Keynote Speaker

Superintendents are the key to leading a successful transition to digital instruction, a must have for all students to be college and career ready. Yet, superintendents also face the R³ challenge – that is, leading that transition in a climate of rules, regulations and of course, a call for more rigorous instruction. So, what are the keys to success? This year’s keynote speaker, Dr. Karen Beerer, will address these areas!
Dear Colleagues:

I hope that the school year is progressing well for you and your students. In spite of the many daily challenges that we all face, we continue to hear about the many great things happening in our schools. During the month of September and October, Barbara Lowder and I accompany Joe Guillen (Executive Director of NM School Boards Association) on his regional meetings to various districts throughout the state. The visits give all the partner organizations—NMCEL, NMASBO, CES and NMAA a chance to share events occurring in our organizations as well as information on how we can best support districts. It’s always such a joy to see firsthand the improvements being made to facilities, fields and grounds. The hospitality shared in those districts is just as amazing and of course, the student presentations remind us that we continue to do the work in schools because we care first and foremost about the young lives left in our charge.

At the beginning of the year we heard about the record number of licenses that were either renewed or issued during the summer. At the same time we were hearing—anecdotally—about the large number of teacher vacancies throughout the state. Rather than just wonder about what seems conflicting information, our NMSSA President, Kirk Carpenter, asked that we gather data from districts regarding teacher vacancies. On August 1, with 75 districts reporting, we had about 600 vacancies throughout the state. We asked districts to submit data again after Labor Day, as we anticipated many vacancies had probably been filled. But as of September 21 more than 300 vacancies still exist. That means that we have at least 300 classrooms with either a long term sub or a person who may be working on certification.

The conversation about sufficient funding for our schools is ongoing and, in fact, two lawsuits are currently in process to force the issue of whether or not New Mexico is providing sufficient funding for K-12 public education. However, a critical component of a sufficient education has to be a qualified, licensed teacher in every classroom. It cannot be ok to have 300 classrooms without a teacher. That brings us back to the question of Why? Why do we have so many vacancies? Why aren’t we attracting people to the teaching profession? We continue to hear the worried concerns from colleges of education about the dwindling numbers in their programs; and we continue to hear from teachers in the field who are retiring as soon as they are able, and in many cases years before their predecessors did.

Sure, salaries will make an impact on whether or not people enter and stay in the profession; but there are many other factors that need to be addressed—the ever increasing needs of children, the lack of parental involvement and engagement, the increasing demands on teachers, the increased expectation for more rigorous instruction and finally the decreased respect for the field of education—all these make it difficult to attract our young people to the profession and to keep our teachers and principals from leaving sooner than we’d like.
NMCEL Board Minutes in Brief

September 10, 2015

- Meeting was called to order.
- Board members approved the Agenda.
- Introduction of Board Members/Recognition of Affiliates, Announcements
- Discussion Items:
  - 2015 Conference Report & Evaluation
  - Update: LESC and LFC Meetings
  - Update on Symposium
  - Legislative Platform — main points
  - Honorary Lifetime Memberships
- Action Items:
  - Approval of the July 22, 2015 Minutes
  - Approval of Financial Statements through August 2015.
  - Action on Lifetime Memberships
- Reports:
  - Affiliates
  - Executive Director
  - Communication & Leadership Coordinator
  - Office Administrator
  - Legislative Report

Continued from page 2

From the Executive Director cont’d.

At the same time, I know that our superintendents and other leaders are doing everything they can to encourage both their teachers and students to strive for excellence, not sufficiency, but excellence. A good example is the Loving District where the staff and students have decided that they are going to do everything in their power to raise expectations and acknowledge their entire community for supporting academic achievement. Their new slogan is “Loving Learning” and as part of their outreach, each week they are personally acknowledging one parent from each school in their community for supporting their child—even if it’s just in getting their child to school on time every day. Sometimes all it takes is a gesture of appreciation and acknowledgement to help our schools to do better and to reach higher. Everyone in our schools is doing the best job they can with the resources, the knowledge and the skills they possess. As leaders, we know that we have strong influence on everything that happens in our classrooms and in our schools and although it may be adding one more thing to our already full plates, we must keep our school communities informed about all the good things being done in our schools in spite of having fewer resources and more demands. NMCEL is proud to represent New Mexico’s education leaders.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
People First Language

Kathie Snow is a wife and mother, as well as an author, public speaker, trainer, consultant and host of the website, Disability is Natural. Ms. Snow states that “people with disabilities constitute our nation’s largest minority group. It’s also the most inclusive: all ages, genders, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic levels are represented.” In her article, People First Language, Ms. Snow discusses the importance of words and the importance of using the correct words. Instead of saying handicapped, disabled, special needs, say children/adults with disabilities. Many other strategies and examples are provided on her website and in the article.

