



Early College Academy &
Career Enrichment Center
Family News
March 2026



CEC/ECA 50/20 Block Party

Thursday, March 19th • 1:30-3:30 PM

*Celebrate 50 years of the Career Enrichment Center
and 20 years of the Early College Academy!*

Hear from APS and community leaders about what makes both of these institutions exceptional, enjoy local entertainment, tour some of our incredible programs and see our campus in action!

Fun, interactive showcases and demonstrations!

Open to the public! Refreshments provided!

1:30 PM – Opening Ceremony

2:00-3:00 PM – Programs Showcase



RSVP and tell us you're coming!
<https://forms.gle/CiEdXqDSa47mDcJ19>

sponsored by



EXOMIND



Security Hardware Solutions, LLC

CELEBRATING

**90
YEARS**

NUSENDA CREDIT UNION



ANNIVERSARY BLOCK PARTY • March 19th

CEC is celebrating 50 years of serving up valuable career-connected learning experiences for students from across our district, and ECA is celebrating 20 years of excellence as the premiere high school in the State of New Mexico. This calls for a celebration, and **you are invited to our CEC/ECA 50/20 Block Party on Thursday March 19th from 1:30 to 3:00 pm.**

At 1:30 PM there will be speeches and a ceremony honoring 50 years of serving APS.

From 2:00–3:00 PM, CEC pathways will host interactive demonstrations or experiences that showcase student work and skill mastery.

For 50 years, CEC has transformed lives across the district by providing equitable access to Career Technical Education, dual credit, and real-world skill development. Thousands of students have walked through our doors and found direction, confidence, purpose, and opportunity! Come experience CEC!

COMING EVENTS:

Mar. 13	End of 3rd Quarter Grading Period
Mar. 18	SAT Testing for Juniors (asynchronous learning for non-testing students)
Mar. 19	CEC/ECA 50/20 Anniversary Block Party (1:30-3:30 PM)
Mar. 26-27	Parent Teacher Conferences/Virtual Learning Day
Mar. 30-Apr. 3	Spring Break (NO SCHOOL)
Apr. 2	ECA-CEC Booster Club meeting (5:30 PM; virtual – see link below)
Apr. 11	ECA-CEC Prom
Apr. 14 & 15	Parenting Workshop (5:30-7:00 pm, see story pg 2)
Apr. 15	Senior Sunset
Apr. 18	Senior Parent Breakfast

PROM • April 11th

ECA Student Government presents Prom on Saturday, April 11th from 7-10 PM at the Sheraton Uptown. Prom is open to ECA and CEC students and to grades 9-12. With the exciting theme “Murder at the Masquerade,” you can participate in the murder mystery as the mysterious culprit enacts their evil scheme, or simply enjoy a night of music, food, and unforgettable memories!

[Run for prom court!](#)

(Seniors and Juniors only)

Prom spirit week will be April 6-10; Prom assembly for ECA will be April 10th.

[Purchase tickets online](#) - enjoy early bird prices now! (All discounts end and prices rise April 1.) Food provided with ticket. Regular ticket \$50 ea.; couples \$90 total (2@\$45 ea.)

Senior / Senator discount \$45 ea.; couples \$80 total (2@\$40 ea.)

ECA STUDENT GOVERNMENT
presents

PROM

Murder at the Masquerade

Early Bird Prices:
Regular Single - \$50
Regular Couples - \$45
Senior & Senator Single - \$45
Senior & Senator Couples - \$40

All discounts end April 1st.

Pricing after April 1st - Single \$60 - Couple \$55
All funds raised go towards student activities.

April 11th, 7pm-10pm
Sheraton Uptown Hotel

PARENTING WORKSHOP • April 14 & 15

ECA/CEC is excited to, once again, partner with Faith Works Counseling to host the free 2-part **Effective Strategies for Navigating the Teenage Years workshop**. This workshop will be held on April 14 & 15 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.

Parents/guardians will learn how to: most effectively communicate with their teen; how to create boundaries; help their teen regulate their often-changing emotions; foster connection; as well as strategies for safety when out in the community; and much more. [Register here](#).

