

# ANNUAL REPORT

School Year 2019-2020



New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired



September 9, 2020

**Dear NMSBVI Family and Partners,**

This report shows the breadth of services that NMSBVI provided to the children of the state of New Mexico during the 2019-2020 school year. This school year presented all of us with unprecedented new challenges that required all of us to learn new skill sets in a very short period of time. Despite those challenges, we are excited to highlight some of our successes, adventures and projects. We are humbled by the support that we receive and celebrate the partnerships that help us to be innovative, child centered and involved in our communities. We appreciate the partnerships with our stakeholders – especially our families – and those partnerships were vital in helping NMSBVI continue with quality education for our students.

These pages highlight the variety of initiatives in which NMSBVI is involved: from our research projects and parent trainings to our Prison Braille Project. It also highlights the variety of activities that are provided for our students: from our public speaking club, to our adaptive ski program, goalball teams and cheerleading squad. They also showcase highlights from our Continuous Learning Plan, during which our students were required to learn from home, through a variety of methods. NMSBVI was pleased to host a variety of virtual events such as a science fair, student social hours, art classes, physical education and music classes in addition to core classes and Expanded Core Curriculum for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired (ECC) lessons.

NMSBVI is thankful to our staff, who embraced the “new normal” with enthusiasm, creativity and incredible energy. We are especially thankful to our families, who taught their children along side of us in true partnership. This annual report also serves as a huge thank you for all of your support and a reminder of the many services that you help NMSBVI provide for our wonderful children throughout our beautiful state.



Team spirit at NMSBVI! Superintendent Patty Beecher & student Jessica proudly sport their logoed “Golden Bear wear” during Homecoming Week, held at the Alamogordo campus in December 2019.

*Patricia Beecher*

Patricia Beecher, NMSBVI Superintendent



# Board of Regents

Board of Regents list at time of this publication (autumn 2020):

**Catherine Gray, President**

email: CatherineGray@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

**Agnes Vallejos, Vice-President**

email: AgnesVallejos@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

**Gary Smethurst, Secretary**

email: GarySmethurst@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

**Alfred Sena, Member**

email: AlfredSena@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

**Mary Willows, Member**

email: MaryWillows@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us



Carla adeptly navigates across the Alamogordo campus using her white cane; while Orientation and Mobility instructor Mr. Ron Later accompanies her in her travels.



During a busy day filled with learning activities & fun at the school's Early Childhood Program in Albuquerque, Diana takes a quick giggle break.

# History of Our School



As a network of services, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) staff can be found in hospitals, in family homes, in classrooms, at Low Vision Clinics and in university classrooms. This hasn't always been the case. When NMSBVI (originally called the Institute for the Blind) was officially created by the territorial New Mexico Legislature in 1903, the goal was to establish a residential campus that would house the state's students who were blind and provide for their education and upbringing. To that end, 20 acres were set aside in Otero County for this purpose and an \$8,000 appropriation from the legislative process was used to build the first education building in Alamogordo, New Mexico.

As the number of students grew, the need for additional buildings grew as well. In 1925, R.R. Pratt, the school's superintendent, invited Helen Keller to help him lobby in Santa Fe. Helen Keller and Elizabeth Garrett, daughter of lawman Pat Garrett, addressed a joint session of the New Mexico Legislature on behalf of the school and were successful in raising \$65,000 for expansion.

Through the years, school staff as well as the Board of Regents have grappled with ways to meet the programmatic needs of their students. Programming has changed dramatically through the years. Some students are now educated in their home schools with short bursts of intensive instruction on the residential campus. Career exploration remains an essential component of blindness education but chair caning and piano tuning have given way to individualized career plans that teach job skills matching the interest of each student. Braille and independent travel skills continue to be a priority, and students now have extensive exposure to the expanded core curriculum of blindness.

One thing that has not changed through the years is the abiding belief that independence is essential for every student, and the development of independence requires the engagement of everyone. With the understanding that independence comes when everyone has promoted its development throughout a child's life, in 1974 the school opened a second campus in Albuquerque to provide services to children aged 3-6,

who need to learn early blindness skills. In the late 1990's, the school established a statewide birth-to-3 home-based program that has become a national model for visual impairment (VI) services to very young children and their families. A Low Vision Clinic, a university teacher preparation program, technology lending library, and an extensive mentorship program for teachers have all followed.

At every level, NMSBVI continues to live its mission: every child in New Mexico, every day, will be educated in an appropriate setting with programming and materials that are accessible; and will have access to highly qualified teachers of the visually impaired.

## Strategic Plan



NMSBVI's Strategic Plan is a dynamic document that drives decision-making at every level at NMSBVI. The plan centers on six overarching goals that support all of the initiatives of the school. The goals include:

- (1) Supporting systems that result in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment in the state;
- (2) Creating a system to convey and receive information about blindness;
- (3) Building, maintaining, and supporting a system of data-driven decision-making to help support the needs of the students throughout New Mexico;
- (4) Developing a system throughout the state that supports early identification as well as successful transition of students across programs and into adult life;
- (5) Developing and maintaining partnerships and resources that will be used to advance the success of each student.
- (6) Developing systems to document, share and advance the efficacy of NMSBVI practices for educating students with visual impairments using the core and expanded core curricula.

This new Strategic Plan was finalized in April, 2019. We have created action steps and timelines under each broad goal and are actively working to achieve these steps. The process of strategic planning is vital in ensuring that NMSBVI continues to embrace and follow our mission. It provides clarity and direction for our staff and maintains our focus on educating our students with vision impairments and blindness throughout our beautiful state. The process allows each staff member to have a voice in determining the direction of our school and supports our collaborative spirit. We look forward to achieving these goals.



Creativity is a big part of each day at the Early Childhood Programs, based in Albuquerque; here, Ashley proudly displays her art-on-a-mirror.



Jackson uses a walker to help him explore a building on the Alamogordo campus; Adaptive PE Instructor Mr. Alex Bocian encourages him.



Eli and Education Assistant Ms. Julia Sanders have some happy relaxation-time playing in the plastic ball-pit in the school's therapy room.

# Our Ongoing Mission



NMSBVI, an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-to-high-school who are blind or visually impaired, will identify students and promote quality education through collaborative relationships with students, families, and local/state/national partners through outstanding advocacy, training, resources, and support services, thus empowering all students who are blind or visually impaired to become independent, productive members of their communities.



With a little help from Birth-to-3 Orientation & Mobility Specialist Ms. Sophia Diaz, Nayelli works on taking steps using her new Adapted Mobility Device.

## A Bill of Rights for All Children with Visual Impairment and their Families

**Preamble:** In addition to numerous educational principles that have been proven to be beneficial for children with visual impairment, all the provisions of what constitutes a "Free and Appropriate Public Education" under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 shall be assumed along with this bill of rights.

1. Children with all levels of visual impairment (including those with multiple disabilities and those who are DeafBlind) have a right to early intervention/instruction provided by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment and certified orientation and mobility specialists, that is timely, ambitious, and results in the highest possible achievement for each child.
2. Children with visual impairment have the right to a functional vision evaluation and a learning media assessment by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment to determine appropriate services following the initial clinical eye exam.
3. Parents/guardians of children with visual impairment have the right to assistance in interpreting the educational implications of the diagnosed visual impairment that is provided by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment and certified mobility specialists and the right to seek assistance from regional/national agencies (including consumer advocacy organizations) that can help them make informed decisions on behalf of their child.
4. As required in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act "in the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team must provide for instruction in braille and the use of braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child." Appropriate reading and writing media are determined by conducting a learning media assessment.
5. Children and families have the right to be fully informed about the "Expanded Core Curriculum" of skills unique to students with visual impairment, which includes: compensatory skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills, & self-determination.
6. Children have the right to assessment and instruction, in school and in their communities, in every area of the Expanded Core Curriculum that is deemed appropriate by the educational team and includes the parents/guardians as the primary decision makers and includes the student when appropriate. The Expanded Core Curriculum is equal in importance to the standard academic curriculum and will not be overlooked in the educational plan.
7. Children have the right to receive school materials that are accessible, in the preferred format and at the same time as their sighted peers. Children have an absolute right to testing procedures and instruments that are fair and accessible, that take into consideration the results of the functional vision evaluation, and include all accommodations identified in the IEP.
8. It is the right of children and families for a full range of educational placement settings to be discussed at IEP meetings, including the variety of unique programs and options offered in specialized schools/services for children who are visually impaired. A specialized school may offer the best opportunity for achievement and be the "least restrictive environment" for some children.
9. All children with a visual impairment have the right to teams that enthusiastically assist them in preparing for transition to independence and adulthood.
10. Children with visual impairment, including those with multiple disabilities and DeafBlindness, have the right to be perceived and treated as equal, active, and contributing members of their communities, classrooms, and schools. As with all children, their engagement through belonging increases the collective value of each setting within which they participate.

