manage hunting and recreation on 12,000 acre operation.
- Manage and oversee 300 acre irrigated farming enterprise.
- Design and maintain roads, fences and water systems including wells, pipelines and drinking facilities in a wildlife friendly manner.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1985

Bachelor of Science: Agriculture Business Management

New Mexico State University – Las Cruces, NM, United States

1985

Bachelor of Science: Farm and Ranch Management

New Mexico State University – Las Cruces, NM, United States

2020

National Association of Counties - Leadership Academy Graduate

2021New Mexico Leadership Graduate

ACTIVITIES AND HONORS

- Youth Heartline Board of Directors, August 2021-2022.
- Regional Agency Interactive Network, (RAIN) Board of Directors 2018-2021
- Maxwell Municipal School Board of Education, March 2003-present, president.
- Vermejo Conservancy District, 1988-2015, member, secretary, president.
- Maxwell Cooperative Water Users Association, Board of Directors, member, vice-president, 2008-2016.
- Colfax County Soil and Water Conservation District, Board of Directors, 2001-2016.

- New Mexico State University Clayton Livestock Research Center, Board of Directors, 2010-2014.
- Steering committee for Colfax County 40 year water plan.
- Steering committee for Canadian River Riparian River Restoration Project.
- Government Secret Clearance

REFERENCES

- Terrance R. Kamm, Attorney at Law, retired, Raton, NM 575-445-5575.
- Dr. Loretta Conder, Raton, NM 575-447-0210.
- Leonard Baca, Colfax County Sheriff, 575-447-2385.



Mary Lou Kern
Maxwell Municipal Schools Board Member
24 Year Service Award Nominee
2026



24 Year Service Award

Criteria for Judging Award

24 years of Service (not necessarily consecutive) on the local school board.

Successful candidates must receive a positive vote from two-thirds majority of the voting Board of Directors. There will be no competition between 24 Year Service Award nominees.

Nomination Form

Nominee Name: Darrell Roberts, School Board President

Nominee Address: P.O. Box 689
Mountainair, NM 87036

Please submit:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board member's accomplishments
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting documents

Nominator Name: Pedro Valles, Superintendent

Nominator School District: Mountainair Public Schools

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Deadline for Submission: Friday, September 18, 2026



MOUNTAINAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Pedro "Pete" Vallejo, Superintendent
P.O. Box 456/ 801 W. Main St. Mountainair, NM 87036
TEL: 505-847-2333, x3002 FAX: 505-847-2843

September 16, 2026

New Mexico School Boards Association

Attn: Awards Committee

Re: Nomination of Darrell Roberts for the NMSBA 24-Year Service Award

Dear Members of the Awards Committee:

I'm writing to nominate Darrell Roberts, President of the Mountainair Board of Education, for the NMSBA 24-Year Service Award. Darrell has given twenty-five years to public school boards in New Mexico, four years with Logan Municipal Schools and the last twenty-one right here in Mountainair.

In that time, he's helped carry our district through some of its toughest and biggest moments: steering us through COVID, seeing the new middle/high school through from planning to opening its doors, and now guiding the board through the construction of our new elementary school. Just as important, he's shown up year after year for the everyday work of board service, such as budgets, staffing, policy, that keeps a district running well even when no one's watching.

Darrell's steadiness, institutional memory, and genuine care for our students and staff have made him a true asset to this district across several administrations. Twenty-five years of volunteer service is a big commitment, and he's honored it with real distinction. I'm honored to recommend him for this award.

Sincerely,

Pedro "Pete" Vallejo, Ed.D.

Superintendent, Mountainair Public Schools

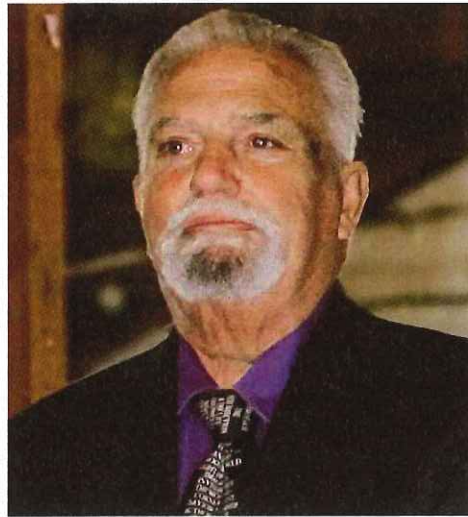
Brief Resume' for Darrell Roberts
Board President, Mountainair Public Schools

I first became involved with the school board in Logan when my two sons were in high school. I served on the board from 1988 until 1992, when we moved to Mountainair.

Years later, when my oldest grandchild was in high school, the superintendent at the time, Mr. Mortensen, encouraged me to consider running for the school board. I was first elected in February 2006. This February will mark 25 years of service as a school board member. I have also had the privilege of serving as Board President for the past several years.

Throughout my years of service, I have encouraged more parents to become involved by serving on their local school boards. I believe that having parents actively participate in their local schools is important to the success of our students and communities.

In addition to my school board service, I have been a pastor since 1970, most recently at Gran Quivira Church in Mountainair. I also work alongside my wife in our accounting business since 1988.



Darrell Roberts
Mountainair Board Member
24 Year Service Award Nominee
2026



Hall of Fame

Criteria for Judging Award

Criteria listed are for your consideration when nominating your candidate. Your nominee may or may not **currently be serving as a local board member, but must have served at least **eight years** as a board member in New Mexico. Your nomination must meet four of the six remaining items listed below.*

- 1) Chosen Board Member of the Year
- 2) Served as a local board officer for four years or more
- 3) Served on an NMSBA committee for at least three years
- 4) Served as an NMSBA region officer for two years
- 5) Served as an NMSBA officer (state level)
- 6) Served as an NSBA officer or committee member (national level)

Nomination Form

Name of Nominee: Inez Rodriguez

Address of Nominee: 1016 North Avenue J
Portales, NM 88130

Please submit:

- 1) This form filled out
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting nomination letters or documents

Nominator Name: Mrs. Sharon Rowley, Superintendent
(Can be a board member, superintendent or other)

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Successful candidates must receive a positive vote from two-thirds majority of the voting Board of Directors. There will be a ballot for each candidate. There will be no competition between/among Hall of Fame nominees.

Deadline for submission: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist

Hall of Fame Nomination Checklist

Required:

☒ The nominee has served at least 8 years service on the local board:

Nominee has served 25 years on local board. From 2000 (year) to Present (year).

The nominee must also meet at least four of six criteria below:

☒ The nominee has been chosen as NMSBA Board Member of the Year. Year: 2024

☒ The nominee has served as a local school board officer for 4 years or more. (This would be Secretary, Vice-President or President). Offices held & dates those offices were held: _____

Portales School Board Served 25 years

☒ The nominee has served on an NMSBA Committee for at least 3 years. (This includes Resolutions, Nominations or Policy committee). Committee(s) served on and dates of service: _____

Resolution Committee and Nominations Committee from 2009-2023

Policy Committee

☒ The nominee has served as an NMSBA regional office for at least 2 years. (This would be President, Vice-President or Secretary of a region.) Please list the region, the office and dates of service: 2025 -Present President Region V

2023-2025 Vice President Region V

2025 President Region V

☐ The nominee has held NMSBA Office. (This is for the NMSBA Executive Board and would be Secretary-Treasurer, Vice-President, President-Elect, President or Past-President). NMSBA Executive Board offices held & dates of service: _____

N/A

☐ The nominee has held NSBA office or served on an NSBA committee. (Examples: NSBA Board Member, Caucus/Council Officer, Nominations or other committee.) Please list the office/committee and the dates of service: _____

N/A

Portales Municipal Schools

Board of Education

Cade Standifer	President
Dustin Cabeldue	Vice President
Doug Pfaffenberger	Secretary
Inez Rodriguez	Member
Glenn Johnson	Member

501 S. Abilene

Portales, NM 88130

Phone: 575.356.7000 Fax: 575.356.4377

www.portaleschools.com

Administration

Sharon Rowley
Arturo Ontiveros
Rick Segovia
Cheri Jackson
Services
Sarah Stubbs

Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent
Director of Federal Programs
Director of Special Student
Director of Finance



August 20, 2026

Elizabeth Egelhoff, Joe Guillen, & NMSBA Award Selection Committee
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

To the NMSBA Hall of Fame Award Selection Committee,

It is a profound honor to submit this letter of recommendation for Inez Rodriguez for the prestigious New Mexico School Boards Association (NMSBA) Hall of Fame Award. Having served on our local school board for 26 years—from 2000 to the present—she exemplifies the highest standard of educational governance, servant leadership, and unwavering dedication to public education.

Her quarter-century legacy of service is defined by an uncompromising ethos: she always puts children first. Named the NMSBA Board Member of the Year in 2024 and honored with the NMSBA 24-Year Service Recognition in 2025, she has been an extraordinary partner to me as Superintendent, as well as a tireless advocate for our district's educators, staff, students, and families. She consistently puts in the time, heart, and hard work required to foster real growth in our district. Anchoring all of her service is a deep, abiding faith in God to guide and care for our students, board, and community through every season.

Beyond her immense local impact, her leadership has helped shape the NMSBA at the state and regional levels for nearly two decades. A continuous mainstay on the NMSBA Board of Directors, she served as Region V President from 2009 to 2023, continued her executive leadership as Region V Vice President from 2024 through early 2026, and as of March 2026, has stepped back into the role of Region V President. In addition to her executive duties, she has contributed years of service to critical NMSBA committees, including both the Resolution Committee and the Policy Committee.

Through her 26 years of steady guidance, vision, and selfless advocacy, Inez Rodriguez has left an indelible mark on our school district and on public education across New Mexico. She represents the absolute gold standard of school board service, and I give her my highest and most enthusiastic recommendation for the NMSBA Hall of Fame Award.

Sincerely,

Sharon Rowley
Superintendent of Schools
Portales Municipal School District

INEZ RODRIGUEZ

Portales, New Mexico 88310

(575) 749-1615 • rodriguezinez@msn.com

Professional Summary

Dedicated and accomplished education leader with over 24 years of service in school board governance and leadership. Skilled in curriculum development, student assessment, and administrator collaboration. Recognized for driving educational improvements and successfully meeting all mandatory training requirements.