ECA-CEC BOOSTER CLUB

Please join us for our **ECA-CEC Booster Club meetings**, held on the **first Monday** of each month. The meetings are virtual on Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/rif-sybb-ibi>.

Check out the [Booster Club Web Page](#) – see what we do and find out how to be a part! [Please use this link](#) to share your name and email with our Booster team so we can keep you in the loop.

ECA SELFLESS SENIOR



Sahba Ghasempour is ECA's [APS Selfless Senior](#) for 2026!

“My name is Sahba Ghasempour, and I am a senior at Early College Academy. I see it as my responsibility to give back to my community, as communities thrive when their members contribute their time and skills to support one another. My community has supported me in a multitude of ways, whether it was by providing me with a space to decompress or offering valuable opportunities to grow, it has given me a support system to rely on. I strive to honor this support through volunteering at hospice homes and low-income clinics, participating in environmental clean-ups, and conducting neuroscience research that could one day better the community.”

ECA STUDENT OF THE WEEK



Jordan Abrams is the [APS Student of the Week](#) for Feb 16-20!

Jordan is an Early College Academy senior who loves being connected to her school community and spending time with friends. Her involvement and passion for learning shine through in everything she does.

Jordan's favorite class is CNA at the Career Enrichment Center, where she earned her Certified Nursing Assistant credential. She says the class helped her learn how to care for patients while strengthening her communication skills and empathy for those in need. Outside of class,

Jordan stays busy painting, crocheting and knitting, playing the piano, participating in student government, and listening to music. After graduation, Jordan plans to attend college and pursue a degree in social work, continuing her commitment to helping others.

ESPORTS NEWS



The ECA Elements ends week 4 in top 4 in the state of 3 different games.

ECA Mario Kart is 4-0, with an undefeated 8-0 game record, and holding 1st place in the state.

ECA Rocket League is 3-0 with an undefeated 9-0 game record, and holding 2nd place in the state.

ECA Super Smash Bros is 3-1, holding 4th place in the state.

The Elements will be going to the NMSU Invitational in Las Cruces on March 6-8 to compete against every other high school and college in the southwest U.S.

HAPPENINGS AT ECA/CEC:

Educators Rising State Conference



Over 550 students across the state attended the recent Educators Rising State Conference; 20 were from CEC. Eighteen CEC students competed with projects in Children's Literature and Interactive Bulletin Boards, and 8 placed!



Peyton & Aubree - 3rd place, Children's Literature, National Qualifier

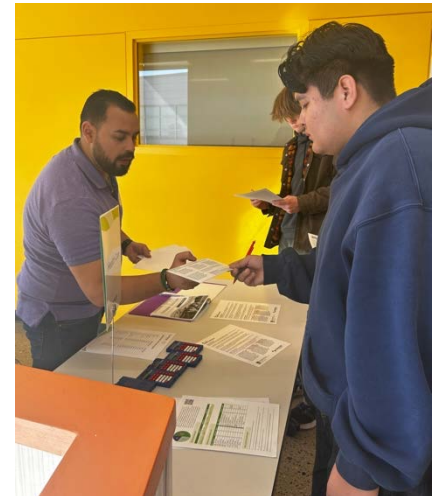
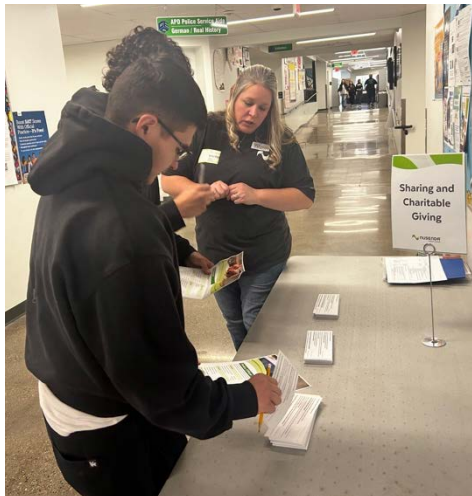
Marissa & Janexy - 5th place, Children's Literature, National Qualifier