The rights listed in this document consist of a combination of legal rights, ethical rights, and human rights. This document exists as a resource for students, parents, and professionals. The authors hope that this resource will be widely distributed and endorsed (formally or informally) by interested individuals and organizations. It is not fully inclusive of all rights; it is a starting point for teams when planning individualized programs for children with visual impairments.

This resource is the result of a joint project between the leaders of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) and the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB), May 2019.



# Demographics



Fiscal Year 2020

## Birth-to-3 (also called Family, Infant, Toddler Program/FIT)

- 655 children were screened.
- 945 new referrals.
- 629 children served on caseloads.

## Early Childhood Program (ECP/Albuquerque campus)

- 59 students were enrolled during the school year.
- School districts included: Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Estancia, Moriarty, Los Lunas, and Grants.

## Residential Campus (Alamogordo campus)

- 44 students.
- 32 students received itinerant/consult services.
- 3 short-term placements.

## Outreach Department

- Mentored 9 interns (8 from NMSU VIP and 1 from another program) from 7 different districts plus both NMSBVI campuses.
- Direct Service to 9 students in 4 districts. Also provided consultation services for Tularosa & Mescalero school districts.
- Provided 12 FVE/LMA's to districts and charter schools.
- Held 2 learning circles each in three regional areas with attendance ranging from 7-15.

## Assistive Technology:

- Completed 30 evaluations, 19 formal and 11 informal evaluations.
- In addition to the evaluations, provided service to 30 students across 26 districts and 4 charter schools.

## Vision Impairment Program

- Enrollment Data for Summer 2019 - Spring 2020:  
TSVIs = 16, COMSs = 13, MA in SPED = 3;  
New Admission = 16 (6 COMSs & 10 TSVIs).
- Completion Data for Summer 2019 - Spring 2020:  
TSVIs = 3, COMSs = 6, MA in SPED = 5.
- Internship Data:  
TSVIs = 8 in 8 districts + NMSBVI, COMSs = 6 in 6 districts.

## Low Vision Clinic

- Saw 48 students at 6 Low Vision Clinics (one was a two day clinic). 30 were new students to clinic and 18 were follow-ups.
- Held five travel clinics – Santa Fe, Roswell, Las Cruces, Rio Rancho, and Carlsbad.
- Saw students from 15 districts and 4 charter schools, plus both NMSBVI campuses and the FIT program.

## Instructional Resource Center (IRC)

- IRC checked out 3,031 items, for 41 school districts across NM.

Students Served: approx.

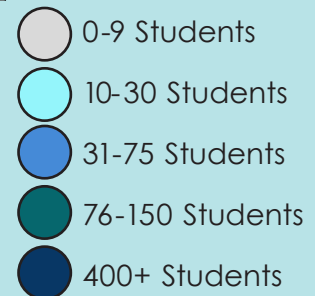
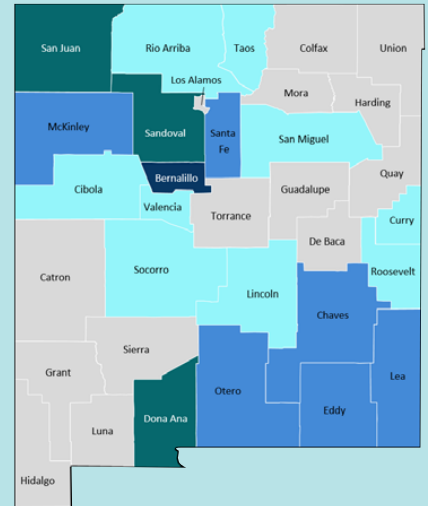
**2,500**

**3,000+**

Vision-Related  
Adapted Supplies provided  
to New Mexico Students

# County Map

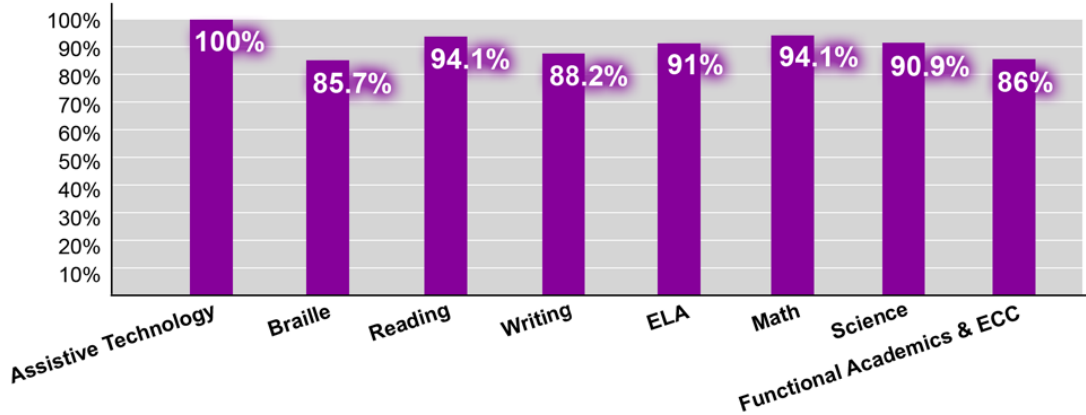
## Children Served on Caseload, by County School Year 2019-2020



# Student Achievement Data School Year 2019-2020

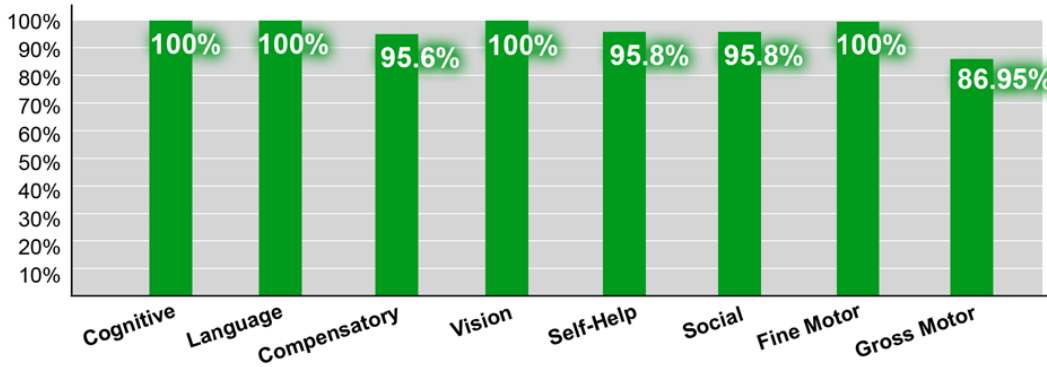


## School-Age Students at NMSBVI: Percent of Students Achieving Moderate to Substantial Progress

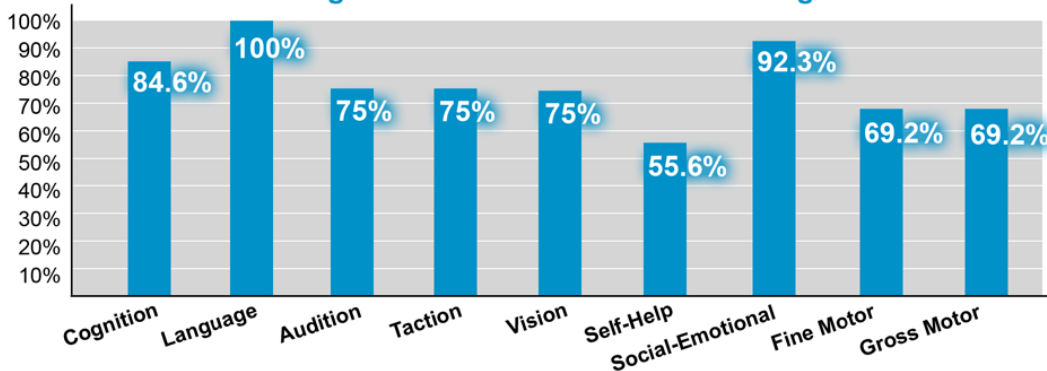


## Preschool- & Kindergarten-Age Students at NMSBVI's ECP: Percent of Students Achieving Moderate to Substantial Progress