Skills & Expertise

- Curriculum Development
- Student Assessment & Progress Evaluation
- Instructional Adaptation Based on Student Needs
- Leadership & Team Collaboration
- Training & Certification Management

Certifications & Training

- Master Board Member – NMSBA
- Board Member of the Year (2024) – NMSBA
- Certified across multiple NMSBA training categories
- Completed all mandatory training requirements for school board governance

Leadership Experience

- Portales School Board – Active Board Member
- NMSBA Board of Directors – Appointed June 2000
- 23 years of continuous board service
- Served as President of Region V for 21 years
- Currently serving as Vice President

Work History

Parent Teacher Coordinator – Bilingual Program
December 1970 – 1971

Kmart Corporation – Softline Division Manager
June 1974 – June 2002

- Managed operations and staff in the Softline Division
- Retired after nearly three decades of dedicated service

NMSBA Board of Directors
2000 – Present

- Actively serving and providing leadership in education policy and governance

Education & Development

Ongoing professional training through NMSBA certifications and workshops. Extensive coursework in curriculum planning, instructional leadership, and student success strategies.



Inez Rodriguez
Portales School Board Member
Hall of Fame Award Nominee
2026



Board Member of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Minimum of Level I – Leadership Achievement in the Leadership Development Program.
- 5) Other training attended.

Nomination Form

Board Member Name: _____ Priscilla Benally _____

Please submit:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board member's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting nomination letters or documents

Nominator Name: _____ Kevin Mitchell GMCS Board President _____
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: _____ Gallup McKinley County Schools _____

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Deadline for Submission: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist

Letter of Recommendation for Priscilla Benally
School Board Member of the Year Award

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored to write this letter in strong support of Priscilla Benally, whom currently serves as the Vice President on the Gallup McKinley County School Board, for the prestigious NMSBA School Board Member of the Year Award. As the Board President, I have had the privilege of working closely with Ms. Benally and can wholeheartedly affirm her dedication, expertise, integrity, and unwavering passion for ensuring the success and well-being of all students in New Mexico, particularly our Native American student population.

Ms. Benally has been a steadfast and courageous advocate for addressing the unique needs of Native American students. She works diligently to ensure that their voices are heard, their cultures and identities are respected, and their educational needs are addressed. Her commitment, however, extends far beyond any single demographic. She is deeply passionate about equity, opportunity, and sufficiency for every student in New Mexico, regardless of where they live or the circumstances of their community.

Throughout her service as a school board member, Ms. Benally has consistently championed initiatives that prioritize student learning, educational opportunity, adequate resources, and the success of underserved communities. She understands the challenges faced by rural and Native communities and brings those perspectives to the boardroom with purpose, professionalism, and a strong commitment to finding solutions.

Ms. Benally's dedication to professional growth and effective school governance is equally commendable. She has earned her Master Board Member Credential through the New Mexico School Boards Association, an advanced leadership certification recognizing a high level of governance training, completion of all required professional development credits, and commitment to ethical standards of school board service. This accomplishment reflects her commitment to continuous learning, effective governance, accountability, and ethical service to students, families, staff, and communities.

Her vision and leadership within the New Mexico School Boards Association are equally inspiring. Ms. Benally currently serves on the NMSBA Board of Directors as Region 1 Vice President and has served on both the NMSBA Resolution Committee and Policy Committee. She has been a strong voice for increasing participation and representation from minority communities and ensuring that New Mexico's school boards reflect the diversity of the students and communities they serve.

Another area in which Ms. Benally has demonstrated exceptional leadership is student mental health and well-being. At a time when the emotional and mental health needs of young people have become increasingly critical to student success, her knowledge, experience, and advocacy are invaluable. She recognizes that a child's ability to learn is closely connected to their sense of safety, belonging, connection, and overall well-being. She has consistently supported policies,

programs, and community efforts that address mental health, suicide prevention, and the social-emotional needs of students.

Ms. Benally also brings a unique perspective to educational leadership through her deep understanding of the communities she represents. She understands that effective education requires more than academic achievement alone. It requires strong families, healthy communities, cultural understanding, meaningful opportunities, and equitable access to resources. She has dedicated herself to ensuring that these considerations remain part of the conversation when decisions are made about the future of our children.

You can always count on Ms. Benally to represent the hardworking school board members of New Mexico with dedication, integrity, courage, and professionalism. She comes prepared, listens to different perspectives, and remains focused on what is best for students and the communities she serves. Her insights, experience, and passion make her an invaluable asset to our district and to public education across the state.

Ms. Benally exemplifies what it means to be a committed school board member. Her years of service, continued professional development, Master Board Member Credential, advocacy for Native American and underserved students, commitment to equity, and leadership in student mental health demonstrate a level of service that deserves recognition.

I am confident that recognizing Priscilla Benally as School Board Member of the Year would be a fitting acknowledgment of her years of dedicated service and would further elevate the important work of the New Mexico School Boards Association in advocating for students, families, educators, and communities throughout our state.

Thank you for considering Priscilla Benally for this well-deserved honor. She embodies the qualities of a true educational leader, advocate, and public servant, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin Mitchell

Board President

Gallup McKinley County School District



Superintendent
Jvanna Hanks II

Assistant Superintendent
Katherine Crisler
Gerald Horacek
Carrie A. Lovato, Ed.D.
Ashley Ryan, Ph.D.

September 4, 2026

New Mexico School Boards Association
Board Member of the Year Award Committee
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Members of the Award Committee:

I am writing to recommend Priscilla Benally, Vice President of the Gallup-McKinley County Schools (GMCS) Board of Education, for the NMSBA Board Member of the Year Award. In the time I have worked with her, I have come to know her as one of the most dedicated, knowledgeable, and genuinely community-rooted board members I have encountered.

Ms. Benally has represented District 3 since March 2015 and was re-elected to her current term, which runs through December 2027. While elected to represent District 3, she has consistently advocated on behalf of students across the entire county, an approach that reflects how she carries out the role. Her fellow board members elected her Vice President in November 2025 and re-elected her to that position in July 2026.

Beyond her role with GMCS, Ms. Benally serves on the New Mexico School Boards Association's Board of Directors as Region I Vice-President, and she has contributed to both the NMSBA Resolutions Committee and Policy Committee. She also holds NMSBA's Master Board Member Credential, an advanced distinction that requires extensive training hours along with a practicum grounded in real legislative engagement rather than classroom instruction alone. Since 2017, she has personally testified before the New Mexico Legislature on matters directly affecting our students, including funding and equity tied to the Yazzie/Martinez decision, the protection of federal Impact Aid for districts such as ours, and House Bill 60 in 2022, which helped secure pay parity for Native American language and culture teachers. NMSBA has further recognized her as an 'Exemplary' leader in its Leadership Development Program for four consecutive years, from 2021 through 2024.

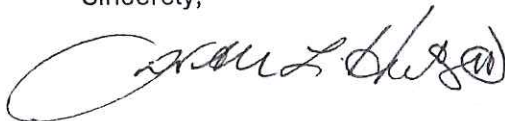
What distinguishes Ms. Benally most, however, is her connection to the community she serves. She is a citizen of the Navajo Nation, a graduate of Thoreau High School, and fluent in both English and Navajo. Her understanding of the challenges facing rural and Native American students comes from lived experience rather than secondhand knowledge. She serves as Executive Director of the Thoreau Community Center, a role built on years of service as an Educational Assistant and Health Assistant at Baca/Dlo'ay'azhi Community School, along with formal training in nursing and early childhood multicultural education. She has also served as President of the Navajo Nation Board of Education, as the National Johnson-O'Malley Region 2 Representative for New Mexico, and as a member of the Eastern Agency Crisis Response Team.

Her work at the Thoreau Community Center speaks to a dimension of board service that often goes unrecognized. The center was established in response to a suicide crisis that affected Thoreau and its surrounding communities, and under Ms. Benally's leadership it has become a genuine resource for adolescent suicide prevention and youth behavioral health support. Her ongoing engagement with Navajo Nation chapter houses across her district reflects relationships built over many years, and our schools are stronger for them.

I offer my full and sincere endorsement of Priscilla Benally for this award. Her years of steady, informed, and genuinely committed service to this district exemplify the standard of leadership this recognition is meant to honor.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 505-721-1080 or jhanks@gmcs.org should you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jvanna Hanks II", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jvanna Hanks II
Superintendent, Gallup-McKinley County Schools

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally verify that Ms. Benally has participated in multiple activities that meet the Master Board Member (MBM) Practicum requirements. During her service on the Gallup-McKinley County Board of Education, Ms. Benally actively participated in Interim Legislative Meetings and engaged in state-level advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the district and the students and communities we serve.

Ms. Benally's work in these areas began in 2017. Since that time, she has testified and advocated at the state level on several significant education issues, including, but not limited to:

- Yazzie/Martinez education funding and equity matters
- Impact Aid and issues affecting federally impacted school districts
- New Mexico House Bill 60 (2022), which ensures that Native American language and culture teachers are compensated at the same minimum salary level as Level 1 licensed teachers
- Additional legislative and policy matters relevant to public education and Native American students in New Mexico

These activities occurred during Interim Legislative sessions and related legislative engagement efforts since 2017.

Ms. Benally's participation reflects a strong commitment to legislative advocacy, educational equity, and effective governance. Her work clearly satisfies multiple components of the MBM Practicum requirements.

Please feel free to contact me if additional information or clarification is needed.

Sincerely,



Mike Hyatt

PRISCILLA BENALLY

P. O. BOX 1415 THOREAU NM 87323

(505) 862-2930 • E-MAIL ADDRESS : pbenally@gmcs.org

I have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing education through being active involvement in school board activities. My leadership and contributions extend beyond the local level, as I am actively participating in my communities, district, state, and national board associations.

WORK EXPERIENCE

2012-Present Thoreau Community Center

P.O. Box 401 Thoreau NM 87323

Executive Director/Community Specialist

2000-2008 Baca/Dlo'ay'azhi Community School

P.O. Box 509 Prewitt, NM 87045

Educational Assistant & Health Assistant

Certified Driver License with Endorsements PS

CPR/First Aid Certification

EDUCATION

May, 1996 University of New Mexico-Gallup Branch-Gallup, NM

Certification in Nursing Assistant

May, 2005 University of New Mexico -Gallup Branch-Gallup, NM

Degree Early Childhood Multicultural Education

2009-2012 University of New Mexico-Gallup Branch-Gallup, NM

Register Nurse Program

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Navajo Nation Board of Education-President

Gallup McKinley County Board of Education (Public school district)

NM School Board Association Region 1 President, Vice President (Zuni, GMCS, CCSD, Bloomfield, Farmington, Aztec, Dulce)

National Johnson O'Malley Region 2 (State of New Mexico) Representative

Member of the Eastern Agency Crisis Response team
Baca/Dlo'ay'azhi School Board member (BIE school)

LANGUAGES

English and Navajo

REFERENCES

Jaclyn Delgarito Community Member of Thoreau (505) 236-8443

Kevin Mitchell President to Gallup McKinley County School Board (505) 879-5017

Mike Hyatt Past Superintendent (505) 495-9287



Priscilla Benally
Gallup-McKinley Co. Schools Board Member
Board Member of the Year Nominee
2026



Board Member of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

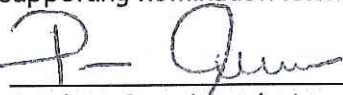
- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Minimum of Level I – Leadership Achievement in the Leadership Development Program.
- 5) Other training attended.