NMCEL NM Coalition of Administrators of Special Education affiliate member, Jerry Reeder, recommends reading the full-length article which is located at www.disabilityisnatural.com.

The Qualities of a Good Leader

By John Benson, H.R. Specialist
06/09/2015

To be a good leader means that you can inspire others to follow your example, willingly and cheerfully. A good leader will both inspire confidence and give a strong example of what we should aim for. These are the characteristics of a good leader.

1. Lead by example. If you wish your team to be hard working and diligent, it is important that you live up to your own ideals. There is a saying “I would never ask anybody to do something I wouldn’t do myself”. If your team sees you arriving late and being unprofessional, it will make it much more difficult for them to follow your advice.

2. Humility. To lead we need to encourage others to act in a certain way. However, if we try to lead through our inflated ego people will not respect us. Rather than stressing yourself, try to lead through stressing certain principles. People will be much more willing to follow a leader who embodies humility.

3. Appreciate your co-workers. To be a good leader, you cannot underestimate the importance of offering gratitude to those who are trying hard to do the right thing. If people receive appreciation then it will definitely encourage them to continue doing the right thing. At the same time, our appreciation should be sincere. We should not flatter but look for something good a person has done.

NMCEL At Work

NMCEL Executive Director and Leadership Coordinator have joined NMSBA, CES and NMAA to present information about the work of the organization at the Regional School Board Meetings.

- Region I, Zuni, October 7
- Region II, Pecos, September 17
- Region III, Springer, October 19
- Region IV, Moriarty, October 14
- Region V, Melrose, September 15
- Region VI, Loving, September 28
- Region VII, Alamogordo, October 27
- Region VIII, Cobre, September 22

Upcoming LESC Interim Meeting Schedule

- October 28-30 - Santa Fe
- November 18-20 - Santa Fe
- December 16-18 - Santa Fe
- January 18, 2016 - Santa Fe

Upcoming LFC Interim Meeting Schedule

- October 27-30 - Santa Fe
- November 17-20 - Santa Fe
- December 7-11 - Santa Fe
The New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders (NMCEL) is comprised of seventeen affiliates that represent administrators across the state. Each affiliate selects a person to represent their organization on the NMCEL Board. NMCEL welcomes the following individuals to the board for the 2015-2016 school year.

**Julie Arnold**  
Principal  
Rio Rancho Public Schools

Julie Arnold is currently the Principal at Mountain View Middle School in Rio Rancho where she previously held the position of assistant principal. She has been in the educational field for 18 years, having worked in Arizona and the Gadsden School District as a middle school ELA teacher. She is married and is the mother of a one year old.

Ms. Arnold states she is excited to be a part of an organization that truly can make a difference for students and teachers.

**Kirk Carpenter**  
Superintendent  
Aztec Municipal Schools

Kirk Carpenter has served as Superintendent in Aztec Schools for the last six years. His career has included teaching history, assistant principal, principal and coaching, all at Aztec High School. He was born and raised in Farmington, where he still resides. You can hear him broadcasting high school sports on a local Christian radio station. Kirk says he loves the great state of New Mexico and states, “I am New Mexico Public Schools”.

As an NMCEL Board member, Mr. Carpenter will work to continue to be a strong advocate for educational leaders and the children in New Mexico.

**Vicki Chavez**  
Executive Director  
Southwest Regional Education Cooperative #10

Vicki Chavez started her 18 year career as a math and pre-algebra teacher, enrichment teacher and a teacher at an alternative high school. Her extensive background and licenses have given her the opportunity to become an instructional coach, elementary principal and a certified key trainer for the Guided Language Acquisition Design protocol. Prior to becoming an educator, she worked as a financial manager and was a commercial loan analyst.

Ms. Chavez is passionate about every student receiving an excellent education. Being on the NMCEL Board provides her the opportunity to impact education at a greater level.
NMCEL Welcomes New Board Members cont’d.