### Oregon Project Categories: 96.7% of Students Made Progress



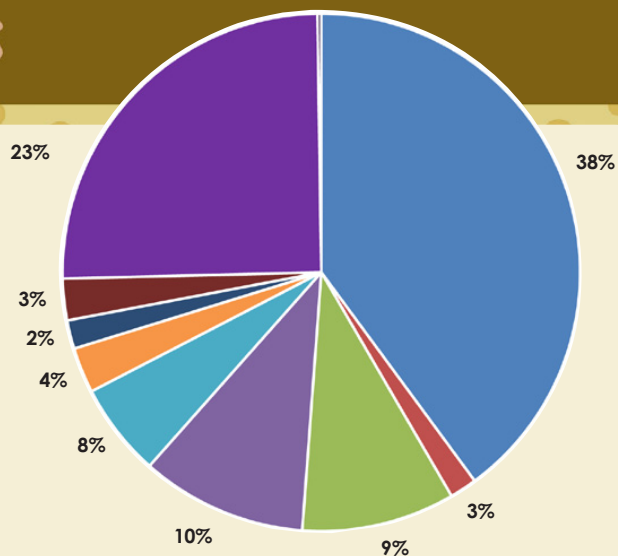
### Insite Categories: 78% of Students Made Progress



# Statewide Vision Diagnosis

-  Neurological Vision Impairment
-  VI due to Non-Accidental Trauma
-  Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH)
-  Retinal Defect
-  Anterior Defect
-  Ocular Motor
-  Enucleation, Anophthalmia, Microphthalmia
-  Nystagmus
-  At risk

Data from July 2020



# Partnerships & Collaborations



NMSBVI is not alone in our mission to serve the students in New Mexico who are blind/visually impaired. We are lucky enough to have many partnerships that not only make our work possible, but also enhance it. It is with our partners that we, together, create innovations and strive to move into the forefront of our field of education in service to our students and families. Here are just a few of them:

- **Higher Education Partnership:** The New Mexico State University (NMSU)/NMSBVI partnership continues to provide educational training for NM teachers through the Vision Impairment Program (VIP). As a result over the past ten years, more than 100 teachers in New Mexico have become licensed Teachers of the Visually Impaired or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists.
- **Funding Partners:** Like most schools, adequate funding is always an issue. Partnerships support NMSBVI's efforts to acquire the funding necessary to meet the needs of the school. We appreciate the support from the Land Grant Permanent Fund and the support from the New Mexico Land Office. The Navajo Nation provides funding for two developmental vision specialists. The 2020 Legislators provided funding for the Low Vision Clinic and the Early Childhood Program. We have been lucky enough to receive funding through the Legislature for much-needed capital projects for our Alamogordo Campus as well. Additionally, the NMSBVI Foundation provided funding for unmet needs of the school throughout the year.
- **Research Partners:** The school enjoyed research partnerships this year as well. The Early Childhood Program staff have collaborations with entities in Russia, supporting effective teaching practices in both countries for children who are blind and visually impaired. Our Birth-to-Three program continues to support research on the B6O&M Inventory and the use of The CVI Companion Guide, along with partnering with The University of Utah for a study on virtual visiting during the pandemic.
- **Supporters:** Some of NMSBVI's most treasured partnerships come from individuals and groups who share the vision for improving services for the blind throughout the state. There are VI contractors who work in multiple districts whose passion and commitment to their students and to the field results in outstanding services. The National Federation of the Blind, the Commission for the Blind, as well as public school districts throughout the state have engaged in dialogue, worked with the school to promote change, and have been strong supporters of our united efforts to integrate services seamlessly for our students. The new EC-ECD (Early Childhood Education and Care Department) Family, Infant and Toddler department partners with the state schools or NMSBVI to provide early intervention services statewide. We have partnered with the Department of Corrections and Lea County Correctional facility in our Prison Braille Program.

NMSBVI is grateful for the strength of every partnership we enjoy. As this year draws to a close, NMSBVI thanks each of its partners and we look forward to creating new, exciting partnerships.



# Flexible Learning System

**By Patricia Beecher, NMSBVI Superintendent**

The 2019-2020 school year took a very unusual turn when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in late 2019/early 2020. NMSBVI immediately began to prepare our Continuous Learning Plan, which helped students continue to learn from the safety of their own homes for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Unfortunately, the pandemic held on through the summer and into the new school year. In order to prepare a robust educational plan for our NMSBVI students, we prepared Flexible Learning Systems designed to ensure high quality, challenging instruction for our students in a variety of scenarios -- whether it be fully remote learning, hybrid learning, or traditional in-person learning.

NMSBVI prepared throughout the spring & summer by purchasing personal protective equipment, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, technology and access for students and staff, and more. We upgraded our HVAC systems and put pandemic plans into place. We kept lines of communication open with families & staff by sending out surveys, making individual contact through emails and phone calls, and posting COVID-19 information and plans on our website. NMSBVI created a COVID-19 Task Force and a COVID-19 Planning and Response Team, which continue to meet on a weekly basis. NMSBVI remains in close contact with the NMPED, the Higher Education Department, the Department of Health, and the Governor's Office in order to stay current on this quickly changing situation.

We thank all of our partners at the state and local levels — including all of our families, students and staff — for coming together to figure out how to tackle the many challenges we have collectively faced. This experience has helped us to grow, to become more creative in how we teach and learn, and to be even more collaborative and communicative within NMSBVI and with our students and their families. We will treasure those gifts and build upon them in the coming years.



In her home, Jessica listens to her Orientation & Mobility video lesson from Mr. Ron Later, using an iPad in tandem with a physical mock-up of an intersection with mini cars, to help her understand the spatial relationships.



On school days, NMSBVI Food Services continues to prepare delicious lunches for our students; now, they are boxed lunches. Here, Ms. Jelly Myers, Ms. Patricia Clark, & Ms. Jan Denton pack the students' meals with love.



Our dedicated transportation staff delivers the school's boxed-up lunches to local students' homes in & around Alamogordo; here, NMSBVI driver Mr. Lloyd Mitchell makes a happy lunch-time delivery to a student's home.



To celebrate the start of summer break, our Alamogordo preschool students enjoyed a happy parade/home-visit from Ms. Jennifer Lara, staff, & the Golden Bear mascot. Despite social distancing & masks, gifts & laughter were exchanged!



During "covid times", many regularly-scheduled school events have been switched to a virtual format; Angel and other students delivered their 2019 Science Fair projects through a video presentation which was posted online for everyone to enjoy.

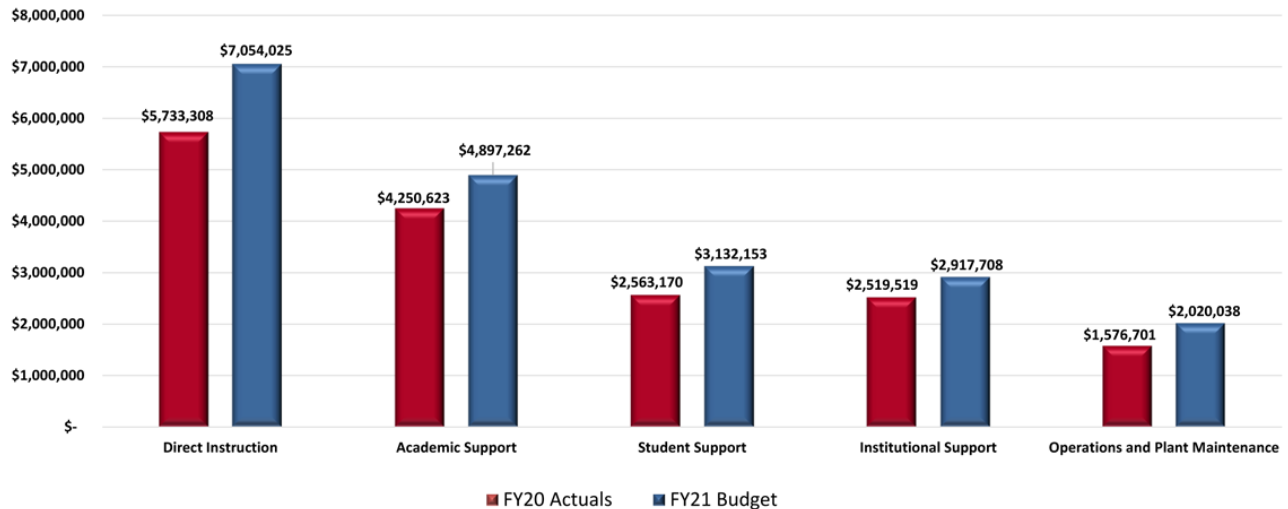


Throughout the shifts of educational methods during the pandemic, our instructors have gotten creative with their delivery of classroom material; Music instructor Mr. CC posted his educational videos (some with captions) on youtube.