Nomination Form

Board Member Name: Patrick M. Cohn, Jr.

Please submit:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board member's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting nomination letters or documents

Nominator Name:  Pauline Jaramillo
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: Socorro Consolidated Schools

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Deadline for Submission: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist

September 11, 2026

Dear NMSBA Awards Committee:

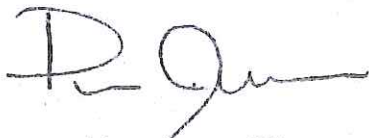
It is my honor to nominate Patrick M. Cohn Jr. for NMSBA School Board Member of the Year. Patrick's leadership, dedication, and strong advocacy for public education demonstrate his commitment to serving students, educators, families, and school boards throughout New Mexico.

Patrick currently serves as Secretary of the Silver Consolidated Schools Board of Education and Chair of NMSBA Region 8. He was also honored to serve as NMSBA Secretary-Treasurer, representing New Mexico school board members at the national level. Through this role, he advocated in Washington, D.C., with New Mexico's congressional delegation and has also worked with the New Mexico Legislature, testifying and advocating for legislation that supports students, educators, and public schools.

Patrick believes school board service extends beyond the boardroom. His leadership is grounded in listening, collaboration, and being willing to stand up for public education when it matters most.

For his dedication to students, proven leadership, and commitment to strengthening public education throughout New Mexico, I proudly nominate Patrick M. Cohn Jr. for NMSBA School Board Member of the Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Jaramillo', with a stylized, flowing script.

Pauline Jaramillo

Brief Resume

Patrick Cohn's commitment to public education is rooted in a strong belief that effective school board leadership requires service, advocacy, collaboration, and the courage to be a voice for students, teachers, families, and communities. Throughout his public service, Patrick has worked to ensure that local school board members have a meaningful voice at the local, state, and national levels. He currently serves as County Treasurer for Grant County, Chair of the New Mexico Association of Counties Treasurers Affiliate, Secretary of the Board of Education for Silver Consolidated Schools, and Chair of NMSBA Region 8.

Patrick was also honored to serve as 2026 Secretary-Treasurer of the New Mexico School Boards Association (NMSBA). In this leadership capacity, he had the privilege of representing school board members from across New Mexico at National School Boards Association (NSBA) events. His service provided him opportunities to meet with New Mexico's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., and advocate for the protection and advancement of public education. Patrick has also carried that advocacy to the New Mexico Legislature, where he has advocated and testified for legislation that benefits students, teachers, and public schools, while standing firmly against policies that could negatively impact them.

Patrick's commitment to service extends throughout Grant County and New Mexico. In addition to his service on the Silver Consolidated Schools Board of Education, he has served his community through LULAC Council 8003, the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, El Grito Head Start, and as a co-founder of the Grant County Task Force for the Homeless. These experiences have strengthened his belief that meaningful leadership requires listening to others, building relationships, finding common ground, and being willing to take an active role in the decisions that shape our communities.

On a personal note, Patrick is a dedicated family man and has been happily married to his wife, Desiree, for more than 24 years. Patrick and Desiree have four children and three grandchildren. They have made Grant County their home, residing in Silver City, New Mexico. In his free time, Patrick enjoys spending time with his family and experiencing the natural beauty of southwestern New Mexico through camping, hiking, fishing, and time in the Gila National Forest.

Patrick would be honored to be a choice for Board Member of the Year with the NMSBA. He is committed to bringing his experience, proven leadership, and passion for public education to the Board while continuing to advocate for every school board member, every educator, and most importantly every student in New Mexico.



Patrick Cohn
Silver Consolidated Schools Board Member
Board Member of the Year Nominee
2026



Board Member of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Minimum of Level I – Leadership Achievement in the Leadership Development Program.
- 5) Other training attended.

Nomination Form

Board Member Name: Dr. Adan Delgado

Please submit:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board member's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting nomination letters or documents

Nominator Name: Rhiannon Chavez, Cuba ISD Superintendent
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: Cuba Independent School District

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Deadline for Submission: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist

BOARD OF EDUCATION

TAYLOR PINTO, President
JAMES D. CASÁUS, Vice-President
VIVIAN KEETSO, Board Secretary
ELIZABETH MARTIN, Board Member
DR. ADÁN DELGADO, Board Member

**ADMINISTRATION**

RHIANNON CHAVEZ, Superintendent
JUDY ATENCIO, Assistant Superintendent
OLIVIA CASAUS, Elementary School Principal
ROBERT VALDEZ, Middle School Principal
GILBERT DOMINGUEZ, High School Principal

September 18, 2026

Dear Awards Committee:

It is my honor to nominate Dr. Adan Delgado, a member of the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education, for Board Member of the Year. With more than 28 years of service in public education, Dr. Delgado has served as a teacher, administrator, superintendent, regional education leader, state education leader, and now elected school board member. His extensive experience, commitment to professional growth, and continued service to students and public education make him an exceptional candidate for this recognition.

Dr. Delgado's connection to Cuba Independent School District is especially meaningful. He is a proud graduate of Cuba Independent Schools who later returned to serve as Superintendent from 2017 to 2019 and, in 2024, was elected to the Board of Education. His journey from Cuba ISD student to superintendent and ultimately school board member reflects a remarkable commitment to giving back to the district and community that helped shape him. As a board member, he brings valuable institutional knowledge and expertise in governance, school finance, policy, and district operations, while maintaining a strong focus on opportunities and outcomes for students.

His leadership extends well beyond our local district. Dr. Delgado currently serves as Region II Vice President for the New Mexico School Boards Association, representing school districts throughout the region and contributing his expertise to the Association's work. He has also served as a presenter for several NMSBA trainings and conferences, sharing his knowledge of effective governance, superintendent evaluation and support, and school budget and finance with fellow board members across New Mexico. In addition, he has completed the required hours in NMSBA's Leadership Development Program and has attended several national school board conferences, demonstrating his continued commitment to learning and effective school board governance at the local, state, and national levels.

Dr. Delgado also brings extensive statewide educational leadership experience to his board service. As Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Finance and Operations for the New Mexico Public Education Department, he administered more than \$5 billion in state funding and \$2 billion in federal K-12 funding and helped develop the Family Income Index. His public service has also included the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board and the New Mexico Career Technical Education Advisory Board. Earlier in his career, he led multiple northern New Mexico school districts and regional initiatives focused on career and technical education, broadband access, literacy, and educator development.

P.O. Box 70, Cuba, NM 87013 | (575) 289-3211 | Fax (575) 289-3314

www.cuba.k12.nm.us

Cuba Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital or veteran status or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment. Cuba Independent School District also prohibits the use of racial, ethnic, and/or sexual slurs, including sexual harassment. If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in a school meeting or hearing, or if you wish to receive assistance or information regarding student grievances, language translations of District policy, Section 504 or Title IX, please contact the Superintendent's Office at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. The district Title IX Officer may be contacted at the address or phone number listed above. For concerns at the school level, Elementary - Ext. 400, Middle School - Ext. 300, or High School - Ext. 200.

What distinguishes Dr. Delgado is his willingness to use this breadth of experience in service to others. He understands public education from nearly every level—from the classroom to the superintendent's office, from the local boardroom to regional and statewide leadership. He not only continues to develop his own knowledge as a board member, but also shares that knowledge to help strengthen school board governance throughout New Mexico.

As Superintendent, I see firsthand the value Dr. Delgado brings to our Board and District. He brings informed questions, historical perspective, financial expertise, and a deep understanding of the responsibilities of both governance and administration. Most importantly, his service remains grounded in a commitment to the students, staff, families, and community of Cuba Independent School District.

Few individuals have had the opportunity to serve the same school district as a student and graduate, superintendent, and elected board member. Dr. Delgado's career represents a sustained commitment to public education and to the community that helped shape him. Cuba ISD is fortunate to benefit from his leadership, and New Mexico's broader educational community continues to benefit from his willingness to share his knowledge and experience.

It is with great respect and enthusiasm that I nominate Dr. Delgado for Board Member of the Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Chavez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rhiannon Chavez
Superintendent
Cuba Independent School District

ADÁN DELGADO | ED.D.

Board of Education, Cuba Independent Schools • Education Executive • Founder, erō Point Solutions

PO Box 145, Cuba, New Mexico 87013 • (505) 946-8043 • adelgado@cuba.k12.nm.us

Education governance and finance leader currently serving as an elected member of the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education — the same ~700-student district led as Superintendent from 2017–2019. Brings 28+ years of experience spanning the classroom, district administration, and state government, including a Deputy Cabinet Secretary tenure overseeing \$7B+ in combined state and federal K-12 funding. Also serves on the governing boards of the New Mexico School Boards Association (Region II Vice President) and the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation (Treasurer). Founder of erō Point Solutions, providing strategic planning and program evaluation consulting to schools, tribal, and nonprofit organizations.

BOARD & GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Board of Education Member, Cuba Independent School District 2024 – Present

Cuba, New Mexico

- Elected to the governing board of the same district served as Superintendent (2017–2019), providing board-level oversight of policy, budget, and superintendent performance
- Brings direct executive and state-finance experience — including a Deputy Cabinet Secretary tenure overseeing NM school funding — to board decisions on fiscal oversight, compliance, and strategic direction
- Represents a district with the state's second-highest at-risk student index, an area of firsthand programmatic and operational familiarity from prior district leadership

Board of Directors, Region II Vice President — NM School Boards Association 2024 – Present

- Represents Region II districts on the statewide association's governing board, contributing governance and school-finance expertise to statewide policy work

Board of Directors & Treasurer — Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation 2025 – Present

- Serves on the Executive Committee, overseeing fiscal stewardship and grantmaking strategy for the Foundation

Board of Trustees — New Mexico Educational Retirement Board 2019 – 2021

- Held fiduciary oversight of the state's public school employee retirement system

CORE COMPETENCIES

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| ▶ School Board Governance & Policy | ▶ Program Evaluation & Continuous Improvement | ▶ K-12 Finance & Budget Administration |
| ▶ Superintendent Evaluation & Support | ▶ Public School Operations & Transportation | ▶ Executive Coaching & Mentorship |
| ▶ Career & Technical Education (CTE) | ▶ Federal & State Grant Administration | ▶ Tribal & Intergovernmental Partnerships |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Owner, erō Point Solutions 2024 – Present

Cuba, New Mexico

- Delivers consulting in project design, program evaluation, strategic planning, executive coaching, operations optimization, and fiscal management for public-sector and nonprofit clients
- Led proprietary research, stakeholder engagement, and strategic recommendations to expand opportunity for disconnected youth across northern New Mexico
- Developed a proprietary, Emergent-theory-based framework for program evaluation and continuous improvement