Will Hawkins
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Hobbs Municipal Schools
Will Hawkins has served in the educational field for 16 years. Prior to his current position, he was a middle school English teacher in San Angelo, assistant high school principal in Brownfield, middle school principal in Brady, and a high school principal in Brownfield, all in the Texas school system. He then joined the Hobbs School District as the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Instruction.

Mr. Hawkins will work to expand the involvement of personnel directors from around the state and to further connections with PED as it relates to licensure, advancement and teacher evaluation. As an NMCEL Board member, he will work to serve students and employees in the districts around New Mexico.

Jerry Reeder
Executive Director of Special Services
Rio Rancho Public Schools
Jerry Reeder has devoted his career to students receiving special education services for the last 21 years. He has worked as a teacher and site specialist in special education in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho School Districts. He also was the Director of Federal and Bilingual Programs and Elementary Special Education.

Mr. Reeder’s goal as a member of the NMCEL Executive Board is to improve education for all students in New Mexico. Representing the NM Council of Administrators of Special Education, he continuously works to improve education for students with disabilities.

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**NMCEL Welcomes New Board Members cont’d.**

**Victoria Tafoya**  
*Executive Director of Federal, Bilingual and Native American Programs*  
*Rio Rancho Public Schools*

Victoria Tafoya has been in the educational field for 16 years. She worked as a teacher at Albuquerque Public Schools and as a Spanish Immersion teacher with the Department of Defense Schools in Yokosuka, Japan. She is a member of several organizations that support Bilingual Education.

Ms. Tafoya’s goal, representing NM Association of Bilingual Education on the NMCEL Board, is to work with others to improve and support public education in New Mexico. It is her hope that all students possess the competence and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of our thriving, diverse society.

**Karen Trujillo**  
*Director of K-12 Outreach*  
*New Mexico State University*

Karen Trujillo has served in several roles in her 22 years in the educational field—high school math teacher, K-8 principal, professional development facilitator, research faculty, grant writer, and grant administrator, having received her Ph.D. in 1998 from NMSU in Curriculum and Instruction.

Dr. Trujillo is very familiar with the work of the NMCEL Board. She hopes to bring a voice from southern New Mexico and higher education to the Board. She in turn, will work to share information from NMCEL with the Alliance members and with higher education.
Jamie Widner has been an involved educational leader for 30 years. He has taught high school agriculture at Corona, Roswell and Melrose. In addition, he served as high school principal and superintendent at House Schools prior to becoming superintendent in Melrose. Besides being involved with his family and his angus cow herd, his main hobby is following all activities at Melrose Schools.

Mr. Widner hopes to learn all he can as an NMCEL board member. He will also share information with ENMERC, the organization he represents.

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For a collaborative discussion, contact Jackie Harvey, Sales Director, at 630-219-6595, or J.Harvey@scholastic.com.
21st Annual Search Underway for Nation’s Top Youth Volunteers

The 2015 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards Program, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) recognizes outstanding students annually in middle and high school grades who have demonstrated exemplary community service. The program recognizes honorees at the local, state and national level.

Qualifying students must:

- Be in grades 5-12 as of November 3, 2015, and a legal resident of the United States or the District of Columbia;
- Have participated in a volunteer activity that occurred at least in part after September 1, 2014;
- Complete an online application and submit to a school principal or the head of one of the program’s designated organizations by November 3, 2015.

Applications are available online at http://spirit.prudential.com or www.nassp.org/spirit. Applications must be completed by November 3, 2015, and then submitted to a middle or high school principal, Girl Scout Councils, County 4-H Organizations, American Red Cross Chapters, YMCAs or HandsOn Network Affiliates. The application packet has been sent to all middle and high school principals. The deadline for submitting applicants to the state-level judging committee this year is November 10, 2015.

Encourage your students to apply for this prestigious honor.

Tomorrow’s economies will be forged by students who are proficient in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects. Samsung is helping people discover a world of possibilities through its mission to raise student interest in STEM subjects nationwide. They are doing this through innovative programs with their partners that will help build a better tomorrow.

To excite students about the possibilities of STEM education, Samsung started the Solve for Tomorrow education contest, giving schools across the U.S. the opportunity to raise interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects among students by awarding their schools with a share of over $2 million in technology products.