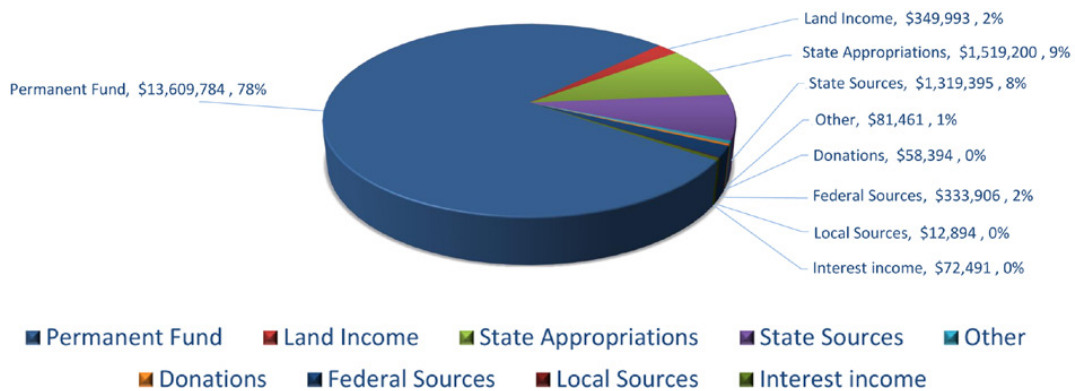
# Financials



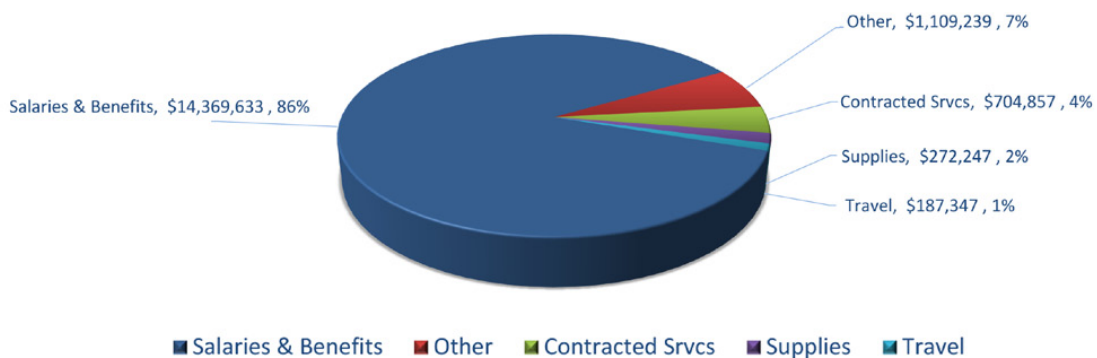
## FY20 Unaudited Actuals to FY21 Budget



## FY20 Revenue



## FY20 Expenses



# Program Updates



## Birth-to-Three: Transition to Virtual Services, 2020

By Cindy Faris, Birth-to-Three Program Coordinator

The spring of 2020 has been a time of transition with the COVID-19 pandemic making a huge impact on our lives. In March 2020, New Mexico made a decision to close schools, provide services in early intervention virtually, and switch workers who had the ability to a work-from-home job model. We learned to adapt our work to a virtual world and our staff learned to work from home while also taking care of their own families and balancing work, school for their own children, sometimes with both parents working from home and sharing space.

During March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed all of our lives and the way we work. Both NMSBVI and the state of New Mexico Family Infant Toddler Program moved to a virtual platform for communicating with each other as well as for providing services to children and families. Our NMSBVI birth to three program had the advantage of already working from home offices; and a familiarity with using Zoom for meetings and training in the FIT Coaching model for providing services for children and families. Our staff have reported positive outcomes including less driving time, which has allowed them to see more children virtually by telehealth. Staff have worked together to create virtual trainings for early intervention agencies; and to share resources and learn to work together to provide Spanish interpretation and vision assessments. They have continued to learn to use the FIT coaching model with families on virtual home visits as well as collaborating with FIT teams virtually for home visits and meetings. In addition, we have continued to receive referrals from hospitals, eye doctors, and early intervention agencies. Staff have described virtual Transition meetings & IEP meetings as being successful with good participation from a large number of team members from both schools & the birth to three programs.

Challenges have included the fact that some families were not able to do video visits, or chose not to have video visits during this time due to the stress they faced with working from home and/or helping older children with online classwork. Our staff have continued to contact families by telephone, text, email and by sending resources to the families to work with their children at home. Although our staff have been able to adjust to working virtually, staff miss the face-to-face relationships established during home visits. Another challenge for the orientation and mobility staff has been the consideration of safety in giving virtual instructions for orientation and mobility.

We are thankful for the health and safety to this point of our staff and families, and for the opportunity to provide services in a safe format during this pandemic health crisis. Future challenges will involve addressing the concerns of families and staff who do not feel comfortable that in-person home visits are safe, at least for the near future. Some of the challenges for home visits are the inability of our staff to control the safety of different home environments, questions about the level of PPE for staff needed to prevent infection in home environments, and the safety of travel by car and hotel to different parts of New Mexico. There are also concerns about the possibility of transmission of the COVID-19 virus to our own families as well as other families we serve as staff travel between different homes and different parts of the state that they cover.

## Early Childhood Program (ECP)

Paul Kilman, Program Coordinator, Early Childhood Program

The Albuquerque ECP campus had a great year. This year, we had 59 students enrolled during the school year. Next year we anticipate that we will increase our student numbers and we plan to add an additional



A virtual "telehealth" session with the NMSBVI B-3 Program helps this 11-month old to strengthen his tactile & exploration skills, in the comfort of his own home.

classroom, which will give the ECP ten classrooms in total.

At the ECP, we use a transdisciplinary approach when planning for the students' needs. This approach involves the teacher, educational assistants, and therapists meeting regularly to discuss the student's needs and plan next steps for the student. During these meetings the staff work together to create hands-on experiences that specifically address the students' developmental needs. Teachers use the information from the transdisciplinary meetings in order to integrate recommendations into the daily classroom routines to individualize programming for the student. Activities are created around the classroom thematic units to increase student learning. Students enjoy participating in these activities while they explore the textures and materials related to the thematic unit to gain a better understanding of the concepts. Teachers integrate regular field trips during their thematic unit to give the students real life experiences in our community.

Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that are brought onto the ECP campus. We were fortunate enough to be able to have "The Recycle Guy" join us again this year. The students loved using recycled materials to play music and interacting with the homemade musical instruments. The fire department came with a fire truck to allow our students to climb on it and explore the truck and fire fighter's equipment. One of the students' favorite activities this year was interacting with farm animals brought to campus. The students all enjoyed sitting and riding on a horse.



Hazel makes an exciting discovery about a toy in her classroom as ECP instructor Mr. Michael Garcia looks on.

Three of our staff members, (Kitty Edstrand, Maya Alarid-Pease, and Jessica Matney) began collecting data for our study, "Building Foundation for Communication". The goal of this study is to validate our communication curriculum. They were seeing some really good results; however, due to the Pandemic they had to halt the data collection. They will restart data collection once students can return in person.

In March, our school moved to a Continuous Learning Plan, where the students were learning virtually from home due to the Pandemic. During virtual learning, teachers and therapists were able to connect more with parents as they collaborated together to educate the students. When the school year ended we were still teaching the students virtually with parents' involvement. We all missed our graduation ceremony and being able to say good bye to our graduates in person.

## ECP ~ Parent Trainings & Support

**Nora Sandoval, Social Worker**

The ECP has collaborated with all areas of government to meet the complex issues of the global pandemic, COVID19. We have been working with families to support their access to needed resources, individual supports and changes to education at this time. We provide individualized supports and continue to staff family needs. We work with community providers to offer and guide families with concerns. Our program has been in contact with state agencies to provide information and opportunities to families. We continue to work together to meet the needs of our students & families during this uncertain time; and we work with families to meet the educational and emotional needs of their child at home.

## Instructional Resource Center Update (IRC)

**Mary Vaughn, IRC Coordinator**

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) Instructional Resource Center (IRC) has many roles to support the students of New Mexico. The IRC serves as a statewide lending resource for the American Printing House (APH) for the Blind. The APH Federal Quota Program is an annual appropriation for

the specific purpose of providing resources, including Braille textbooks, to students who are blind and visually impaired in the United States. Ordering APH Quota Fund materials through the IRC is at no charge to the school district or the student.