Executive Director, Northwest Regional Education Cooperative 2021–2023 & 2015–2017

Chama, New Mexico

- Directed cooperative initiatives for 7–8 northern New Mexico school districts, administering multi-million-dollar intergovernmental agreements with the NM Public Education Department
- Operated multi-district consortia for Perkins CTE, Title III, and North-Central Broadband; oversaw regional reading-coach and mentoring programs for teachers and principals
- Produced a student recruitment film series highlighting high-demand Career Technical Education pathways

Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Finance & Operations, NM Public Education Department 2019 – 2021

Santa Fe, New Mexico

- Administered \$5B+ in state and \$2B+ in federal K-12 funding, including CARES, CRRSA, and ARP pandemic relief
- Oversaw operational budgets for every NM school district and charter school, statewide student transportation, and the Department's IT division
- Co-developed the Family Income Index, a novel low-income funding formula drawing on state tax, human services, and US Census data

Superintendent, Cuba Independent School District 2017 – 2019

Cuba, New Mexico

- Led daily operations for ~700 students, 125+ staff, and a \$12M budget in a district with the state's second-highest at-risk index
- Built a district strategic plan, AP program, at-risk suspension-alternative program, tiered SEL system, and a Cisco Networking Academy

Superintendent, Pojoaque Valley School District 2010 – 2015

Santa Fe, New Mexico

- Led daily operations for 2,000+ students, 250+ staff, and a \$25M budget
- Directed capital projects including a multi-purpose youth athletic complex and 800-seat performing arts center; achieved district-wide AdvancED accreditation
- Built partnerships with five Pueblo governments; launched Early College High School and virtual-learning programs

Early Career — Education & Engineering 1992 – 2010

- Superintendent, Elementary Principal, MS/HS Principal, Technology Director & Teacher/Technology Coordinator, Jemez Mountain School District (1998–2010); Physics Instructor, New Mexico Highlands University (1997–1998)
- R&D Engineer, Eastman Kodak Research Labs; Engineering Researcher, NASA Controlled Environment Life Support Systems Project; Engineering Intern, Sandia National Laboratories (1992–1997)

EDUCATION

Ed.D., Educational Leadership — *University of New Mexico, with Distinction 2023*

Dissertation: A Phenomenological Study of Successful Superintendent Retention in a North-Central New Mexico School District

M.A., Educational Leadership — *New Mexico Highlands University, 4.0 GPA 2004*

B.S., Engineering (Mathematics Minor) — *New Mexico Highlands University, Cum Laude 1996*

LICENSURE & CERTIFICATION

- New Mexico PED K-12 Administration License (Level 3-B) & Instructional Leader License (Level 3-A); endorsements in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Technology Education/Coordination
- Title IX Compliance for K-12 Education — Association of Title IX Administrators

ADDITIONAL ADVISORY & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- New Mexico Career Technical Education Advisory Board (2024–Present)
- New Mexico School Superintendents Association Executive Council (2009–2015, 2017–2019)

AWARDS & SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- 2015 Superintendent of the Year — New Mexico Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
- "Effective Governance Practices for Evaluating and Supporting Superintendents," NM School Boards Association School Law Conference, 2024
- "School Budget and Finance for New Board Members," NM School Boards Association Board Institute, 2024
- "Public School Support & PED FY22 Budget Request," NM Legislative Finance Committee, 2020

INTERESTS

Rural sustainability & economic development • dryland farming practices • New Mexico history & genealogy • applied artificial intelligence



2025 Leadership Development Program Awards

E = Exemplary = Earned 20 or more hours within the program/training year (**can be received yearly**).
Level I = Reached 24 cumulative training hours within the program/training year (**awarded only one time**).
Level II = Reached 36 cumulative training hours within the program/training year (**awarded only one time**).
MBM = Master Board Member distinction – Level II plus presentations/practicums and coursework

Alamogordo

Angela M. Cadwallader – E
Craig Danekas – E, II
Brandy Murphy – II
Shannan Wright – II
Ryal McMurry – E

Albuquerque

Josefina Dominguez – E
Danielle Gonzales – II
Heather Benavidez – II
Ronald Tome-Warito – E

Artesia

Kristy Crockett – II

Aztec

Fran Dobey – E
Laci Newland – II
Amanda Sutherland – I

Belen

Aubrey Tucker – E
Larry Garley – E
Ralph Fernandez – E
Joanne Silva – E

Bernalillo

Christine Suina – E

Capitan

Joseph Fraley – II
Weston Hacker – II
Zeke Greer – II

Carrizozo

Faithe Samora – I

Central

Christina Aspaas – E
Gary Montoya – E
Suzette Haskie – E
Matthew Tso – E, II

Chama

Stephanie Maestas – E
Abraham Baca – E

Clayton

Guston Woods – I
Jana Lees – I

Cloudcroft

Lance Wright – E
Jeffrey Eigenmann – E, II
Cassandra Saffle – E, I

Clovis

Cindy Osburn – E
Amy Egbert – E

Cobre

Gabrielle Begay – E, II
Emmarie Heredia – I

Corona

Alena Brandenberger – I
Cody Lightfoot – I

Cuba

Vivian Keetso – E
Taylor Pinto – E
Elizabeth Martin – E
James Casaus – E
Adan Delgado – E, II

Deming

Daniel Krowl – E
Mary Lou Cameron – E
Robert Orosco – II
Ashlea Crumley – I, II

Dexter

Nancy Miles – E
Juanita Segovia – E
Kellie Cobos – II
Linda Lopez – II
Luis Davalos – E, I

Dora

Dallen Skelley – I

Dulce

Annette Teube – E
Wesley Vigil – E
Lorene Willis – E

Espanola

Javin Coriz – II

Estancia

Randol Riley – E
Heather Hedges – E
Ashley Romero – E
Sarah Lucero – E

Farmington

Krista McWilliams – II
Lisa Maxwell – E

Gadsden

Laura Salazar Flores – E
Claudia Rodriguez – E
Arlean Murillo – E

Gallup-McKinley Co.

Kevin Mitchell – E
Priscilla Benally – E
Michael Schaaf – E

Grady

Elnabeth Grau – I

Grants-Cibola

Francie Lee – E
Toby Walter Jaramillo – E, II

Hagerman

Chris Pilley – II

Hatch Valley

Elva Garay – E
Rey Gonzales – I
Richard Marquez – II
Joaquin Legarreta – I

Hobbs

Peggy Appleton – E
Kerry Romine – E, II

Hondo Valley

Alice Velasquez – E
Irene Sanchez – II
Jason Candelaria – I, II
Debbie Jo Almager – E

House

Marsha Stowe – I

Jal

Amy Crawford – II

Jemez Mountain

Lucy Morfin – E, I, II

Jemez Valley

Peter Madalena – E
Cathy Trujillo-Wiseman – E
Amelia Trujillo – I, II



2024 Leadership Development Program Awards

Level I = Reached 24 cumulative training hours within the program/training year (**awarded only one time**).

Level II = Reached 36 cumulative training hours within the program/training year (**awarded only one time**).

E = Exemplary = Earned 20 or more hours within the program/training year (**can be received yearly**)

MBM = Master Board Member distinction – 40 cumulative hours plus presentations/practicums and coursework

Alamogordo

Angela M. Cadwallader – E
Craig Danekas – E, I
Ryal McMurry – E, I
Brandy Murphy – E, I
Shannan Wright – E, I

Albuquerque

Janelle Astorga – E
Heather Benavidez – E, I
Josefina Dominguez – E
Crystal Tapia Romero – I, II
Ronald Tome-Warito – E, I, II

Artesia

Kristy Crockett – I
Ben Harvey – I

Belen

Ralph Fernandez – E, I, II
Larry Garley – E
Joanne Silva – E, I, II
Aubrey Tucker – E

Bernalillo

John Gurule – E, I, II
Paul Madrid – I, II
Christine Suina – E

Bloomfield

Sue Finch – E
David Salcido – I
Ben Woody – I

Capitan

Zeke Greer – E, I
Weston Hacker – I
Jim Nesbitt – E

Carlsbad

Clancey McMillan – I

Central

Christina Aspaas – E
Suzette Haskie – E
Gary Montoya – E
Matthew Tso – E, I
Marion Wells – E

Chama

Abraham Baca – E, II
Stephanie Maestas – E
Earl James Martinez – E
Margaret Martinez – E
Amanda Ulibarri – E, I, II

Cimarron

Kaycee Sandoval – E
Kimberly Taylor – E, I
Kimberly Valenzuela – E, I, II

Clayton

Mike Barnes – E, II
Jana Lees – E
John Trujillo – II

Cloudcroft

Eigermann Jeffrey – E, I
Danny Ward – E
Lance Wright – E

Cobre

Gabrielle Begay – I
Gilbert Guadiana – E

Cuba

James Casaus – E
Adan Delgado – E, I
Taylor Pinto – E

Deming

Mary Lou Cameron – E
Ashlea Crumley – E
Daniel Krowl – E
Robert Orosco – I
Olivia Paez – E

Dexter

Kellie Cobos – I
Linda Lopez – E, I
Juanita Segovia – II

Dora

Brandon Dewbre – II

Dulce

Frankie Ortiz – E
Annette Teube – E
Wesley Vigil – E, I, II

Elida

Scott Burton – I

Espanola

Javin Coriz – I
Katrina J. Martinez – II

Estancia

Heather Hedges – E, II
Sarah Lucero – E, I
Randol Riley – E
Ashley Romero – E
Lee Widner – E

Farmington

Lisa Maxwell – E, I, II
Krista McWilliams – E, I
Andra Stradling – E
Stephanie Thompson – E

Floyd

James Love – E

Gadsden

Daniel Castillo – E
Arlean Murillo – E
Claudia Rodriguez – E
Laura Salazar Flores – E

Gallup-McKinley Co.

Priscilla Benally – E
Kevin Mitchell – E
Michael Schaaf – E

Grady

Kathy Edwards – II
Colten Grau – E

Grants-Cibola

Guy Archambeau – E
Toby Walter Jaramillo – E, I
Francie Lee – E, I, II

Hagerman

Trevor Gray – II

Hatch Valley

Joaquin Legarreta – E
Richard Marquez E, I

Hobbs

Peggy Appleton – E
Joseph Calderon – E
Kerry Romine – E, I

Hondo Valley

Jason Candelaria – E
Cindy Gomez – I, II
Irene Sanchez – E, I
Alice Velasquez – E, I, II



Dr. Adan Delgado
Cuba Independent Schools Board Member
Board Member of the Year Nominee
2026



Board Member of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Minimum of Level I – Leadership Achievement in the Leadership Development Program.
- 5) Other training attended.