Yamari & Valeria - 2nd place, Interactive Bulletin Board, National Qualifier

Lexi - 3rd place, Interactive Bulletin Board

Emilia - 2nd place, Interactive Bulletin Board, National Qualifier

ECA Students Participate in Financial Reality Fair



Thanks to **Nusenda Credit Union** for another fantastic Reality Fair! ECA students got to learn financial literacy: saving, debt, home-buying, and more with the fantastic financial consultants at Nusenda Credit Union. This program truly fits ECA and CEC's goals of getting students ready for their careers and college by arming them with the right financial knowledge. Special thanks to **Financial Services Career Exploration teacher Amanda Reyes** and **Dean of Students Eileen Maddock** for working so hard on the event.

ECA Students Make Several Visits to the Roundhouse!

Neil Burgess and Noah Holmen (top right in photo at right) visited the New Mexico Senate Roundhouse in Santa Fe as **ECA's representatives in the APS Superintendent's Student Action Council.**



Ms. Kuhnee's Crime & Punishment Classes also visited the NM Legislature (left 3 photos). Students requested the trip while they were studying Constitutional Law. They wanted to see how the system worked and learn how to lobby!

Jordan Abrams meets with Representative Harold Pope (son of our own Mr. Pope!)

ECA Mock Trial Team to Move on to State Competition

We are so proud of our Mock Trial teams for their outstanding performances at the Center for Civic Values Mock Trial Regional Competition. Congratulations in particular to **Green team** for placing 7th out of 49 teams and advancing to state competition for the first time in ECA's history!

Thank you to **Mark Walker** for providing this amazing experience for our students!



Ethnic Studies Students Learn to Make Tortillas on a Comal

Students in **Gino Noriega's Ethnic Studies class** got hands-on experience making tortillas using a comal. A comal is a round or oval griddle used in Mexico, Central America, and parts of South America for cooking tortillas and other foods. What a wonderful way to keep traditions alive!



APD K9 Unit Visits Vet Med Class for Impressive Demonstration

Megan Lanigan's Vet Med students got an up-close (but safely behind the windows) demonstration of an APD K9 taking down a bad guy. Students learned about the close working relationship between the dog and its handler.

Crime & Punishment Classes Host APD CSI Expert

Students from **Tanya Kuhnee's Crime & Punishment class** study a crime scene. A member of the APD Crime Lab helped them understand what detectives look for when solving crimes.



Field Trip to Talin Market

Students from **CEC's Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese World Language classes** had a field trip to the Talin Market World Food Fair in February.

Students and parent chaperones listen to Victor Limary, market manager.

Follow our accounts on social media!

Youtube:

Career Enrichment Center
> youtube.com/@aps_cec

Early College Academy
> youtube.com/@aps_eca

ECA Esports
> youtube.com/@eca_esports



Instagram:

Career Enrichment Center
> instagram.com/aps_cec

Early College Academy
> instagram.com/aps_eca

ECA Student Government
> instagram.com/eca_stugov/

ECA Esports
> instagram.com/eca_esports



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

► For Seniors and Families ◀

► The Coach Mike "Papa" Brown Memorial Scholarship 🏆✨

Honoring a legacy of leadership, heart, and dedication to student athletes.

This scholarship is open to all Albuquerque Public School student-athletes in the Albuquerque Metro Area with a 3.5 GPA or higher. Applicants must plan to attend college or a vocational/trade school by Fall 2026.

If you are a student athlete, you should strongly consider applying! They have only received 22 applications so far.

📢 Low applicants for local scholarship=high chances for you!

Five scholarships will be awarded (do not use AI to write your essay).

🏆 Grand Prize: \$5,000

🥈 First Runner-Up: \$4,000

🥈 Second Runner-Up: \$3,000

🥈 Third Runner-Up: \$2,000

🥈 Fourth Runner-Up: \$1,000

📅 Applications open: Aug. 28, 2025 • Deadline: Feb. 27, 2026 • Winners announced starting: Mar. 28, 2026

If you're a driven student-athlete ready to chase your future, this is your moment.