The materials help support the core curriculum and the expanded core curriculum essential for students who are blind and visually impaired. School districts in New Mexico register their students through NMVI Count, a statewide database, who meet the criteria for eligibility of the APH Quota Fund program. The student must meet the federal definition of blindness, have an educational program that meets the guidelines and have a written educational plan. Not only does the IRC provide materials for the district, but provides personal support to train on APH resources and support for staff working with students who are blind and visually impaired.

The IRC lending library has two staff who handle the purchasing and orders of APH resources. They are always happy to fill orders for students because they know it is ultimately helping a student to be successful in their classrooms. The staff also maintain the Perkins Braille writers by cleaning and fixing them so that they are always ready for student use.

The IRC currently has four braille transcribers on staff, who get braille textbooks into the hands of students in New Mexico. This team of dedicated staff fulfill many orders for New Mexico. Some of those orders include transcribing end-of-course exams, literary books, core curriculum textbooks & lessons for inclusion students attending the residential campus.

Even during COVID 19, the IRC has been able to continue providing educational resources to students. We are thankful and excited to be able to support continuous learning throughout New Mexico whether it be a virtual or hybrid platform. Everyone, students, parents and educational staff, has felt the effects of having to adapt and change during this time and have grown to meet the challenge. The dedicated IRC staff has also embraced the changes to continue meeting the educational resource needs of New Mexico's students. For more information about the Instructional Resource Center, you can contact Mary Vaughn at (575) 921-6872 and maryvaughn@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us.

## Outreach Programs Update

**Julie Johnson, Outreach Coordinator**

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach department provides a variety of services and supports for school-aged students throughout the state who are blind or visually impaired. One key role for the outreach department is mentorship support services for the Visual Impairment Program (VIP) at New Mexico State University. Teachers who enter the VIP to become licensed Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) are enrolled in an internship for the two years they are in that program. The NMSBVI outreach department serves as appointed mentors to those interns as they work with students with blindness and/or visual impairments. During the 2019-20 school year, the outreach department mentored 8 interns through NMSU's VIP and 1 intern in another program.

The Outreach Department also partners with a limited number of smaller districts to provide direct services to students who need services from a licensed TSVI; in the spring all mentoring, consulting and direct service was done remotely. The outreach department also provides consultation and/or evaluation to districts that request assistance.



*As part of her work-study program in the IRC, student Savanna pushes a cart loaded with boxes as Instructional Materials Specialist Mr. Andrew Wilmott assists.*



*At a Low Vision Clinic held in Las Cruces, Dr. Powell leads NMSBVI student Mario through a series of activities designed to help her assess his vision.*

NMSBVI's Outreach Department provides Low Vision Clinics around the state for students with visual impairments. NMSBVI partners with optometrists in the state who have received specialized training in low vision to evaluate students and help to determine if any low vision devices might benefit the students and better enable them to access their educational materials. Low Vision Clinics are provided in various locations throughout the state so that families can more easily attend. During the 2019-20 school year, the Low Vision Clinic saw 48 students from 19 school districts (including private and/or charter schools), both NMSBVI campuses and the NMSBVI FIT department. Due to Covid, there were 3 clinic days that were cancelled.

The Assistive Technology services through NMSBVI's Outreach Department provide assessments and consultation throughout the state. The assistive technology lending library allows students with blindness and/or visual impairments, all across the state, to try devices to help determine if the device is appropriate for their needs. During the 2019-20 school year, assistive technology consultants at NMSBVI provided direct service to 30 students across the state. They conducted 19 formal and 11 informal assistive technology evaluations. The NMSBVI Assistive Technology lending library loaned out 63 devices over the 19-20 school year; and also helped distribute and support the loan of 52 APH (American Printing House) / IRC (NMSBVI Instructional Resource Center) devices.



Access to an array of high-quality brailled materials is critical to our students' continuing academic success. Shown here, Ariella reads a page of Braille text in class.

## Prison Braille Update

**Laura Miyoshi, Prison Braille Program Coordinator**

This will be the fifth year of the Prison Braille Program's existence at the Lea County Correctional Facility (LCCF). The program has continued through three wardens and three directors of education at LCCF.

We had four inmate-participants become certified braille transcribers; currently, we still have two of them actively involved in the program. They have transcribed five biographies from the popular series "Who Was/Is" books for our classrooms, and they have been working on a book from the professional stacks for our library. They have been further honing their skills by transcribing materials that are more difficult to discern what format should be used, and they are looking forward to continuing to do more transcribing for our students. Some of their goals include: becoming certified proofreaders; taking and passing the braille formats test; and helping our students have access to new books they have transcribed for them.

In a year when the future is uncertain, these inmates are still learning and growing as transcribers, to better serve our school and the state of New Mexico. We are currently looking at alternative methods for supporting the program from a distance, as we plan for the future.

## Residential ~ Academic Programs

**Maritza Morales, Principal**

The 2019-2020 school year was a successful and challenging one for the Academic Program. All elementary and secondary students worked diligently in their academic classes and their compensatory skills throughout the school year. Once again, all staff worked hard to provide our students with the best education possible. As one of the students who joined our school in January 2020 told his mother after spending his first week at the residential campus, **"I have learned more in one week at NMSBVI than in one entire semester in my former school."** Below are a few of the highlights of 2019-2020 school year....

**Elementary:** The elementary class, in addition to working in academic classes and learning braille, attended Life Skills and Assistive Technology classes once per week throughout the school year. Both the Life Skills and Technology teachers dedicated time to expose each of the elementary students to different life and technology skills appropriate to their ages. This was a great addition to the elementary program; students were

very excited about going to the Life Skills and Technology classrooms just as the older students do.

**Math:** The math classes worked at their maximum potential. Some of the students learned to access support lessons on Khan Academy with great success. Some others built a geometric tool (simple but effective) to help them visualize geometric shapes and develop geometry terminology and concepts. A couple of the students in the Resource Center Math classes were determined to take Algebra I the next school year and with that in mind embraced the challenge of acquiring the skills necessary to be successful. Some of the other students expressed their desire for SAT reviews and the math teacher quickly set up a SAT Prep session after school regular hours.

**English Language Arts:** The English Language Arts classes read various factual and literary texts to increase their reading comprehension and writing skills as well as to learn about the world that surrounds them. The ninth grade students read the play, "The Miracle Worker" and learned about the lives of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan. Other students worked with Khan Academy's "Grammar" lessons and enjoyed listening to the videos and learning about grammar online. The older students read books like "The Crucible", "To Kill a Mockingbird", and "The Giver", and learned to write academic papers using a prescribed format, such as MLA or APA.

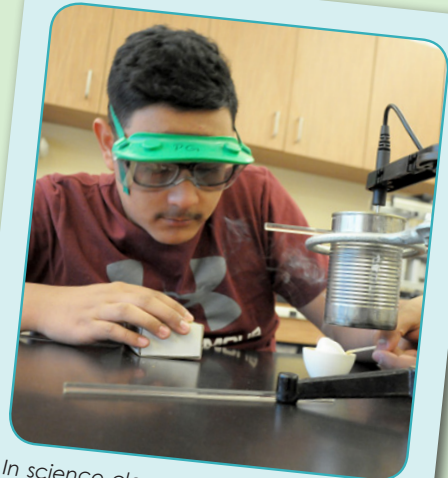
**Science:** The science classes were introduced to and worked through learning the new science curriculum based on the Next Generation Science Standards. Students were challenged to think about and analyze science data and phenomena in new and expanded ways. Students found that the already high expectations for them in science increased and they learned how to respond to them. The Biology students participated in a week-long lab that incorporated many of the "higher tech" pieces of lab equipment to study population growth in yeast cells. The lab required them to learn and use a Talking LabQuest connected colorimeter, photo spectrometer, and made extensive use of the video output microscope to project a microscopic image onto the big screen to make it easier to count yeast cells from day to day. For the students who did not have the vision to do that, they captured the image and quickly made it tactile with the P.I.A.F. machine. This proved to be a fun, but rigorous learning activity for them. In addition to their classwork, all science students prepared to present their science projects at the annual Science Fair, which ultimately switched to a virtual format. There were some very interesting projects presented!