Nomination Form

Board Member Name: AMANDA GALBRAITH

Please submit:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board member's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of the board member
- 3) Photo of the board member
- 4) Any other supporting nomination letters or documents

Nominator Name: ROBERT DODD, SUPERINTENDENT
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Deadline for Submission: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist



500 Laser Road NE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
P. 505.896.0667
F. 505.896.0662

Dear Members of the New Mexico School Boards Association,

It is my privilege to nominate Mrs. Amanda Galbraith, President of the Rio Rancho Public Schools Board of Education, for the New Mexico School Boards Association Board Member of the Year Award.

President Galbraith's service to Rio Rancho Public Schools has been defined by steady leadership, sound governance, and a deep commitment to the students, staff, families, and community she serves. As both Superintendent of Rio Rancho Public Schools and someone who has had the opportunity to work closely with President Galbraith during one of the most consequential periods in our district's history, I have seen firsthand the strength, wisdom, and sense of responsibility she brings to her role.

President Galbraith has served as Board President for nearly her entire tenure on the Rio Rancho Public Schools Board of Education, assuming that responsibility at her first meeting as a Board Member in 2020 and continuing to lead the Board today. Her longevity in that role speaks to the trust placed in her by her fellow Board members, and to her ability to provide consistent leadership through periods of growth, change, and transition.

Perhaps no responsibility better demonstrates President Galbraith's leadership than the historic superintendent transition undertaken by Rio Rancho Public Schools during the 2025-2026 school year. For more than three decades, RRPS had known only one superintendent, Dr. V. Sue Cleveland. Her retirement required the Board to navigate the first superintendent search and leadership transition since the district was founded.

President Galbraith led the Board through that unprecedented process with thoughtfulness and a clear understanding of what was at stake for our schools and community. Following a comprehensive search process, the Board selected me to succeed Dr. Cleveland, approving my contract in December 2025. From my perspective, as the individual selected through that process, I can attest to the care President Galbraith brought not only to the selection itself, but also to ensuring a successful transition from one administration to the next. She understood that the Board's responsibility extended beyond hiring a superintendent. It required honoring the district's history while establishing the conditions for its next chapter. The ability to balance continuity with progress has characterized her tenure.

During President Galbraith's leadership, Rio Rancho Public Schools has continued to grow and invest in opportunities for students. She has helped oversee the opening of Joe Harris Elementary School, the RioTECH campus, and the brand-new Puesta del Sol Preschool, three significant additions to our district that reflect very different but equally important needs: providing high-quality learning environments for a growing community and expanding career

and technical education opportunities that prepare students for college, careers, and the workforce.

She has also been a consistent and thoughtful voice in the Board's most fundamental responsibility: governance. The RRPS Board of Education establishes the overall direction and policies of the district, employs the superintendent, and provides oversight of the district's work. Over the past five years, President Galbraith has helped lead the Board through numerous policy discussions and changes while maintaining a focus on what those decisions ultimately mean for students, employees, families, and the broader Rio Rancho community.

What makes President Galbraith's service especially meaningful is that Rio Rancho Public Schools is more than an organization she governs. It is part of her own story. As a graduate of Rio Rancho High School, she has experienced this district as a student and has chosen to give back to the school system and community that helped shape her. She also has multiple children who have gone through the district, expanding her ties to Rio Rancho Public Schools and the City of Vision. That connection is evident in the seriousness with which she approaches the work and in her enduring focus on the students sitting in our classrooms today.

School board service is often challenging and frequently occurs outside the spotlight. Board members are asked to make consequential decisions, listen to competing perspectives, establish policy, oversee public resources, and remain focused on the long-term interests of students and their community. The role of Board President carries an additional responsibility: creating the conditions for five independently elected members to govern effectively as one body. President Galbraith has embraced that responsibility with strength, professionalism, and consistency.

As the superintendent who works alongside her, I value President Galbraith's willingness to ask difficult questions, engage thoughtfully with complex issues, and maintain the appropriate distinction between governance and administration. She cares deeply about the people of Rio Rancho Public Schools, but she also understands that meaningful leadership requires more than good intentions. It requires sound judgment, accountability, consistency, and the willingness to make difficult decisions in service of a larger purpose.

The New Mexico School Boards Association identifies exemplary service to students, staff, parents, and community members, significant accomplishments that positively affect a school district, active participation in school board activities, and continued leadership development among the criteria for Board Member of the Year. President Galbraith's record of service to Rio Rancho Public Schools demonstrates the impact that committed, thoughtful governance can have on an entire school system.

I entered the superintendency of Rio Rancho Public Schools during a period of significant transition. Having President Galbraith's experience and steady leadership at the head of our Board has been invaluable as we honor the district's past while setting ambitious goals for its

future. I am grateful for her partnership, her service, and, most importantly, her unwavering commitment to the students of Rio Rancho.

President Galbraith's leadership has helped guide Rio Rancho Public Schools through some of the most significant moments in our district's history, and her impact will be felt well beyond her time on the Board. She has approached this work not simply as an elected official, but as a graduate, parent, community member, and advocate who understands what our schools mean to the people of Rio Rancho. I am grateful to serve alongside her and to benefit from the wisdom, stability, and sense of purpose she brings to our work. For her years of dedicated service and her unwavering commitment to the students and families of Rio Rancho Public Schools, it is my privilege to nominate Mrs. Amanda Galbraith for the New Mexico School Boards Association Board Member of the Year Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Dodd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert W. Dodd, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Rio Rancho Public Schools

AMANDA GALBRAITH

Educator | Board of Education President | Community Leader | Race Director

Rio Rancho, New Mexico

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Educator and community leader with extensive experience in education, public service, organizational leadership, and community engagement. President of the Rio Rancho Public Schools Board of Education and a professional religious educator serving students throughout the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Lifelong Rio Rancho resident and Rio Rancho High School graduate with a demonstrated commitment to education, youth development, community service, and leadership.

LEADERSHIP & PUBLIC SERVICE

Rio Rancho Public Schools Board of Education

President, Board of Education | District 2
2020–Present

- Elected in 2019 to represent District 2 and took office in 2020.
- Selected to serve as President of the five-member Rio Rancho Public Schools Board of Education and has served in that leadership capacity throughout her tenure.
- Reelected without opposition to a second four-year term in 2023.
- Provides governance and leadership for one of New Mexico's largest public school districts, serving students and families throughout the rapidly growing Rio Rancho community.
- Has helped guide the district through significant changes in public education, long-term planning, district growth, and major educational initiatives.
- Led the Board through the district's first superintendent transition since Rio Rancho Public Schools was established more than three decades ago.
- Helped oversee the national search and selection process that resulted in the appointment of Dr. Robert W. Dodd as superintendent in December 2025, succeeding founding Superintendent Dr. V. Sue Cleveland.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Professional Religious Educator | 2019–Present

- Educates and mentors high school students through Seminary programs throughout the Albuquerque metropolitan area.
- Has directly taught students attending Rio Rancho High School and Volcano Vista High School through release-time programs.
- Supports the academic, personal, and character development of young people through daily instruction and relationship building.
- Began serving students as a volunteer Seminary teacher in 2018 before becoming a professional religious educator in 2019.

Saturday Warriors

Race Director | 2019–Present

- Helps organize and execute endurance sporting events throughout New Mexico.
- Coordinates events involving athletes, families, volunteers, and community partners.
- Supports race-day logistics and operations for events serving athletes of varying ages and competitive levels.
- Helps organize the **City of Lakes Triathlon** in Santa Rosa, New Mexico, featuring Sprint and Olympic-distance competitions.
- Helped coordinate the 2026 City of Lakes Triathlon, which hosted the **USA Triathlon New Mexico State Championships** for age-group and high-school athletes.

EDUCATION

Master's Degree

Western Governors University

Bachelor's Degree

Brigham Young University–Idaho

High School Diploma | Class of 2000

Rio Rancho High School

ATHLETIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Endurance Athlete & Triathlete

- Completed 1 **IRONMAN 140.6**
- Completed 4 **IRONMAN 70.3** triathlons
- Completed 2 **full marathons**
- Completed numerous half marathons and other endurance events
- Completed the **2026 Anchorage Mayor's Marathon** in **3:54**, finishing **42nd among women**

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

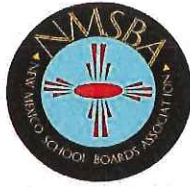
- Born and raised in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.
- Graduate of Rio Rancho High School and longtime advocate for the community's students and families.
- Mother of four children, three of whom graduated from Rio Rancho High School, with her youngest currently attending Rio Rancho High School.
- Longstanding involvement in education, youth development, community service, and endurance athletics throughout Rio Rancho and New Mexico.

AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

Educational Leadership • Board Governance • Public Service • Youth Development • Community Engagement • Organizational Leadership • Event Management • Volunteer Coordination • Endurance Athletics • Mentorship



Amanda Galbraith
Rio Rancho School Board Member
Board Member of the Year Nominee
2026



Board of Education of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Involvement in training (example: Far exceeds the state mandated minimum of 5 hours per training year).

Nomination Form

School Board Nominated: Cuba Independent School District Board of Education

Please check that you have submitted:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of each board member
- 3) Photo of the board
- 4) Any other supporting documents

Nominator Name: Rhiannon Chavez, Cuba ISD Superintendent
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: Cuba Independent School District

Category: Large District (Enrollment greater than 1,000)
 ✓ Small District (Enrollment less than 1,000)

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist

BOARD OF EDUCATION

TAYLOR PINTO, President
 JAMES D. CASAUS, Vice-President
 VIVIAN KEETSO, Board Secretary
 ELIZABETH MARTIN, Board Member
 DR. ADÁN DELGADO, Board Member

**ADMINISTRATION**

RHIANNON CHAVEZ, Superintendent
 JUDY ATENCIO, Assistant Superintendent
 OLIVIA CASAUS, Elementary School Principal
 ROBERT VALDEZ, Middle School Principal
 GILBERT DOMINGUEZ, High School Principal

September 18, 2026

Dear NMSBA Awards Committee:

It is my honor to nominate the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education for the Board of the Year Award. Our five-member Board brings significant experience in school board governance and public education, providing Cuba ISD with knowledgeable, thoughtful, and stable leadership. While members bring different backgrounds and perspectives to their service, they are united by one overarching goal: improving outcomes and opportunities for the students of Cuba Independent Schools.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the Cuba ISD Board is its unity of purpose. Board members consistently return to one important question: What will best support our students and improve their outcomes? This shared focus has created a Board that works exceptionally well together and is overwhelmingly unified in its commitment to the District's success. When different perspectives arise, members listen respectfully, consider one another's viewpoints, and work collaboratively toward decisions that best serve students. This combination of strong relationships and a clear student-centered focus has created a positive and productive governance culture.

