

Christine Duncan Heritage Academy
President's Report by Dr. Quiñones
June 10, 2020

We have now reached 400 deaths and 9000 cases in Nuevo México due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please exercise caution in everything you do to protect yourselves and others.

I have been in communication with Ms. Georgia Roybal and our concern that the historic 2018 Martínez/Yazzie Court Case is being implemented at a snail's pace, if at all, in New México. The case was litigated by the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and the Center for Law and Poverty.

Remedies mandated include 1) increase per-student funding, 2) increase teacher pay, 3) change the funding formula to give more weight to the at-risk students, 4) extended learning time, 5) K-5 Plus (increase learning time in early grades), 6) Indian education, 7) standards based assessments (evaluating a student's mastery of a skill), 8) teacher/administrator evaluation improvement (move from a punitive model to a model where struggling schools are given additional training and help), 9) culturally relevant curriculum materials, 10) improved monitoring of programs (both fiscal and program monitoring) by the Public Education Department and 11) improved early childhood education opportunities.

At present, New Mexico schools are required to establish "equity councils." It will be interesting, as NM is reviewed, how many schools are implementing aggressive measures. One of the strongest mandates of this law is to promote cultural relevance in the classroom. In this regard, courses such as history and language arts must move away from teaching the dominant culture's curriculum and making the curriculum more culturally and linguistically relevant to Nuevo México. We must promote critical pedagogy as the focus of the curriculum for our students through effective inquiry techniques, such as those practiced by Paulo Freire, the great Brazilian educator, who was kicked out of Brazil for doing "too good a job" as teaching that nation's poverty stricken population and promoting literacy.

I understand Christine Duncan Heritage Academy, like other schools, has established an equity council. Of course, dual language, in itself, is a great pedagogical approach.

I will keep you updated. I have been talking with several experts and we may be joining together to put pressure on the state PED to get its act together and comply with this court mandate.