**Braille:** In the braille classes, returning students started the school year with enthusiasm. Students made progress in their reading fluency, Braille knowledge, and writing accuracy. In particular, the two most advanced Braille students were reading ACT prep passages to gain practice with the complexity of passages encountered on college aptitude tests; the state is using a college aptitude test for mandated high school state testing this year. Some students read novels involving political intrigue and royal successions ("Troubled Waters" and "The Curse of Chalion") during the fall semester. Students in other classes read the nonfiction "Who Was Dr. Seuss?" and the fiction novel "Okay for Now". Three elementary students joined Braille classes to start the second quarter; two of these students were beginners in Braille. They had Braille sessions in which they were working on increased accuracy and speed in their reading and writing as well as more UEB symbol/contraction usage, map reading, and proofreading. Overall, students in the braille classes learned more about the UEB code as well as the skills needed for the upcoming SAT test.

**Assistive Technology:** In the Assistive Technology classes, students worked on different activities and projects. During the first semester, they experienced writing a semester compare/contrast paper of two books they

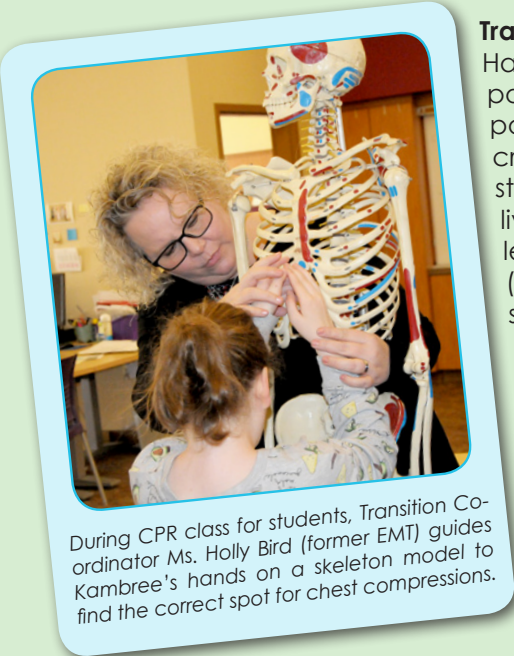


*In addition to classroom instruction, students had the opportunity for supplementary summer classes; here, Math Instructor Ms. Michele Joyner works with Thristan.*



*In science class, student Pedro carefully sets up his experiment; he uses a match to light a marshmallow on fire.*

read for class that dealt with bullying. The students discovered what it was like to write a term paper. After Christmas, the students reviewed how to use excel and what it can be used for. During the spring, students refreshed their skills on how to use PowerPoint which included all of the necessary keyboard shortcut commands to navigate the various computer systems.



During CPR class for students, Transition Coordinator Ms. Holly Bird (former EMT) guides Kambree's hands on a skeleton model to find the correct spot for chest compressions.

**Transition Program:** Our Transition coordinator developed a Transition Handbook for NMSBVI Students and Parents. She identified and improved post-secondary opportunities / options for students in the Intensive Support Program and developed a "Transition Begins at Birth" program that creates for students and parents a foundational understanding and stream of thought around post-secondary employment, independent living, education/training, community participation, and recreation/leisure. In addition, she helped to coordinate a student assessment (WOWI) training for NMSBVI staff, and other providers/educators in the state who work with students who are blind or visually impaired.

And THEN...The 4th quarter came! The fourth quarter turned out to be a completely new adventure. Due to COVID-19, schools in New Mexico were asked to provide distance learning during school closure for the rest of the semester. NMSBVI stepped into the challenge and put together a continuous learning plan. In order to provide the best learning opportunities possible for the academic program students, we used the Microsoft TEAMS platform, Zoom video, phone conferences and e-mail communication as well as print and embossed student packets that were mailed home every week.

NMSBVI teachers and educational assistants did a fantastic job preparing class materials, providing class lessons, and communicating with parents. For the most part, students and parents fully participated in the provided learning time. Secondary and elementary students met with their teachers via zoom video conferences on a weekly basis and embraced their class work with great enthusiasm. We were extremely proud of our students; despite the challenges of having to access their learning environment remotely, our secondary students embraced the new experience and applied what they had learned in their assistive technology classes. For those students who had difficulties participating in their learning time, our teachers went to great lengths to reach out to their parents to provide the assistance and support they needed.

It is amazing the many things we all can learn in a short period of time when an unforeseen situation presents itself! NMSBVI has an extraordinary staff that, once again, demonstrated their willingness to undertake any challenge and learn what was necessary to provide for the needs of their students no matter the situation.

## Residential ~ After-School Programs

**Public Speaking Club ~ Donelle Bunch-Sydow,**

**Language Arts Instructor**

In the 2019-2020 school year, students met weekly after school to work on speaking skills and to prepare for two performances. Both performances were done at the Patron's Hall Coffee Shop in Alamogordo. Dorm students also attended the performances, along with members of the public who happened to be in the coffee shop. On our March 4th performance, music instructor Mr. Cuellar (Mr. C.C.) joined us. Students in the speaking club were Mary, Savanna, and Shawn. Ariella joined us as part of the special music performance. During the performances, the manager of the Flickinger Performing Arts center came down from her office in the adjoining building because she said she heard such "joyful noise" coming from



At the "Poetry Open-Mic" event at a local coffeeshop, Shawn gets up in front of the crowd to recite an excerpt from William Shakespeare's "As You Like it."



Patron's Hall that she had to come see us. All of the performers' coffee shop treats were "on the house."

### **Yearbook Club ~ Carla Gonzales, Multi-Media Specialist**

The 2019-2020 school year began like any normal school year at NMSBVI. Everyone was excited to get back to class and catch up with friends, teachers and colleagues. As the school year progressed, it was clear that several students enjoyed taking photos. Many times when I went into a classroom or activity there would be a student who asked if they could use the camera to take a photo of myself, the instructor or another student.

I found it intriguing that a student with limited or no vision would have an interest in taking photographs, which is a very-visual activity. I have learned so much from these students and they taught me that even though they may not be able to see clearly, or at all, they could "see" through the excitement of others of what was happening and were just as eager to capture the moment, as any photographer would be. That opened my eyes to the possibility of allowing them access to a school camera to capture moments of interest.

Around that same time, it was brought to my attention that having a Yearbook Club could encourage more students to be actively involved in the production of the NMSBVI yearbook, and enhance the skills of our budding student-photographers and provide a place to showcase their photos. Midway through the school year Pedro, Arianna & Feliz answered the call for students to join the yearbook club. The club would meet once a week after school. During these one-hour sessions, they were introduced to the yearbook software, how to add photos to the software and how to work on pages within the program. When mid-March arrived and the globe was hit with the pandemic, students and staff were sent home to complete the remainder of the school year through virtual classes; unfortunately, that ended the club interaction for the school year.

The 2020 NMSBVI yearbook includes a page highlighting the students' involvement; they selected the photos and used the software to design the page. There is an additional 2-page spread of photos taken by various students during the months everyone was on campus. The following students were our 2019-2020 school year photographers, and we're so proud of their work: Beau, Lily, Savanna, Mary, Feliz, Arianna, and Pedro.

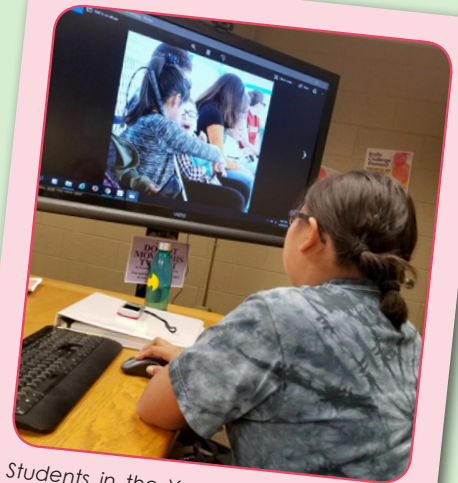
## *Residential ~ Athletics*

### **Adapted Physical Education Class ~ Alex Bocian, Adaptive PE Instructor**

Adapted physical education class provides students with the opportunity to safely engage in a variety of movement experiences designed specifically to encourage motor development, build self-confidence, foster socialization, build respect for everyone, and learn a variety of concepts that enable successful participation to enhance health, fitness, and wellbeing of our student population.

Object control skills, locomotor movement, adapted sports, fitness, lifetime activities and aquatics are all a vital part of the curriculum. Object control skills are things like catching, kicking, striking, and throwing which allow students to manipulate items in their environment and engage in movement. Locomotor movements include skills such as walking, jumping, galloping, and crawling which allow students to move and interact with their environment.