The Board also demonstrates an outstanding commitment to effective governance, professional development, and active involvement in NMSBA. In 2025, the entire Cuba ISD Board received the NMSBA Leadership Development Award, reflecting the commitment of all five members to strengthening their knowledge and effectiveness as school board leaders. Board members regularly attend NMSBA conferences and regional meetings, and members have served as Region II officers, contributing their time and leadership beyond our own District. Cuba ISD will also host an upcoming NMSBA Region II meeting this spring, providing another opportunity for our Board to support collaboration and engagement among school boards in our region. Board members also pursue professional learning at the national level through conferences and organizations such as the National School Boards Association, National Indian Education Association, and Johnson-O'Malley programs. They bring what they learn back to Cuba ISD and continually seek ways to strengthen governance and improve opportunities for students.

As Superintendent, I am especially grateful for the Board's support of district leadership and its commitment to the overall success of our schools. Members understand and respect the distinction between governance and administration while remaining engaged, informed, and invested in the work of the District. They ask thoughtful questions, provide valuable perspective, support their superintendent and staff, and remain focused on moving Cuba ISD forward.

P.O. Box 70, Cuba, NM 87013 | (575) 289-3211 | Fax (575) 289-3314

www.cuba.k12.nm.us

Cuba Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital or veteran status or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment. Cuba Independent School District also prohibits the use of racial, ethnic, and/or sexual slurs, including sexual harassment. If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in a school meeting or hearing, or if you wish to receive assistance or information regarding student grievances, language translations of District policy, Section 504 or Title IX, please contact the Superintendent's Office at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. The district Title IX Officer may be contacted at the address or phone number listed above. For concerns at the school level, Elementary – Ext. 400, Middle School – Ext. 300, or High School – Ext. 200.

The Cuba Independent School District Board of Education exemplifies the strength of a governing team united by a common purpose. Their experience, professionalism, commitment to continued learning, and unwavering focus on students have created a strong foundation for the continued success of our District. I am proud to serve alongside a Board that remains focused on ensuring Cuba ISD students have the opportunities and support they need to succeed.

It is with great pride that I nominate the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education for the Board of the Year Award and respectfully ask that they receive your consideration for this recognition. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Chavez', written in a cursive style.

Rhiannon Chavez
Superintendent
Cuba Independent School District

**Cuba Independent School District Board of Education
Board Member Résumés**

Taylor Pinto, President

Board & Governance

- Currently serving his third term on the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education
- Serves as Board President and previously served as Vice President
- Brings knowledge and experience in school finance, policy, Native American education, special education, and community engagement
- Recipient of the 2025 NMSBA Leadership Development Exemplary Award

Professional & Community Experience

- Works for a Navajo Nation Council Delegate
- Brings valuable experience with tribal government, community relations, and issues affecting Navajo students and families
- Knowledgeable about the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) programs, special education, and policies.

Cuba ISD & School Board Involvement

- Currently raising two grandchildren who attend Cuba Independent Schools
- Regularly participates in local, regional, state, and national school board activities and professional development
- Active participant in NMSBA regional meetings and conferences, as well as national learning opportunities through NSBA, NIEA, and JOM

James D. Casaús, Vice President

Board & Governance

- Currently serving his second term on the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education
- Serves as Board Vice President
- Brings particular knowledge and interest in school policy, athletics, student opportunities, and community engagement
- Recipient of the 2025 NMSBA Leadership Development Exemplary Award

Professional & Community Experience

- Employed by the New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Local rancher with strong ties to Cuba and the surrounding rural communities
- Strong advocate for student opportunities both in and beyond the classroom

Cuba ISD & School Board Involvement

- Graduate of Cuba Independent Schools
- Father of four recent Cuba ISD graduates
- Regularly participates in local, regional, state, and national school board activities and professional development
- Active participant in NMSBA regional meetings and conferences, as well as national learning opportunities through NSBA, NIEA, and JOM

Vivian Keetso, Secretary

Board & Governance

- Currently serving her fourth term on the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education
- Serves as Board Secretary
- Brings extensive knowledge and experience in school finance, Indian education, and public education
- Recipient of the 2025 NMSBA Leadership Development Exemplary Award

Professional & Educational Experience

- More than 25 years of professional experience in public education with a neighboring school district
- Brings extensive knowledge of school operations and the educational needs of students, staff, and families

Cuba ISD & School Board Involvement

- Graduate of Cuba Independent Schools
- Maintains deep family and community ties to the District, with several nieces and nephews who have attended Cuba ISD
- Regularly participates in local, regional, state, and national school board activities and professional development
- Active participant in NMSBA regional meetings and conferences, as well as national learning opportunities through NSBA, NIEA, and JOM

Elizabeth Martin, Member

Board & Governance

- Currently serving her third term on the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education
- Brings extensive knowledge and experience in special education, federal programs, Johnson-O'Malley programs, family advocacy, and services for students with disabilities
- Recipient of the 2025 NMSBA Leadership Development Exemplary Award

Professional & Educational Experience

- Former longtime Cuba Independent School District employee
- Former Executive Director of EPICS
- Extensive experience in special education advocacy, family support, training, and federal programs

Cuba ISD & School Board Involvement

- Graduate of Cuba Independent Schools
- Several of her children graduated from Cuba ISD
- Currently raising a granddaughter who attends Cuba ISD
- Regularly participates in local, regional, state, and national school board activities and professional development
- Active participant in NMSBA regional meetings and conferences, as well as national learning opportunities through NSBA, NIEA, and JOM

Dr. Adán Delgado, Member

Board & Governance

- Currently serving his first term on the Cuba Independent School District Board of Education
- Serves as Region II Vice President for the New Mexico School Boards Association
- Presenter for NMSBA professional development on effective governance, superintendent evaluation and support, and school finance
- Recipient of the 2025 NMSBA Leadership Development Exemplary Award, Level I Award, and Level II Award

Professional & Educational Experience

- More than 28 years of experience in public education and educational leadership
- Former Superintendent of Cuba Independent School District and Pojoaque Valley School District
- Former Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Finance and Operations for the New Mexico Public Education Department, with responsibility for more than \$5 billion in state and \$2 billion in federal K–12 funding
- Former Executive Director of the Northwest Regional Education Cooperative
- Former member of the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board
- Current member of the New Mexico Career Technical Education Advisory Board
- Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of New Mexico
- Expertise in school governance, finance, policy, strategic planning, district operations, and educational leadership

Cuba ISD & School Board Involvement

- Graduate of Cuba Independent Schools
- Former Superintendent of Cuba ISD
- All three children are Cuba ISD graduates
- Active in NMSBA regional and statewide leadership and regularly participates in state and national professional development
- Attends national school board and education conferences, including opportunities through NSBA and other national organizations



2025 Leadership Development Program Awards

E = Exemplary = Earned 20 or more hours within the program/training year (**can be received yearly**).
Level I = Reached 24 cumulative training hours within the program/training year (**awarded only one time**).
Level II = Reached 36 cumulative training hours within the program/training year (**awarded only one time**).
MBM = Master Board Member distinction – Level II plus presentations/practicums and coursework

Alamogordo

Angela M. Cadwallader – E
Craig Danekas – E, II
Brandy Murphy – II
Shannan Wright – II
Ryal McMurry – E

Albuquerque

Josefina Dominguez – E
Danielle Gonzales - II
Heather Benavidez – II
Ronalda Tome-Warito – E

Artesia

Kristy Crockett - II

Aztec

Fran Dobey – E
Laci Newland – II
Amanda Sutherland - I

Belen

Aubrey Tucker – E
Larry Garley – E
Ralph Fernandez – E
Joanne Silva – E

Bernalillo

Christine Suina – E

Capitan

Joseph Fraley - II
Weston Hacker – II
Zeke Greer – II

Carrizozo

Faithe Samora – I

Central

Christina Aspaas – E
Gary Montoya – E
Suzette Haskie – E
Matthew Tso – E, II

Chama

Stephanie Maestas - E
Abraham Baca – E

Clayton

Guston Woods - I
Jana Lees - I

Cloudcroft

Lance Wright – E
Jeffrey Eigenmann E, II
Cassandra Saffle – E, I

Clovis

Cindy Osburn - E
Amy Egbert - E

Cobre

Gabrielle Begay – E, II
Emmarie Heredia – I

Corona

Alena Brandenberger – I
Cody Lightfoot - I

Cuba

Vivian Keetso - E
Taylor Pinto – E
Elizabeth Martin - E
James Casaus – E
Adan Delgado – E, II

Deming

Daniel Krowl – E
Mary Lou Cameron – E
Robert Orosco – II
Ashlea Crumley – I, II

Dexter

Nancy Miles - E
Juanita Segovia – E
Kellie Cobos – II
Linda Lopez – II
Luis Davalos – E, I

Dora

Dallen Skelley – I

Dulce

Annette Teube - E
Wesley Vigil – E
Lorene Willis - E

Espanola

Javin Coriz – II

Estancia

Randol Riley – E
Heather Hedges – E
Ashley Romero – E
Sarah Lucero – E

Farmington

Krista McWilliams – II
Lisa Maxwell – E

Gadsden

Laura Salazar Flores – E
Claudia Rodriguez – E
Arlean Murillo – E

Gallup-McKinley Co.

Kevin Mitchell – E
Priscilla Benally – E
Michael Schaaf – E

Grady

Elnabeth Grau - I

Grants-Cibola

Francie Lee – E
Toby Walter Jaramillo – E, II

Hagerman

Chris Pilley - II

Hatch Valley

Elva Garay - E
Rey Gonzales - I
Richard Marquez – II
Joaquin Legarreta - I

Hobbs

Peggy Appleton – E
Kerry Romine – E, II

Hondo Valley

Alice Velasquez – E
Irene Sanchez – II
Jason Candelaria – I, II
Debbie Jo Almager - E

House

Marsha Stowe - I

Jal

Amy Crawford - II

Jemez Mountain

Lucy Morfin – E, I, II

Jemez Valley

Peter Madalena - E
Cathy Trujillo-Wiseman - E
Amelia Trujillo – I, II

2026 Cuba Independent School District Board Members



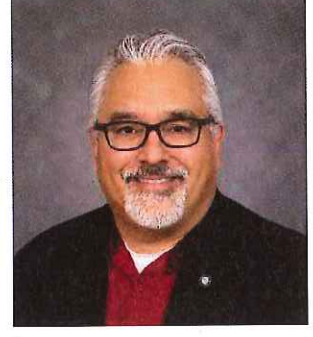
Taylor Pinto, President



James D. Casaus, VP



Vivian Keetso, Secretary



Adan Delgado, Board Member

**Not pictured: Elizabeth Martin, Board Member*



Board of Education of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Involvement in training (example: Far exceeds the state mandated minimum of 5 hours per training year).