Apply now and carry forward Papa Brown's commitment to excellence. 🙌

<https://papabrownscholarship.wixsite.com/scholarship-fund/the-scholarship-1>

► New local scholarship! 💰 \$2,000 Scholarships for NM Seniors! 💰

The New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders (NMCEL) Scholarship is looking for the Class of 2026's best and brightest.

🌟 Bonus: Planning to major in Education? You get extra consideration!

Requirements:

📍 NM Public HS Senior

📈 3.0+ GPA

📅 Deadline: April 10, 2026, by 5 pm - [Apply on the Google Form](#).

🗣️ Interviews for finalists held via Zoom on May 8.



► Win scholarships. Save lives. 🚒💚

Project Yellow Light is officially OPEN for high school and college students! 📅 3/1 **Deadline:** Billboard (\$2k prize) 📅 4/1 **Deadline:** Video (\$8k prize) & Radio (\$2k prize)

It's time to use your creativity for a cause that matters. Don't wait- click the link below for all the details! 🔗

<https://www.projectyellowlight.com/>

► Toyota High School Challenge Scholarship

Graduating New Mexico high school seniors, you could win one of 60 scholarships worth \$1,000 each to use toward your future education! Show your community involvement and share your vision for making a difference through a 250-word (or less) essay.

📍 Eligibility Reminder: High school seniors must live in one of the eligible ZIP codes to apply. Scan the QR code to check the ZIP code list and submit your application!

🕒 **Deadline:** April 5, 2026

<https://1003thepeak.iheart.com/content/the-toyota-high-school-scholarship-challenge/>

► The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

It's not too late to apply for federal financial aid! Here's the essential information and resources:

The FAFSA for the 2026/27 College school year is OPEN! If you and a parent/guardian have not filled it out yet, it's not too late! Most colleges have a financial aid priority deadline (UNM's financial aid priority deadline is January 31, 2026). Filling out the FAFSA is not a requirement for families but it is highly recommended whether you believe your student will qualify for federal financial aid or not.

Frequently Asked Questions About the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly known as the FAFSA®, is an application students fill out to be considered for federal financial aid. Filling out the FAFSA is the only way to apply for federal financial aid.

Who should fill out the FAFSA?

Every eligible student should consider filling out the FAFSA for the first time in their last year of high school. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) provides assistance in paying for college.

Federal financial aid is available for U.S. citizens and eligible noncitizens (like permanent residents and individuals who meet certain noncitizen criteria).

You (the student) should complete the FAFSA, but your parent/guardian will also need to create an account to provide some of the required information. The application is free, and resources exist to help you fill it out. You should complete the FAFSA every year you plan to attend college.

Can undocumented students complete the FAFSA?

Undocumented students, including students with temporary protected status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students, aren't eligible for federal aid. You may be eligible for financial aid from your state, college, or a scholarship provider. Reach out to the financial aid office at the colleges you're considering. Explore alternatives to federal student aid. For additional information, check out these frequently asked questions.

When should I fill out the FAFSA?

Complete your FAFSA as early as you can to ensure you don't miss your chance to receive financial aid. The federal deadline for completing the FAFSA is June 30. However, many states and colleges have their own priority deadlines that may be much earlier and some types of financial aid are limited. Colleges may award these funds on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit your college's website to see what their deadlines are. Find out your state's deadline.

How do I fill out the FAFSA?

Complete the FAFSA online by logging in with your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. An FSA ID is a username and password used by students and parents to complete and sign the FAFSA. If you haven't created an FSA ID yet, create one at studentaid.gov.

Most families completing the FAFSA will consent to share their federal tax information directly from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This data exchange between the IRS and the FAFSA makes completing the application easier and reduces the number of questions you must answer.

How do I create an FSA ID?

Students who are eligible for and applying for federal financial aid and parents who are required to be listed on the FAFSA need to create FSA IDs.

To create an FSA ID you'll need:

- Your Social Security number (if you have one).
- Your date of birth.
- Your full legal name (written exactly as it appears on your Social Security card).
- An email address you have access to.
- A mobile phone number (optional).
- A mailing address.

