

# Las Cruces Community School News

JANUARY 2019

## Launching the Las Cruces Partnership for Community Schools

The City of Las Cruces and Las Cruces Public Schools hosted a joint press-conference to announce the launch of the Las Cruces Partnership for Community Schools, a structure that will provide collaborative leadership in expanding the community schools initiative locally.



Las Cruces Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Greg Ewing, LCPS District Training Specialist/Community School Liaison Mary Parr-Sanchez, LCPS Coordinator for Community Schools David Greenberg and Mayor Ken Miyagishima answer questions Dec. 3 during a joint press conference at City Hall. Bulletin photos by Elva K. Österreich

## Las Cruces to expand community schools initiative in partnership with school district

Las Cruces Sun-News [article](#)

LASCRUCES - Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima joined Las Cruces Public Schools Superintendent

Greg Ewing on Monday to announce a joint partnership for Las Cruces Community Schools.

District and city officials announced that a joint body would be charged with expanding community school services in the city. Lynn Middle School is already serving as a designated "community school."

Community schools partner with local organizations to provide extracurricular programs, including additional meals, medical services or other programs to low-income families.

Through a joint powers agreement between the city and the schools, a public board consisting of representatives chosen by the city and the district will govern "a network of high-quality community schools to promote student achievement, positive conditions for learning and the well-being of families and communities."

The agreement also allows for board participation by members of the National Education Association's Las Cruces chapter, New Mexico State University and non-profit organizations.

"We know that when we prioritize all our children in Las Cruces, we are making an investment that has huge returns — in a quality workforce, in a vibrant democracy and in a cohesive community," said David Greenberg, the district's community schools coordinator.

Miyagishima noted that factors outside the classroom affect students' health, security, and their chances of success at school. "Sometimes both parents have to work. Sometimes the

children ... may need some assistance," he said.

The forms of assistance may vary according to the needs of community members served by school sites, Ewing said.

Miyagishima said that initiative would be eligible for city funding at an amount to be determined by the Las Cruces City Council. He speculated that councilors could approve as much as \$70,000 in annual funding initially, and that he expected the board to be seated and conducting public meetings by next fall.

*Algernon D'Amassa can be reached at 575-541-5451, [adamassa@lcsun-news.com](mailto:adamassa@lcsun-news.com) or @AlgernonActor on Twitter.*

## Community Schools Press Conference

See video [here](#).

## "Community Schools" initiative could help low-income Las Cruces students

See full KVIA-TV story [here](#).

## City of Las Cruces, Las Cruces Public Schools come together to help students

See full KTSM-TV story [here](#).

## Organizations collaborate to build 'Community Schools'

See full Las Cruces Bulletin story [here](#).

## Las Cruces Expands Community Schools Initiative

See full KRWG story [here](#).



Tomas



Sylvia



Albert

### SO WHO Enterprises Provides Self-Care Day and PTO sponsors luncheon for Lynn Staff

On Tuesday, December 18, SO WHO Enterprises provided a full-day of self-care workshops for Lynn staff, including massages, stress relief games and activities, massages, board games, fresh fruit smoothies, coloring, reading, aromatherapy, nail care, brain teasers, old school arcade games and more. SO WHO Enterprises, Inc. is a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization that strengthens the lives of youth AND those who serve/support them through resiliency based character education, mentoring, leadership, professional development and supportive services. Big thanks to Kim York, President of SO WHO (and Lynn social worker) and Janean Garney, Lynn Instructional Specialist. Ms. York led a discussion about the impact of stress and the importance of developing a practical self-care plan. Each staff also received a Self-Care Starter kit. Contact SO WHO at (575) 312-0553 or [kyork@sowhoenterprises.org](mailto:kyork@sowhoenterprises.org).