Adapted sports can be played by all students successfully with the



*Students in the Yearbook Club learned how to use a computer and large monitor to begin choosing photos & content for the pages of the publication.*



*In the school's on-site bowling alley, Amythyst prepares to roll a bowling ball down the ramp as Adaptive PE Instructor Mr. Alex Bocian gives her some hints.*

correct equipment and rules in place; some sports that students have participated in during APE class are Hockey, Football, Tennis, Baseball, Basketball, Track and Field, and many more! Fitness activities help students understand self-care and health-related fitness components including endurance, strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. Lifetime activities include walking, cycling, bowling, dance, and many more which provide students with long term options for both leisure and wellness. The pool on campus allows for instruction in aquatics with a focus on water safety, stroke development, and Fun! Students' dedication and hard work paired with the staff's caring and collaborative approach creates an environment where all students can progress in both content knowledge and physical ability.

**Adapted Ski Program ~ Lori Adam, Occupational Therapist**

Twelve students from the preschool, elementary and ISP classes participated in a 4-week adaptive ski program with Ski Apache Adaptive Sports. We were able to include 6 secondary students for a day of skiing. Everyone had a great time! Students skied with specialized ski instructors and used a variety of adaptive equipment including bi-skis, walkers, poles and tethers. First-time skiers were introduced to ski equipment; and returning skiers improved their skills, using fewer adaptations. It was another great year! Participants had fun, improved their skills and gained self-confidence!



*During a field-trip to Ski Apache in snowy Mescalero, Beau has a lot of fun building his skills with his Adaptive Ski Coaches.*

**Golden Bears Goalball and Cheer ~ Jeremiah Vaughn, Athletic Coordinator/Coach**

It was another successful season of goalball at NMSBVI. The NMSBVI Golden Bears travelled to the Colorado School for the Blind, September 6-8, 2019, to compete in their Homecoming Goalball tournament. After many hard-fought games, the NMSBVI Golden Bears came out victorious once again, taking first place! October saw the NMSBVI Goalball team travel to Grand Prairie, Texas to compete in the Grand Prairie High School Goalball tournament. NMSBVI competed against club teams from around Texas, ultimately proving too much for their competition; the Golden Bears went undefeated, taking first place in yet another tournament.

The week of December 9th, 2019, NMSBVI had our Homecoming festivities, culminating in our homecoming Goalball tournament against the Bulldogs of CSDB on Friday, December 13th. The Golden Bear boys team swept the field going a perfect 3-0 and capping off the season undefeated for the 3rd year in a row. On Saturday the 14th, teams comprised of community members along with the Golden Bears and Bulldogs competed in a community goalball tournament. Although there was a lot of stiff competition, the Golden Bears continued to prove too much for their competition, winning it all once again.



*Golden Bear Goalball trip to Colorado! Back row: NMSBVI transportation staff Ms. Katie Reynolds & Ms. Lori Romero, with Goalball coach Mr. Jeremiah Vaughn, and Cheer coach Mr. Matthew Wise. Front row: NMSBVI Goalball team members Mary, Shawn, and Pedro; and cheerleader Carybeth with coach Ms. Erica Later.*

Working alongside the goalball students each year, our cheerleaders are definitely an invaluable part of our Golden Bear

team! Once again this year, Coach Matthew Wise had his team well trained and fired up to do all they could to see their teams through to victory!

## Residential ~ Family Weekend Event

*Heather Miller, Special Education Administrator*

We had a great time at Family Weekend 2019! 16 families from around the state participated, 5 of whom were families of prospective students. This annual weekend provided families the opportunity to not only learn about all of the great things NMSBVI has to offer but also to have hands-on experiences.

On Friday night, families both watched and participated in a goalball exhibition. It was exciting to see so many people give goalball a try and we had lots of excellent players! Saturday, families were able to either spend time with the teachers to hear about how their children are doing, or to learn about what a day at NMSBVI looks like. During lunch, some of our secondary students recited poetry and monologues and families introduced themselves to the group. It was a nice opportunity to break the ice and opened the door to the families developing relationships with each other. In the afternoon, families learned about all of the amazing assistive technology that is available, made ice cream sundaes with blindfolds on, learned about mathematical applications and nemeth code, and met representatives from the National Federation of the Blind. Many families were surprised to learn about all of the resources the NFB can provide to not only individuals with visual impairments, but their families as well. In the evening, after another delicious meal, students swam in the pool, looked at the night sky, moon, and Neptune through the telescope, and completed activities around the gym "world" to fill their "passport of fun" with experiences.

All of the activities were greatly enjoyed and tons of fun! After breakfast at the hotel on Sunday, families participated in the student panel, where two of our current students shared stories about their lives and how NMSBVI has helped them. Families also heard information on how to support the development of self-advocacy, listened to an APH presentation and learned about resources available to them and their districts, and had the opportunity to ask questions about IEPs and other educational situations unique to their children.

Family weekend provides families from all over the state with the opportunity to network with other families and build relationships with those having similar experiences, both within the educational system and their personal lives, who they may not otherwise have the chance to meet. It also provides students who more recently developed their visual impairments, or who have progressive conditions, with the chance to find hope and encouragement as they learn about the resources they can access; and that groups, such as NFB, are available to support them throughout their lives. We look forward to this awesome adventure again next year!

## Residential ~ Library / 3D Printing

*Amy Brody, Librarian*

In 2019-2020 students began to learn how to use NMSBVI's 3D printer. NMSBVI Librarian Amy Brody printed fidget spinners, cane attachments, and learning objects for the students which made them curious to try the printer for themselves. Many of the students stayed after school to learn how to find electronic files to print and how to load filament into the printer to make their own objects. One

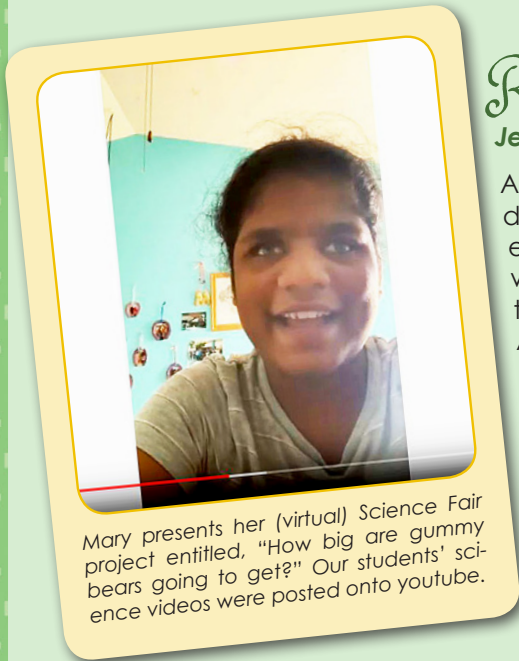


*In the school's math classroom, student Mary familiarizes some of her family members with the Braille textbooks she uses every school-day.*



*Student Faebian loads the raw materials (plastic filament strips) into a 3D printing machine as Librarian Ms. Amy Brody verbally guides him along the steps.*

student printed a 3D replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, and another student printed a model of The Titanic. Both items were related to English assignments they were reading and enhanced the lesson. Other students printed slinkies, unicorns, and the world's tallest building. All who participated learned the process for producing an object and gained technical skills in our changing world. The librarian is still using the 3D printer to create tactile objects like constellation maps, seasonal decorations, famous replicas of buildings, and models of things such as escalators and the corona virus molecule. We hope to have more students participate in learning to use this valuable educational tool.



Mary presents her (virtual) Science Fair project entitled, "How big are gummy bears going to get?" Our students' science videos were posted onto youtube.

## Residential ~ Virtual Science Fair

**Jeff Killebrew, Science Instructor**

As the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted school life, NMSBVI's science students met a major challenge by going "virtual" for their 2020 Spring Science Fair. Unbeknownst of the coming pandemic, our students began work on their science projects during the fall semester with plans to share their results the following March via a traditional in-person Science Fair. As they put the finishing touches on their presentations, disappointment replaced excitement as our school buildings closed for the remainder of the school year. "What are we going to do about our science fair?" was the question of the day as our new reality set in.

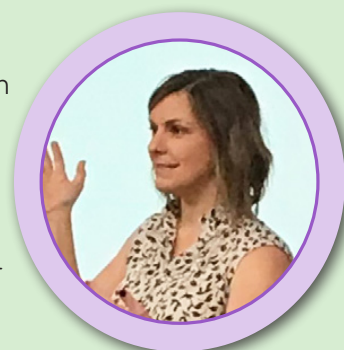
With the help of our IT and Media department, a "Virtual Science Fair" was developed as students made video presentations of their projects from home and shared them with the world via NMSBVI's YouTube channel. Even though it was under difficult circumstances, our students produced excellent presentations on a variety of topics such as, "What are Dreams Made of?", "How Speakers Work," and

"Which Gasoline Burns the Cleanest?" to name a few. Many positive comments were posted online about their presentations as people far and wide watched our students proudly share their hard work.