A Social Security number, mobile phone number, and email address can only be associated with one FSA ID. This means you can't make multiple accounts for yourself, and if you share an email or phone number with someone, only one person can use that information to create an FSA ID.

What information does the FAFSA require?

If you're considered a dependent student, completing the FAFSA with your parent(s) information), you need to provide:

- General demographic information.
- High school and college information.
- Federal income tax returns.
- Current bank statements.
- Records of investments and other assets.

Do I need my parent(s) to fill out the FAFSA?

Most students are considered dependent when completing the FAFSA, meaning that parental information is required. Your dependency status determines whose information must be included when you fill out the FAFSA. If you're considered an independent student by the FAFSA, you won't be required to provide parental or guardian information.

How do I submit the FAFSA?

After filling out the FAFSA, you and your parent(s), if parental information is required, must sign and submit the application. If you complete the FAFSA online, you must sign the form with your FSA ID. If you complete a paper FAFSA, you must sign the paper form and mail it to the address listed. The FAFSA will take a few days to process if signed and submitted online. Processing will take longer if you mail in a paper form.

What happens if I don't complete the FAFSA?

If you don't complete the FAFSA, you won't be able to receive federal financial aid. You may also be ineligible for certain types of college scholarships and state aid. If you can't complete the FAFSA due to missing information or difficulty with the form, contact your college financial aid office for additional help.

What happens after I submit the FAFSA?

It may take a few weeks for your selected schools to receive your FAFSA information after you submit it. Keep an eye on your email to ensure you don't miss any important notifications from schools.

► The New Mexico Assistance Foundation (NMEAF)

NMEAF is an organization that works with APS seniors and families for guidance on filling out the FAFSA. This is the only site that you need to get ready to complete your FAFSA. I suggest that you review the NMEAF information on the FAFSA first and then it should only take you and other contributors 20-60 minutes to complete!

<https://www.nmeaf.org/plan-pay-for-college/fafsa-fund-your-future/prep-for-fafsa/>

They offer a \$500 Scholarship. It's a "No Brainer" scholarship that you should all apply for. It's simple - check it out on their website!

Money Mondays for FAFSA assistance:

If you need help with your FAFSA, FSA ID, or have questions about college, scholarships, or financial aid? Join us Mondays from 3–6 PM for free virtual help via Zoom. Financial aid pros from local colleges and universities will be there to support students and families every step of the way.

 MONEY MONDAY Live on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87698022517>

 Mondays | 3–6 PM (excluding holidays)

Upcoming Dates: March: 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; April: 13, 20, 27; May: 4, 11

 Questions? Email: outreach@nmeaf.org

 Download the full 2025 schedule: <https://www.nmeaf.org/plan-pay-for-college/events/money-mondays/>

► 3 scholarships you can apply for by just doing your FAFSA!

<https://www.nmeaf.org/plan-pay-for-college/scholarships/fafsa-scholarship/>

<https://www.aps.edu/education-foundation/impact/scholarships#varsity-scholarship>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/bigfuture-scholarships/scholarship-details>

★ For Juniors and Families ★

★ SAT School Day

The upcoming SAT School Day is Wednesday, March 18th! You will take the SAT for FREE and can send these scores to 4 colleges of your choice for free! SAT Practice Resources: <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/practice>

◆ For ALL Grade Levels and Families ◆

◆ Girls Who Code: Pathways Summer Program ✨

Girls Who Code Pathways is a free, flexible 7-week online program running June 29–August 14, designed for high school girls and non-binary students of all experience levels, including rising 9th graders, graduating seniors, and returning participants. 🖥️

Students can explore coding tracks in Data Science + AI, Game Design, Web Development, Cybersecurity, and AI + Society, connect with peers through a private Discord, and gain real-world insight through virtual events with leading tech organizations.