Additional information and application is available at: www.samsung.com/us/solvefortomorrow

High Plains Regional Education Cooperative #3 is partnered with the following professional and reputable contractors providing pre-bid contracts for architectural design, general contracting, environmental remediation, furnishings, energy solutions, food services, and security systems for school districts, state agencies, and local public bodies:

- Access Technologies, Inc.
- Ameo Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.
- Atkin Olshin Schade Architects
- Energy Control, Inc.
- FacilityBUILD, Inc.
- MIRADOR Enterprises, Inc.
- PLAY1

- School Furnishings Unlimited
- SLA Management, LLC.
- SMPC Architects
- Southwest Abatement, Inc.
- STOYEN Construction
- The Hartman+Majewski Design Group
- Vigil & Associates Architectural Group

For more information, contact High Plains REC at 575-445-7090.
Microsoft Expands Global YouthSpark Initiative to Focus on Computer Science

Microsoft announced $75 million in community investments over the next three years to increase access to computer science education through its YouthSpark initiative. One of the flagship programs is Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (TEALS), which pairs tech professionals from across the industry with classroom educators to team-teach computer science in U.S. high schools. TEALS aims to grow its goal over the next three years of working with 2,000 tech industry volunteers to reach 30,000 students—the objective is to support classroom educators as they learn the computer science coursework, preparing them to teach computer science independently after two years of team-teaching.

“Computer science is a foundational subject—like algebra, chemistry or physics—for learning how the world works, yet it’s offered in less than 25 percent of American high schools,” said Microsoft President Brad Smith. “We need to increase access to computer science and computational thinking for all students, especially those from diverse populations, by partnering across the industry with teachers and schools to turn this situation around and change the paradigm for developing a more diverse tech talent pipeline.”

There are three additional key elements of Microsoft’s global commitment to increasing access for all youth to the full range of computing skills, from digital literacy to computer science. See page 12.

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Upcoming Events

CES
- Facility Manager’s Workshop, October 26-28, 2015, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque
- Educational Symposium, October 27, 2015, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque

NMAA
- NMAA/NMADA Fall Conference, October 4-6, 2015

NMASBO
- Boot Camp, October 12-16, 2015, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque
- ASBO International, October 23-25, 2015, Grapevine, TX

NMCEL
- Board Meeting, October 15, 2015, Online
- Educational Symposium, October 27, 2015, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque
- Board Meeting, December 10, 2015, NMAA
- Board Meeting, February 4, 2016, Online
- Board Meeting April 14, 2016, CES
- Board Retreat, June 6-7, 2016, TBD
- Summer Conference, July 20-22, 2016, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque

NMSSA
- Retreat & Meeting, October 28, 2015, Embassy Suites, Albuquerque
- Meeting at NMSBA Annual Convention, December 4, 2015, Albuquerque
- Meeting at NMSBA Board Institute, February 12, 2016, Santa Fe
- Meeting at Spring Budget Workshop, March 31, 2016, Hotel Albuquerque
- Meeting at NMSBA Law Conference, June 3, 2016, Tentative Date
- Meeting at NMCEL Conference, July 21, 2016, Embassy Suites

NMSTE
- NMTIE Conference, November 17-20, 2015, Hotel Albuquerque

AASA
- National Conference, February 26-28, 2015, San Diego
As another school year begins, many school district leaders are once again tasked with proving how they are “doing more with less.”

A superintendent’s tenure is often tested, however unrealistically, by whether or not he or she can demonstrate that, even given fewer resources, more students are learning at higher rates, and dollars are being used more efficiently than in the past. But, even with the cleverest of finance directors, superintendents and pupil service directors can be stymied in their efforts by federal policy barriers.

The best example of this roadblock is the maintenance of effort provisions found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As Congress continues to fail to provide even 40 percent of the 40 percent it owes states and districts for educating students with disabilities, the maintenance of effort framework in IDEA has become a significant hindrance to district leaders trying to fill budget shortfalls from the federal, state and/or local level.

The “maintenance of effort” (MoE) provisions are intended to ensure education funding is cut as little as possible in tough economic times and that federal funding does not take the place of other money that should be coming from state and local coffers. However, the 100 percent MoE requirement for IDEA—in contrast to the 90 percent MoE requirement for Title I—means there is far less wiggle room for districts facing across-the-board funding shortfalls to reduce special education expenditures even if it is the equitable or reasonable thing to do and can be done without negatively impacting student services.

While IDEA currently provides district leaders with a few exceptions, such as a decrease in special education enrollment to readjusting their current special education funding levels, the recession acutely highlighted how the exceptions need to be broadened at the local level.