On Wednesday, the Lynn PTO followed this up by providing breakfast and lunch for Lynn staff to reward them for all their hard work during the semester. Thanks to Lynn families for rallying around our hardworking staff! Local businesses who participated in this event by donating food include (will get you these names ASAP)



### Sheriff Elect Kim Stewart Speaks to Lynn Students

One model program at Lynn is the STARS mentorship program, in which high school students come to Lynn to mentor Lynn students every week. The STARS curriculum requires participants to develop a service project for their community. This year students chose to write letters of appreciation to local law enforcement to thank them for their service. On Tuesday, December 18, Sheriff Elect Kim Stewart came to Lynn and educated the students on the work that is done by our local law enforcement members as well as community needs and career possibilities for the field of law enforcement.

### It takes a community to educate a child at Lynn Middle School

January will mark two years since Lynn Middle School in Las Cruces re-imagined itself.

A walkaround classrooms and its cafeteria reveals signs of the metamorphosis.

On any given weekday students drop in for healthy snacks or warm clothes in the school's community room. Parents have access to computers, WiFi and office supplies to apply for jobs. Families and neighbors stop in for staples at a monthly food pantry operated by Roadrunner Food Bank.

Meanwhile, a mobile Boys and Girls Club, set up in the school's cafeteria, keeps them busy and, some say, out of trouble.

Lynn is a community school, a model pioneered in the state at Albuquerque Public Schools.

It's an idea as old as the one-room schoolhouse, but with a modern twist. Instead of sending students out into the world to get help for non-classroom challenges, the school brings the world to them.

Volunteers and organizations swarm Lynn to help children deal with the effects of poverty so that they can concentrate on learning. Like the rest of the state, three-quarters of Las Cruces school children are eligible for free and reduced lunch, an indicator of poverty.

Supporters of the changes point to signs of improvement at the school.

Since 2017, Lynn has moved from an "F" school to a "D" school in the Public Education Department's school grading system. The student absentee rate has dropped from around 15 percent each day to about 8 to 10 percent, said Principal Toni Hull. That's still high, but she hopes to bring it down even further. A new disciplinary approach that minimizes suspensions and seeks resolution to conflict has dropped the number of referrals for discipline from 52 in the first month of school last year, to 26 referrals in the same period this year, according to Hull. Both mean more students are in class and learning.

See full story [here](#).

# What is a 'community school?' A tour of Lynn Middle School's growing social program

From Las Cruces Sun-News [article](#)

*This article has been updated to clarify the district's claim that Lynn will be the first middle school in Las Cruces to offer an in-school health center.*

LAS CRUCES - On a Wednesday afternoon early in December, nearly a hundred people formed a line on the northern side of Lynn Middle School on South Walnut Street as pallets stacked high with onions were lowered from a truck.

Inside the school's cafeteria, students were busy organizing produce for distribution to an expected 100 families at their school's monthly food bank, a partnership with Roadrunner Food Bank. Today, volunteers planned to give out 5,211 pounds of food.

Elsewhere in the cafeteria, an employee of the United Health

Care company staffed a table with information about its Medicare plans, and representatives from the Department of Workforce Solutions had arranged literature in English and Spanish about how to access job training, tuition assistance and job-seeking services.

Looking on was Las Cruces Public School's coordinator for community schools, David Greenberg.

"What we were hearing from a lot of folks was that they were trying to get back into the workforce," Greenberg said.

Lynn Middle School launched its community school program in January of 2017, joining a movement to bring a wide range of local community services into school facilities. The launch followed years of meeting with the community served by the school as well as local agencies and potential



Students at Lynn Middle School organize drinks for a mobile food bank at Lynn Middle School on Wednesday, December 5, 2018.

Photos by Josh Bachman/  
Sun-News



Celina Corral, right, of the Empowerment Congress, teaches a class on cultural diversity at Lynn Middle School, Wednesday, December 5, 2018.

partners. Greenberg said the process of dialogue and gradually adding services continues - and the pace is a feature, not a bug.

"The whole thing has been about managing expectations," he said as he gave reporters from the Sun-News a tour of Lynn Middle School. "We knew that to do a community-driven process, it's going to take time to listen."

The point of listening, he said, was to assess what services would actually help Lynn's students succeed and develop a customized model with the community leading, rather than impose an idealized or "cookie-cutter" approach from without.