📄 Apply in ~10 minutes

🕒 Early Deadline: Feb 25, 2026

📅 Final Deadline: April 10, 2026

Learn at your own pace, build skills, and explore tech careers this summer! 🚀💜

<https://girlswhocode.my.salesforce->

[sites.com/GWCErollment/apex/ERx_Forms_PageMaker?pagelId=Welcome&utm_source=Campaign+Monitor&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=foia](https://girlswhocode.my.salesforce-sites.com/GWCErollment/apex/ERx_Forms_PageMaker?pagelId=Welcome&utm_source=Campaign+Monitor&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=foia)

◆ Dual Credit Information Session

If you are still trying to figure out how CNM dual credit works and what your opportunities are at CNM, you and a parent should attend this event!!!! If you are a senior and thinking about starting your college journey at CNM, you should attend this event!

CNM is excited to host an upcoming Dual Credit Information Session!

This session will provide students with important information about earning college credit while still in high school, including eligibility requirements, benefits, the enrollment process, costs, and key deadlines. It's a valuable opportunity for students who are considering dual credit courses and want to learn more about how participation can support their academic and postsecondary goals.

In addition, we will host a resource fair that evening featuring representatives from multiple departments and programs, including Financial Aid and Scholarships, Wellness CNM, the School of Liberal Arts, the School of Business, Hospitality and Tourism, the Criminal Justice Program, the Medical Assistant Program, the School of Math, Science, and Engineering, and many more.

Students interested in joining the program can also attend our application workshop, where recruiters will be on site to provide assistance and answer any questions students and parents may have.

This session will be held at **Main Campus Smith Brasher Hall on April 8th, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dual-credit-information-session-application-workshop-tickets-1982050614744?aff=oddttdtcreator>

◆ Exploring Health Career Pathways in New Mexico

Ready to be the next healthcare hero? 🧑‍⚕️✨ Join Exploring Health Career Pathways in New Mexico, a FREE live online series where current health students show you the ropes. No matter where you are in NM, this is your chance to build a roadmap to your dream career.

Why join?

- ✅ Real stories from current med/health students
- ✅ Professional dev (College apps, personal statements, & scholarships!)
- ✅ WIN PRIZES: Complete 6 sessions to enter our giveaway! 🎁

 Next Session: Tuesday, Mar 3rd | 5pm - 6pm

High school students throughout New Mexico can SIGN UP TODAY at <https://bit.ly/48zvkJ>

◆ Local Scholarship Alert for grades 9-12! 🎓💰

At Parnall Law, we're passionate about keeping our roads safe. That's why we're back with our 2026 Scholarship Program! We are awarding a total of \$5,000 in prizes to 3 students who help us tackle the dangers of distracted driving.

The Task: Create a "Distracted Driving Family Plan" essay. 📝

The Prizes:

- 🥇 1st Place: \$2,500
- 🥈 2nd Place: \$1,500
- 🥉 3rd Place: \$1,000

How to Enter:

1. Be a NM High School student (and US resident).
2. Write an essay on your plan to keep your family safe on the road.
3. Submit by May 1st, 2026!

Ready to fund your future? Visit: <https://www.hurtcallbert.com/bert-gives-back/scholarships/> to apply! 🚗🧑‍🚒🚫

◆ Get to know NMSU in Las Cruces!

Saturday, March 14th is our upcoming **Aggie Experience Open House**. This event is open to *all prospective* students, not just those interested in engineering. It gives students and families the chance to visit campus, explore academic programs, connect with student organizations, and get a feel for campus life at NMSU.

For more information go to: aggie-experience.nmsu.edu

◆ African American Youth Empowerment Summit

Registration is open for the APS African American Youth Empowerment Summit, which will be held on Saturday March 7th from 9:30am - 4:00pm at College and Career High School.

AA-YES is a youth leadership event centered around the empowerment of African American / Black students and students committed to becoming strong allies. Although targeted in part towards Black/African high school students, all APS high school students are encouraged to attend. There will be opportunities to build cultural knowledge, develop skills around being a leader and fostering strong allies, and build community understanding and networks. A light breakfast and lunch will be available. Participants will receive a certificate of participation to use on their resume or college applications.

To register, please go to: <https://www.aps.edu/events/2025-2026/5th-annual-african-american-youth-empowerment-summit>