Nomination Form

School Board Nominated: Lordsburg School Board

Please check that you have submitted:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of each board member
- 3) Photo of the board
- 4) Any other supporting documents

Nominator Name: Alyssa Esquivel
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: Lordsburg

Category: Large District (Enrollment greater than 1,000)
 X Small District (Enrollment less than 1,000)

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist

Board of Education of the Year Nomination

Lordsburg School Board

Dear Members of the Board of Education of the Year Selection Committee,

I am honored to nominate the **Lordsburg School Board** for Board of Education of the Year. As a team of five, we have had the opportunity to see firsthand the dedication, hard work, and commitment this Board has shown to the students, staff, families, and community of Lordsburg.

The Lordsburg School Board has worked diligently to make meaningful improvements for our school district while keeping students and staff at the center of their decisions. One of the Board's most important accomplishments has been beginning the development of the district's **first strategic plan**. This work demonstrates their commitment to creating a clear vision for the future and establishing goals that will help guide the district toward continued success.

The Board has also recognized the importance of connectivity for students and staff, especially in a rural community. Through these efforts, the district has provided free internet access to students and staff, helping remove barriers to learning and ensuring students have greater access to educational opportunities both inside and outside of school.

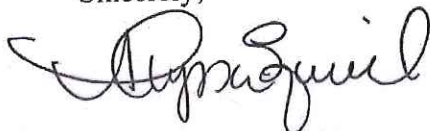
Another strength of the Lordsburg School Board is how it has worked with community members and local partners to create opportunities for students and families. Their efforts to provide **free game entries** have helped strengthen the connection between our schools and the community. These opportunities allow families to come together, support our students, and build pride in Lordsburg schools.

What makes the Lordsburg School Board deserving of this recognition is not just one accomplishment, but the continued commitment they demonstrate through their teamwork and service. They listen, collaborate, seek solutions, and work to make decisions that benefit the entire school community. Their willingness to invest time and effort into the future of our district shows how deeply they care about our students and staff.

As a team of five, we believe the Lordsburg School Board represents what a strong Board of Education should be: **dedicated, collaborative, forward-thinking, and committed to the success of students and staff**. Their work is making a positive difference in our district and our community.

For these reasons, I am proud to nominate the **Lordsburg School Board for Board of Education of the Year**. I am grateful for their service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the students, staff, families, and community they serve.

Sincerely,



Alyssa Esquivel
Lordsburg Municipal Schools

2026 Lordsburg School Board

Aimee Samuel- has completed 14 hours of required training.

Susie Cole- has completed 9 hours of required training.

Alyssa Esquivel- Serving as Region Officer, NMSBA Vice President. On the board of the Legislative Committee. On the Board of Directors. Has completed 21 hours of required training.

Eddie Parra- has completed 28 hours of required training.

Fabian De La O- has completed 20 hours of required training.



Lordsburg School Board 2026



Board of Education of the Year

Criteria for Judging Award

- 1) Active in local, region, state and national school board activities.
- 2) Exemplary service provided to students, staff, parents, and patrons of the school districts.
- 3) Significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on the school district.
- 4) Involvement in training (example: Far exceeds the state mandated minimum of 5 hours per training year).

Nomination Form

School Board Nominated: **Pojoaque Valley School District**

Please check that you have submitted:

- 1) Letter of nomination outlining the board's accomplishments as they relate to the criteria set forth
- 2) Brief resume of each board member
- 3) Photo of the board
- 4) Any other supporting documents

Nominator Name: **Dr. Channell Segura, Superintendent**
(Can be a Board member, Superintendent or other)

School District: **Pojoaque Valley School District**

Category: ☒ Large District (Enrollment greater than 1,000)
☐ Small District (Enrollment less than 1,000)

Submit your nomination package via email to Elizabeth Egelhoff, NMSBA Program Director at elizab@nmsba.org or mail to:

New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: Friday, September 18, 2026

*See next page for checklist



1574 State Road 502
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87506
P: 505-455-2282 / F: 505-455-7152
www.pvs.k12.nm.us

Dr. Channell Segura
Superintendent

Mario Vigil
Associate Superintendent

Michella Ortiz
Chief Financial Officer

Staci Mascareñas
Human Resources Director

September 11, 2026

Dear New Mexico School Boards Association Members of the Selection Committee:

It is my honor to nominate the Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education for the New Mexico School Boards Association's School Board of the Year Award. During the 2025–2026 school year, our Board demonstrated strong leadership, sound judgment, collaboration, and a clear commitment to improving educational opportunities for every student we serve.

This year brought significant change throughout our district. The Board worked closely with me as Superintendent to quickly establish a clear direction, strengthen district systems, manage public resources responsibly, and prepare Pojoaque Valley Schools for continued success. Its members approached difficult decisions with professionalism, careful consideration, transparency, and a consistent focus on students.

One of the Board's most important accomplishments was the adoption and launch of *Ignite the Path*, our district's 2025–2028 Strategic Plan. Developed through a comprehensive process involving student data and input from staff, students, families, Tribal partners, and community members, the plan established measurable priorities in literacy; numeracy; student wellness and belonging; and college and career readiness. The Board prioritized the use of the plan in collaboration with me to guide budget decisions, staffing, programs, facilities, policies, and expectations for district performance.

The Board has placed student achievement at the center of its work. It supported the completion of a comprehensive curriculum audit, the development of a districtwide assessment calendar, and the use of beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year data to monitor literacy, mathematics, attendance, grades, graduation, and college and career readiness. Particular attention was given to the students identified in the Yazzie and Martinez decision, including Native American students, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.

To strengthen instructional support, the Board approved the creation of a Director of Federal Programs, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment position, as well as district literacy and mathematics leadership positions. It supported the adoption of high-quality mathematics instructional materials, the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices, and the successful pursuit of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant. These investments contributed to encouraging academic results, including a 12-percentage-point increase in fourth-grade English language arts proficiency and a six-percentage-point increase in eighth-grade English language arts proficiency. Our students also achieved notable success in Advanced Placement coursework, including a 62.5% pass rate in AP U.S. Government, compared with the statewide rate of 49.2%.

The Board expanded opportunities for students beyond traditional academics. It supported the expansion of AVID into the middle school, the development of Medical Science and Business and Management pathways at Pojoaque Valley High School, and the addition of boys' and girls' golf and Esports. These decisions reflect the Board's understanding that students are more likely to succeed when they are connected to rigorous academics, career exploration, athletics, activities, fine arts, and a supportive school community.

The Board also showed a strong commitment to district employees. It approved a 1.5% salary increase for all staff, exceeding the state-funded 1% increase, while maintaining responsible financial practices. It supported the alignment of salary schedules, stipends, overtime procedures, employee handbooks, and personnel practices to improve consistency and fairness across the district. The Board also prioritized educator support by embedding daily collaboration time into the instructional schedule and investing in professional development, instructional coaching, and high-quality materials.

The transition to a four-day instructional week for 2026–2027 illustrates the Board's willingness to listen, conduct research, and make difficult decisions. The Board supported an extensive engagement process that included biweekly calendar committee meetings, research, public presentations, and a survey that received more than 1,300 responses. Approximately 80% of respondents supported the transition. Before taking action, the Board carefully considered instructional time, attendance, employee recruitment and retention, family needs, student services, and the realities of operating a rural district. The resulting calendar increased daily instructional time, embedded educator collaboration, and established a plan to monitor student and staff attendance, academic performance, and operational impact.

The Board's leadership was also evident in its management of district facilities. It built public trust and community support for a General Obligation Bond to address facility needs and advance the construction of a new Pojoaque Valley Middle School. Voters approved the bond, by expressing 80% support, demonstrating confidence in the Board's direction and responsible use of public funds. The Board also supported the completion of a critical lease agreement with the Pueblo of Pojoaque, secured approval from the Public School Capital Outlay Council, and advanced planning for the middle school project.

During construction planning, the Board approved the temporary relocation of the Sixth Grade Academy to a dedicated area at Pojoaque Valley High School. This decision avoided the expense of portable buildings while addressing student safety, appropriate separation, and instructional continuity.

Additional facility initiatives included advancing improvements to the Pojoaque Valley High School football field and track, as well as a soccer/softball field, engaging the community in reviewing design options, and identifying future capital priorities such as a transportation facility, auxiliary gymnasium, landscape improvements, outdoor basketball courts, and a multi-purpose field.

The Board also supported the modernization of district operations. During the year, the district transitioned to the Synergy Student Information System, Tyler Time Clock, and Red Rover Human Resource-Management systems. It launched a new district website and mobile application to improve communication with families and the community. The Board maintained transparent monthly budget reporting, responded to findings and recommendations from operational and audit reviews, and has set the expectation for bi-monthly finance committee meetings and quarterly audit committee meetings to demonstrate their care and investment in the district's financial health.

The Board's work to strengthen community partnerships has been especially important. It supported stronger relationships with neighboring Pueblos, and participated in regular Tribal Education Director meetings, Native American Parent Committee meetings, public information meetings, and formal Tribal consultations. A recent consultation with Ohkay Owingeh was described by the New Mexico Public Education Department's Assistant Secretary for Indian Education as the most productive consultation she had witnessed anywhere in the state during her three and one-half years of service. She identified it as a model consultation and commended the district's leadership and collaborative approach. The consultation resulted in shared priorities related to attendance and special education identification and processes.

Throughout the year, the Board maintained high standards for its own governance and professional growth. Its members, in collaboration with me, established communication protocols and Board norms, participated in professional development, strengthened the Superintendent evaluation process, and respected the distinction between governance and administration. Board members asked thoughtful questions, examined data, considered community perspectives, and remained focused on the district's goals while addressing complex issues. As the superintendent, they send community concerns directly to me, which I appreciate, as it helps me to address the issues efficiently.

Every Board member has far exceeded New Mexico's required minimum of five hours of annual training, and has been recognized multiple times for earning progressive awards based on cumulative training hours within a single year by the NMSBA Leadership Development Program. All members have attended a National School Boards Association Conference, where they participated in sessions addressing effective governance, student achievement, leadership, school safety, legal responsibilities, and emerging issues in public education. The majority are also present at the annual NMSBA Law Conference, as well as regional meetings. Their investment in professional development and learning has strengthened the Board's ability to make informed decisions and govern effectively.

The Board's leadership also extends beyond Pojoaque Valley Schools. Board Member, Toby Velasquez, serves as the NMSBA Region II President, representing and supporting school boards throughout the region, and on the NMSBA Board of Directors, representing and supporting school boards from across the state. He is also on the Commission of the New Mexico Athletics Association and a member of the Northern New Mexico College Branch Community College Board. Board Secretary, Felix Benavidez, participates as a member of the New Mexico School Board Association Legislative and Resolution Committee, where he is a strong advocate and voice for our community, and other school districts, when it comes to state legislation that impacts public education. President Susan Quintana serves on our Pojoaque Valley School District Educational Foundation Board, our valued non-profit partner committed to supporting our school district. In further testament to their commitment to professional growth, responsibility, and service, each Board member has served as a Board officer during their terms of office. Their service reflects the Board's commitment to public education not only within our district, but across northern New Mexico and the state.