In July, AASA spearheaded the introduction of an important bill in Congress that will provide districts with flexibility to ensure they are not wrongly penalized for changes in their special education funding levels that in no way impact the provision of special education to students with disabilities. The bill is called the Building on Local District (BOLD) Flexibility in IDEA Act (HR 2965). It adds two additional exceptions to the MoE provisions in IDEA. The first allows districts to reduce special education spending if they are increasing the efficiency of their special education programs and there is no impact on the provision of special education services to students. The second allows districts to reduce the MoE level if the reduction in expenditures is related to employment-related benefits provided to special education personnel (such as pay, retirement contributions, health insurance) as long as the reduction does not result in a decline in the provision of special education services to students.

Continued on page 12
The bill also allows districts to apply to the State for a waiver to reduce MoE if they’re facing a serious financial crisis and can provide evidence they’re in compliance with IDEA. This waiver option is available under Title I and would bring IDEA and Title I in closer alignment.

While Congress is still focused on finishing the ESEA reauthorization process, this bill stands as an important marker of the policy fixes that AASA will be prioritizing in our push to reauthorize IDEA. Across the country, district leaders are negotiating contracts with vendors and unions, repurposing technology or equipment, or creating site-specific programs for students with specific disabilities that have made their special education programs stronger and reduced special education expenditures. The federal government should incentivize these responsible and innovative actions by district leaders and not prohibit districts from realizing the savings they find in their special education programs.

The bold flexibility in IDEA acknowledges that school system leaders must comply with IDEA as well as honor their fiduciary duty to allocate resources economically to the taxpayers in a district. Unnecessarily maintaining special education funding levels because of an inflexible federal requirement does not allow districts to efficiently allocate limited resources to serve the maximum number of students. Savings that districts realize in their local special education expenditures should be allowed to be reallocated to the general education budget—or to fill budget holes—so administrators can dedicate these resources in a manner that best serves all of their students.

We are proud to partner with the Council of Administrators in Special Education and the Association of School Business Officials in lobbying for this important change to IDEA. If your district would benefit by the incorporation of this bill into IDEA, please take a moment to reach out to your representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor HR 2965. You can read more about the bill on the AASA Leading Edge blog.

Microsoft’s Global Commitment to Increasing Access for All Youth

- **Global philanthropic investments** with nonprofits in 80 countries, will deliver a range of computing skills from digital literacy to computer science education to youth in local communities around the world.

- **Microsoft Imagine** connects students with the tools, resources and experiences they need to turn their innovative ideas into reality. Whether it’s building a game or designing an app, Microsoft Imagine makes learning to code easy and accessible for students and educators, no matter their age or skill level and at no cost. Whether it’s free cloud services like Azure, online competitions via Imagine Cup that educators can incorporate into their curriculum, or fun self-serve learning tutorials, Microsoft Imagine helps bring a student’s technology passion to life through computer science.

- **YouthSpark Hub** resources are designed to inspire youth the full spectrum of computing skills, ranging from digital literacy to computer science engineering. The YouthSpark Hub brings together opportunities to participate in DigiGirlz and YouthSpark Live, and attend free YouthSpark Camps at the Microsoft Stores.
4. **Have a clear vision.** Often to lead you will need to overcome the resistance to change. If people have been doing something for a long time then they have an instinctive aversion to implementing new ideas. To introduce a new way of doing things you have to have the confidence and belief in the new way. People will definitely pick up on the belief that you have in your own vision.

5. **Avoid arguments.** If people criticize your approach, often the best thing to do is not get involved in arguments. You can listen to their criticism politely and thank them for their concern, but often the best approach is just to focus on the new approach; look forward and don’t feel the need to defend yourself. This gives your vision certain nobility.

6. **Listen to others.** A good leader should try to feel part of the team rather than superior. If you listen to others, they will definitely appreciate it. Often you may find that others have good ideas that you can incorporate. Even though the ideas are unworkable, it is still worth valuing their opinion, even if they are not used.

7. **Create a positive atmosphere.** If you lead through creating a climate of fear or competition, you will undoubtedly create problems. Lead while maintaining a positive attitude.

8. **Don’t take yourself too seriously.** There is no harm in admitting you can be wrong. People will appreciate a leader who can admit a mistake. It is after all a human quality, but don’t make it a habit.