As an example, Greenberg showed reporters a teachers' lounge at Lynn which has been cleared out in preparation for a new health center. The center will be built and funded by the Ben Archer Health Center, making Lynn the first middle school in Las Cruces with a school-based health center. A dental clinic is also in the works.

Greenberg said bringing the services to Lynn's students will reduce health-related absences, keeping kids in school and learning.

As student learning is also affected by hunger and a lack of access to social services for their families, a function room at the school has been established to help with that as well.

The room includes a clothing pantry with donated items for adults as well as children, kits with some child care supplies and computers available for Lynn families to research and apply for jobs. There is also a pantry with nutritious snacks and packs with food supplies for weekends, kept in stock by Las Cruces food pantry Casa de Peregrinos.

"One in four kids in New Mexico are food-insecure," Greenberg said. "A lot of our kids don't have a meal at home - they have no food. For those kids, if it's a long weekend or a holiday or something, they can take these home."

On the day of our tour, visiting instructor Celina Corral of the

continued on page 4

## Launching the New Mexico Coalition for Community Schools

On Dec. 14, the Las Cruces Partnership for Community Schools teamed up with the ABC Community Schools Partnership, the National Education Association, the National Coalition for Community Schools in Washington DC, and others to launch a statewide coalition for community schools. Over 60 community school advocates and New Mexico educational leaders, including superintendents, school board members, legislators, parents, educators, nonprofit partners, and more convened in Santa Fe to develop a network to expand community



schools throughout the state. Follow this network on facebook by liking and sharing **our page.**



Far left, Mary-Parr Sanchez, NEA-New Mexico Vice-President, left Jose Munoz, National Director for the National Coalition for Community Schools, at the launch of the New Mexico Coalition for Community Schools on Dec. 14.

continued from page 3

Empowerment Congress taught a class on cultural diversity, and Greenberg said the school was working with Doña Ana County Sheriff-elect Kim Stewart on a community education project involving law enforcement.

Greenberg said community schools, endorsed by Governor-elect Michelle Lujan Grisham, are well worth larger investment.

“Every dollar we invest in community schools is \$10 to \$15 saved in social returns in terms of keeping people out of social welfare programs,” he said. “It increases graduation rates, so the social returns are huge compared with incarceration and welfare.”

In a report on the initiative by New Mexico In Depth, Las Cruces Superintendent Greg Ewing acknowledged resistance to the project, with some questioning whether the community school approach detracts from the conception of a school’s mission as limited to delivering classroom instruction.

Greenberg indicated he is happy to



**David Greenberg, the Las Cruces public school district’s community schools coordinator, leads a tour of Lynn Middle School.**

engage the debate about what schools are expected to produce, long- and short-term, as well as how.

“The purpose of education has shifted to preparing individuals for the workplace,” he said. “If we want a more democratic society we have to rethink the purpose of schools and what we can do with school facilities.”

*Algernon D’Amassa can be reached at 575-541-5451, [adamassa@lcsun-news.com](mailto:adamassa@lcsun-news.com) or @AlgernonActor on Twitter.*

## THE HAZLO FOUNDATION: FULL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PROJECT-BASED LEARNING WITH A MENTOR FOR LYNN AND MVLA Apply Here for Funding for Your Projects:

Apply for HAZLO Funds at [THIS LINK](#)

**THE HAZLO FOUNDATION HELPS STUDENTS DEVELOP LIFE AND ACADEMIC SKILLS BY WORKING WITH TRAINED MENTORS TO MAKE REAL-WORLD PROJECTS THAT THE STUDENTS PROPOSE.**

**THE PROJECTS ARE COMPLETED AT SUPERVISED SITES: EITHER SCHOOLS OR CRUCES CREATIVES MAKERSPACE.**

**FOR SELECTED PROJECTS, THE HAZLO FOUNDATION WILL PAY FOR MATERIAL COSTS, MEMBERSHIPS TO CRUCES CREATIVES, AND (IF NECESSARY) TRANSPORTATION.**

Contact: Sylvia Chavez at [Schavez@lcpns.net](mailto:Schavez@lcpns.net)