## Statewide Training Program

**Mark Carter, Statewide Training Coordinator**

During the last year the NMSBVI Statewide Training Program presented two Vision Bee trainings by Jessica Sinarski (pictured at right) titled, "Light up the Learning Brain - Strategies for Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences." Over 300 people attended the Vision Bees, one of which was held in Albuquerque and the other in Alamogordo. Attendees, including parents, teachers, social workers, counselors, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech/language pathologists, birth to three service providers and vision professionals expressed their appreciation for the valuable and informative training.



The Statewide Training Program continues to provide new NMSBVI employees with blindness awareness trainings designed to encourage positive attitudes about the capabilities of persons who are blind. Also, as part of the training, the employees receive information on the Expanded Core Curriculum and learn about the array of services provided throughout the state by NMSBVI. Dr. Loana Mason & Michelle Chacon assisted Mark Carter with the blindness awareness trainings. Ongoing training has also been provided to the NMSBVI transportation/caregivers to enable them to support the learning and independence of NMSBVI students.

The Statewide Training Program provided training to the parents of students who attended the Braille Challenge, which occurred in February 2020 in Alamogordo. The parents training focused on using braille, daily living skills (cooking and kitchen skills), and using technology to facilitate the ability of people who are blind and visually impaired to organize, identify and keep track of important items and information.

A Zoom meeting for Orientation and Mobility Specialists in New Mexico was facilitated by the Statewide Training Program to address questions and share resources related to the recent changes in the provision of instruction related to the COVID 19 virus. On April 20, 27 and May 4, 2020 in response to the COVID 19 changes in educational service provisions, three hour-long online trainings using Zoom were offered to professionals in New Mexico. The Statewide Training Program coordinated presentations by Vickie Buchignani on strategies and tips for providing remote instruction on three topics: 1) Blind and Visually Impaired with Multiple Impairments, 2) Functional Academics and 3) Daily Living Skills. The trainings were well received and had an average attendance of 30 participants, including public school and NMSBVI employees, from all over NM.

Trainings were provided to teachers in public school settings including West Las Vegas and students in Silver City public schools. The West Las Vegas training focused on blindness awareness and the Silver City training was centered around White Cane Day.

## Vision Impairment Degree Program (VIP) at New Mexico State University

*Loana Mason, Ed.D., COMS, Visual Impairment Program Director*

In Summer 2019, 16 students began taking licensure coursework in the VIP; six of whom are prospective certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMSs) and 10 of whom are prospective teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs). Another three TSVIs and six COMSs from the 2017 cohort successfully completed their licensure coursework. All three of these TSVIs have obtained state licensure. While four of these COMSs have obtained national licensure, only two so far have become licensed by the state. Four NMSBVI Outreach Consultants mentored seven TSVI interns in 10 different districts. Seven COMSs interns were mentored by the NMSBVI FIT Developmental Vision Specialists, the NMSBVI ECP, the NMSBVI Residential Campus, three private contractors, and 1 public school instructor. Five students also earned their Master of Arts in Special Education this year. Sixty-eight percent of the blindness professionals currently serving children and youth in New Mexico are products of the NMSU VIP.



During a field-trip to the local mall, NMSU VIP degree students navigated the escalators while wearing eye-cover and using a white cane.



The Workplaces 2020 - Albuquerque Journal

## Albuquerque Journal

*NMSBVI is a proud recipient, again!*

Once again this year, NMSBVI is proud to be a recipient of a Top Workplaces Award for 2020! We have placed at #4 in the best midsize workplace in the state... making this our 4th year in a row to rank within the top 5 places for this prestigious award! Many thanks to our employees, all of our amazing students and their families, and to our many supporters. Each year, it is our continuing honor to serve students all across the State of New Mexico, and we look forward to continuing our mission well into the future!



*When a friendly horse came to visit the ECP playground one day, Alain made friends right away! (Ms. Yvette Aragon gave him a boost so he could reach.)*

# Construction ~ Alamogordo Campus



## **Margie Macias, Director of Institutional Support Services**

As NMSBVI continues with construction at the Alamogordo Campus, we wish to express our many thanks to our local and state legislators, the Public Schools Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC), the Capital Outlay Division of the Higher Education Department (HED) and the many champions at the state level who believe in the school's mission. NMSBVI is into the last 2-3 years of a decade-long goal of construction upgrades and new construction to the historical Alamogordo campus.

Currently, renovations to the Quimby Gymnasium and Natatorium Building are nearing 80% completion with a targeted substantial completion date by November 2020. Major renovations to these two areas include a new roof, mechanical, electrical and sewer/plumbing upgrades, reconfiguration of the student restrooms and locker room areas, new energy efficient windows, pool laundry room and refurbishment of the pool plaster. The parking lot adjacent to these two areas is also being replaced.

On the heels of the Quimby Gymnasium & Natatorium project completion, NMSBVI will move right into the demolition of the two present dormitories to be replaced with new construction of one dormitory and two residential cottages.

These two projects will run simultaneously due to scheduling and construction correlation between the two projects. While the two cottages and the new Garrett Dormitory are being constructed, the present Sacramento Dormitory will be used as swing space to temporarily house the residential students. Once construction of the new Garrett Dormitory is complete, demolition of the Sacramento Dormitory will occur.

Running concurrent with the two dormitory projects, and also under the same contractor, the existing two-story Superintendent's Residence will be replaced with a handicap accessible, single-story residence. Due to the compromised sewer system, the need to upgrade electrical and domestic water lines to code, and conversion of the present two-story home to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, construction estimates for renovations have proven to be more costly than new construction.

Additionally, two parking lots are scheduled for replacement at the Alamogordo Campus — one presently under construction bordering the two educational buildings and the other to start construction in late fall at the Lyle Administration Building area.



Quimby Gymnasium & Natatorium, prior to renovation.



Quimby Gymnasium & Natatorium, under renovation.

Lastly, the Paul & Lois Tapia Building received tentative funding through 2020 General Obligation Bond C Funds for renovations (please vote yes!). This historical landmark is the oldest building on the campus. Built in 1918, its original purpose was to serve as a teacher's cottage — it now houses the school's Braille Production Department. The Tapia Building is one of four (4) buildings on the Alamogordo Campus which are on the National and State Historical Records.

NMSBVI appreciates the working partnerships with the PSFA, PSCOC and HED and their continued support and understanding of how projects are scheduled and managed while, at the same time, considering the students' orientation & mobility independence and their safety.

# The Foundation



## **Beth Lyle, NMSBVI Foundation**

The New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Foundation was established in 1982 to provide supplementary funding for the many student programs, projects, equipment, and services that NMSBVI provides. The Foundation works to meet the current and future needs of our students.

Every year, thousands of children throughout New Mexico are served by NMSBVI. It is with this knowledge that the NMSBVI Foundation works hand-in-hand with the NMSBVI Innovations & Development Department to ensure that there is sustainable funding for the unmet needs of the school. The Foundation continues to grow its corpus to create an endowment for the future of NMSBVI, and the Foundation was thrilled to welcome four new members to its ever-growing board.

In 2019, The NMSBVI Foundation was pleased to host our Fourth Annual Glowball Tournament, which was a great success! Many thanks for the generous donations from our continued sponsors.



Early literacy is so important! Shown here, Ayden in our birth-to-three program explores a book, touching the various textures and braille dots.



At the Early Childhood Programs site in Albuquerque, every day is filled with learning and fun! Here, Osyus explores a furry toy in his classroom.



At the school's greenhouse in Alamogordo, Hae'Leigh waters a little potted plant with some guidance from Life Skills Assistant Ms. Kim Tryon.

# Saying Goodbye



**CONGRATULATIONS TO 2020 GRADUATE, KAMBREE WILBANKS! AND CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ECP GRADUATES!**

**STAFF RETIREMENTS** • Doris Davis • Maria "Elvita" Dooley  
• Brenda Holmes • Holly Obrovac • Julie Pino • Sandra Rentería  
• Marjorie Rhodes

**BOARD of REGENTS RETIREMENTS**

• Regent Alicia McAninch (2003 to 2020) • Regent Christine Hall (2005 to 2019)



To request a copy of this publication in Braille,  
please contact Sharon Hilton,  
NMSBVI Braille Production Department:  
email [SHilton@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:SHilton@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us)



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