

Ms. Yvonne Valenzuela *Special Education Teacher*, known affectionately to her students as "Ms. V.," is a proud native New Mexican whose career reflects a deep commitment to student growth, equity, and educational excellence.

Raised in Gallup, New Mexico, Ms. Valenzuela pursued her higher education at New Mexico Highlands University and Eastern New Mexico University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Communicative Disorders with a specialization in Speech and Language Disorders. After relocating to Albuquerque, she answered a calling to the classroom and completed the Alternative Licensure Teacher Preparation Program at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM).

Ms. Valenzuela brings more than 20 years of experience supporting students from preschool through high school, including 16 years as a High School Special Education Teacher. Prior to entering education, she served as a Case Manager for individuals receiving services through the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver, an experience that continues to inform her student-centered, strengths-based approach to teaching.

For the past seven years, Ms. Valenzuela has been a dedicated member of the Leadership Schools Network. She previously served at Health Leadership High School before joining Siembra Leadership High School, where she has fully embraced the Project-Based Learning model and its emphasis on authentic, student-driven learning.

What she values most about her role is witnessing students grow academically, develop as individuals, and accomplish goals they once believed were out of reach. Her teaching philosophy centers on building strong relationships, fostering self-advocacy, and ensuring every student has the support needed to thrive.

Outside of school, Ms. Valenzuela enjoys spending quality time with her family, friends, and loved ones. Her dedication to her students and her community reflects a career devoted to making a lasting, positive impact in the lives of New Mexico's youth.