What distinguishes the Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education is not simply the number of initiatives it supported and approved, but the clear purpose connecting its decisions. Each major action supported a larger goal: improving student achievement, expanding opportunities, supporting employees, strengthening public trust, modernizing systems, and creating safe and effective learning environments for all of our students.

Our district is small, but mighty, and the work undertaken this year required considerable effort from the entire organization and community. The Board did not allow limited capacity to limit its goals. Its members led responsibly, kept students at the center of their decisions, and worked with district leadership, employees, families, Tribal partners, and the community to move the district forward. They were also not afraid to support difficult or unpopular decisions to protect the wellbeing of our students and our district as a whole.

I am proud to serve alongside a Board that understands both the responsibility and the importance of public education. The Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education has demonstrated effective governance, responsible financial oversight, community-centered leadership, and a sustained commitment to creating the conditions in which students and staff can be their best every day. As their only employee, I have felt supported by them individually, and collectively, especially when tough decisions have had to be made in the spirit of what is best for our students and district. Even when they don't agree with one another, they still collaborate and engage in discussions respectfully, which is a great model of professionalism for our district and community.

For these reasons, I respectfully nominate the Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education for the NMSBA School Board of the Year Award. Its members are deserving of this recognition, and their collective service reflects the high standard of public school governance that communities throughout New Mexico should expect.

Sincerely,



Dr. Channell Segura
Superintendent
Pojoaque Valley School District

Pojoaque Valley Schools Board of Education

Susan Quintana
President

Jerome Lujan
Vice-President

Felix Benavidez
Secretary

Toby Velasquez
Member

Adam Muller
Member

POJOAQUE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD MEMBER RESUMES

Board President, Susan Quintana

Susan Quintana has dedicated more than 40 years to New Mexico schools, shaping generations of students and educators through her work in the classroom and outside those classroom walls. She spent over 35 years as a teacher, including 31 years on the Pojoaque High School staff, where she was known for her commitment to academic excellence and student growth.

Throughout her teaching career, Ms. Quintana served on numerous school committees and participated in extensive professional development at the district, regional, and national levels. Among the highlights of her work were her selection as a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Fellow and her collaboration with teachers and students in Ukraine, experiences that deepened her commitment to global education and historical literacy.

For 13 years, she directed a national Holocaust education program for the Olga Lengyel Institute based in New York City, helping educators across the country strengthen their instruction on Holocaust, human rights, and historical memory. Her excellence in teaching has been recognized through her selection as a Golden Apple Fellow and the LANL Foundation's Excellence in Teaching Award.

In 2022, Ms. Quintana began her service on the Pojoaque Valley School Board. She served as Secretary beginning in January 2022 and has been Board President since January 2026. In her leadership role, she is guiding major district initiatives, including the completion of a new middle school and the development of a teacherage to support educator housing.

Now retired from full-time teaching, Ms. Quintana continues her lifelong commitment to service. She volunteers 15 hours a week at a local charity thrift store, supports community food security through her work with The Food Depot, and remains active with the Golden Apple Foundation.

Board Vice President, Jerome P. Lujan

Jerome P. Lujan is a lifelong champion of education and community service in the Pojoaque Valley. A proud graduate of the Pojoaque Valley School District Class of 1983, Mr. Lujan has dedicated decades to supporting the students, families, and schools of PVSD, first as an active community member and now as the Vice President of the PVSD Board of Education.

Demonstrating overwhelming community trust, Mr. Lujan earned a second term on the PVSD School Board with over 90 percent of the vote. Professionally, he has shared his trade expertise and passion for teaching as an instructor for the JATC IBEW Local 611 Joint Apprenticeship Program, helping prepare the next generation of skilled professionals.

Mr. Lujan's family roots in the district run deep. He is the proud father of 5 children who are all PVSD graduates. His wife also devoted more than 12 years of service to PVSD as an educator, teaching various Advanced Placement (AP) mathematics courses prior to her retirement.

Looking to the future, Mr. Lujan is dedicated to ensuring every PVSD student leaves high school fully prepared for workforce readiness, higher education, and lifelong success. Drawing directly from his experience as an IBEW Local 611 trade instructor, his key priorities center on expanding career and technical education, strengthening hands-on vocational courses, and modernizing technical learning spaces within the district.

He is focused on building pre-apprenticeship pathways by establishing direct pipelines and credit opportunities between PVSD high school programs, regional trade unions, and community colleges. Furthermore, Mr. Lujan aims to equip students with recognized industry credentials and practical skills so they can seamlessly transition into high-paying, in-demand skilled trades upon graduation. By maintaining rigorous AP academic courses alongside vocational training, he ensures every student has access to balanced educational pathways tailored to their individual career goals.

Through his leadership on the board, background in technical instruction, and enduring commitment as a parent and community advocate, Jerome P. Lujan remains steadfastly focused on expanding opportunities and fostering excellence across the Pojoaque Valley School District.

Board Secretary, Felix Benavidez

Felix Benavidez has been actively involved in the Pojoaque Valley community and the Pojoaque Valley School District since 1985. Throughout the years, he has remained personally committed to expanding and strengthening educational and recreational opportunities for the community's children.

He has served on numerous committees and supported many community initiatives, including the development of preschool and kindergarten programs, planning for Pablo Roybal Elementary School, Pojoaque Valley High School, and the District Central Office, as well as summer programs, the Parent Teacher Association, parent involvement programs, youth sports, the Pojoaque Fire Department, and various district fundraisers.

Mr. Benavidez first served on the Pojoaque Valley Schools Board of Education from 1990 through 1998 and returned to the Board in 2020. During his years of service, he has held the leadership positions of Board President and Board Vice President. He currently serves as Secretary of the Board of Education.

After a 35-year career, Mr. Benavidez retired as a licensed clinical social worker. His professional experience includes service with the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, the New Mexico Department of Human Services, Santa Fe Public Schools, and the Pojoaque Valley School District.

He feels blessed to have crossed paths with, and to continue learning from, the many caring and generous individuals and families who make up the Pojoaque Valley community.

Board Member, Toby Velasquez

A native of Mora, New Mexico, Toby Velasquez graduated from Mora High School and is an alumnus of New Mexico Highlands University. Toby was elected to the Pojoaque Valley School Board in 2015 where he has served as Board Member, Board Secretary, and Board President. In 2024, Toby was elected as NMSBA Region II President and is now serving a second term. In 2026, Toby was appointed to the New Mexico Activities Association Commission, and he has supported the New Mexico School Board Association Aspiring Superintendents Program as a panel member.

Toby has served on national, regional and local non-profit executive boards, and was the first New Mexican, first Hispanic, and youngest elected President of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. Toby also served as a two-term President of the Western States Boating Administrators Association.

In 2015, former U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Charles Johnson appointed Toby to the National Boating Safety Advisory Council (a Federal Advisory Committee), and he was reappointed in 2016 and has received three Public Service Commendations for his contributions.

Toby has worked for the State of New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department - State Parks Division for over 27 years. Toby started as a summer Seasonal Laborer in high school and college and was hired as a Park Ranger after college. Toby went on to serve as Park Superintendent, Northeast Regional Manager, Chief of Law Enforcement and Boating Safety, Deputy Director, and has been the Director since 2021. Toby has been a legislative liaison for twenty years, and has served on multiple commissions, task forces, on a gubernatorial transition team, and as an executive secretary to an advisory board.

An avid outdoorsman, he spends his free time ranching, hiking, fishing, and hunting with family and friends.

Board Member, Adam Muller

Adam Edward Muller serves as a member of the Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education. He was first elected in 2019, began his service in 2020, and was reelected to a second term in 2023. During his tenure, he has served as a board member, vice president, and president.

Mr. Muller's priorities have consistently centered on the students, staff, and administration of the district. He strives to make decisions that support school safety, individual well-being, educational excellence, and students' preparation for college, careers, and life. His service on the Board of Education provides him with a meaningful opportunity to give back to his community and to the school district that contributed to his own success.

Born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Mr. Muller is a proud tribal member and lifelong resident of Nambé Pueblo, where he and his wife, Marissa, are raising their children in accordance with their Indigenous traditions. They are the proud parents of Ashleigh, Darrin, Anissa, Cienna, Lilah, Laila, and Alijah. He is the son of Patrick and Diane Muller and the brother of Vernon Muller and Jacqueline Griego. He is also a proud uncle, cousin, and friend.

Throughout his life, Mr. Muller has remained actively involved in his Pueblo and the surrounding community. He has served as a mentor, role model, traditional leader, peer, and youth sports coach in basketball, soccer, Little League baseball, and softball. He has also served in various leadership roles on community boards and organizations.

Mr. Muller began his education at Nambé Pueblo Head Start and attended Pojoaque Valley Schools from kindergarten through his graduation in May 1994. He later earned three degrees from Eastern New Mexico University: an Associate of Applied Science in Fire Protection Technology, an Associate of Science in Emergency Medical Services and Fire Science, and a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Fire and Emergency Services Administration.

With more than 28 years of public service in fire protection and emergency medical services, Mr. Muller has built a distinguished career with the Los Alamos Fire Department, Presbyterian Hospital's Emergency Medical Services Division, and Los Alamos National Laboratory. He retired from the Los Alamos Fire Department in 2016 as an operations battalion chief and firefighter-paramedic. During his career with the department, he advanced through the ranks from firefighter to driver-engineer, captain, and, ultimately, battalion chief.

While serving with the Los Alamos Fire Department, Mr. Muller also began a concurrent career with Presbyterian Hospital's Emergency Medical Services Division, where he currently serves as a field operations supervisor and paramedic. Following his retirement from the fire department, he joined Los Alamos National Laboratory as a fire protection specialist.

Through his work with the Los Alamos Fire Department, Española Valley Emergency Medical Services, Presbyterian Hospital, and Los Alamos National Laboratory, Mr. Muller has developed extensive training, experience, and knowledge in public service, budgeting, strategic planning, grant management, personnel management, leadership, teamwork, team building, and communication. These experiences continue to strengthen his thoughtful and productive service on the Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education.

Board of Education



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Finance Committee

Policy Committee

Pojoaque Foundation Committee



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Audit Committee

Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) (Alternate)



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Audit Committee

Policy Committee

Tribal Education Director Committee

Region III Resolution Committee



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Capital Improvement Committee (CIC)

Northern New Mexico Branch Committee



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Capital Improvement Committee (CIC)

Tribal Education Director Committee

Northern New Mexico Branch Committee (Alternate)

Pojoaque Foundation Committee (Alternate)