



Early College Academy & Career Enrichment Center

Family News

August 25, 2026



WELCOME TO OUR NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL!

Hello everyone. My name is Jennifer Ortiz, and I am proud to serve this fine community as Assistant Principal.

I have 15 years of educational experience, teaching middle and high school students with and without IEP's early in my career. Becoming an administrator in 2020



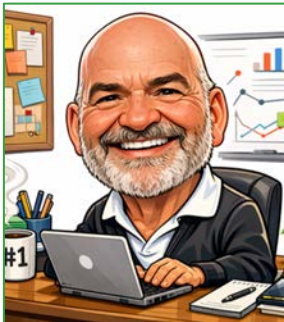
has shaped me tremendously. Additionally, I had the pleasure of being Interim Principal at Freedom HS in 2025, another awesome opportunity. I am a proud keynote speaker, NM Best Buddies Ambassador, and proponent for an inclusive world for all.

What an honor it is to be a part of Early College Academy and Career Enrichment Center. I look forward to building relationships with staff, students, and families.

Please reach out anytime.

-- **Jennifer Ortiz**, Assistant Principal, ECA & CEC

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL



To Our ECA and CEC Families, On October 1, I will retire as principal of Early College Academy and Career Enrichment Center and begin a new chapter as Executive Director of the APS Principals' Association.

Serving ECA and CEC for more than 14 years has been one of the

greatest privileges and most meaningful experiences of my professional life. I am incredibly grateful to the students, families, faculty, staff, and community partners who have supported our schools and helped make them such extraordinary places to learn and grow. Although it is difficult to leave a school I love so deeply, I do so with tremendous pride and complete confidence in their future. ECA and CEC have exceptional students, talented and dedicated staff, strong programs, and an enduring culture of excellence. Leadership may change, but the heart of these schools and their commitment to students will remain strong.

Thank you for your trust, encouragement, and support throughout these unforgettable years. ECA and CEC will always hold a very special place in my heart—and I know they will remain amazing for many years to come. With tremendous gratitude,

-- **Patrick Arguelles**, Principal, ECA & CEC

COMING EVENTS:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Aug. 31 | Freshman Class Officer Student |
| -Sep. 4 | Government Elections |
| Sep. 7 | Labor Day (NO SCHOOL) |
| Sep. 10 | ECA Senior Night (6:15-7:15 PM) <i>Online meeting – see Counselor's Corner for link</i> |
| Sep. 14 | ECA Booster Club Meeting (5:30 PM)
<i>Online meeting – see link on pg. 2</i> |
| Sep. 14-18 | Homecoming Spirit Week |
| Sep. 17 | ECA & CEC Open House (5:30-7:30 PM) |
| Sep. 19 | Homecoming Dance (7:00-10:00 PM) |
| Sep. 24 | ECA Freshmen/Sophomore Parent Information Night (6:15-7:15 PM)
<i>Online meeting – see Counselor's Corner for link</i> |
| Oct. 5 | ECA Booster Club Meeting (5:30 PM)
<i>Online meeting.</i> |
| Oct. 7 | PSAT/NMSQT for All Sophomores (and Interested Juniors) <i>No non-testing students on campus</i> |
| Oct. 8 | End of 1st quarter grading period |
| Oct. 9 | Fall Break (NO SCHOOL) |
| Oct. 12 | Indigenous Peoples Day (NO SCHOOL) |
| Oct. 15 | ECA Picture Retakes |
| Oct. 15 | Ofrenda - Students, families bring offerings. |
| Oct. 29 | Fall Festival, Haunted House, and Cuentos de folklores |
| Nov. 2 | ECA Booster Club Meeting (5:30 PM)
<i>Online meeting.</i> |

BOOSTER CLUB MEETING • September 14th

Please join us for the ECA-CEC Booster Club meeting Monday, September 14th at 5:30 on Google Meet:

<https://meet.google.com/gpy-wvkw-ybz>

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.

SPIRIT WEAR

Get ready for an amazing school year with Early College Academy and Career Enrichment Center spirit wear! Save up to 35% OFF sitewide on brand-new apparel for the whole family! Don't wait – the sale ends on September 7th!

[Spirit Store Online Link](#)

Your purchase supports our Booster Club.



PARKING PERMITS

Parking permits are available for purchase. The wonderful people printing our parking permits have informed me that there is a delay. We will know more soon. Despite this printing delay, parking is available on our campus, it is running smoothly and students are not rushing to make it to their classes. Thank you for your understanding.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Welcome Back ECA Students and Parents,

If you are new to ECA, welcome to the best high school in New Mexico! We strive to keep the rigor strong with a supportive community to help our students achieve.

Just a few notes or reminders for returning students. You will hear a lot from me throughout the school year.

9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades all have a grade level Google Classroom. This is where I do most of my communications with students through announcements. It is imperative that students get in the habit of checking those announcements. I will post lots of student opportunities, jobs, job fairs, college fairs, scholarships, college fly in programs, dual credit workshops etc. etc. As cool opportunities come across my desk, I post them in the appropriate grade level Google Classrooms. Our ECA Activities Coordinator and Work Based Learning and Internship Coordinator post many announcements in the Google Classrooms as well.

Welcome to our first ECA newsletter of the year! This is where I will put all Google Classroom announcements together for parents to read along with other relevant information. PLEASE, students and parents, take the time to read these communications and resources to stay informed. It is a challenge to answer lots of individual emails asking questions about items that I have provided information on already for students and parents in multiple places. If you are a returning student, you will continue to use the same "class of" Google Classroom from last year. If you are new to ECA, watch out for an email invitation to your grade level Classroom in the next couple of weeks!

Along with the Google Classroom announcements and the monthly newsletter, I also have my own **ECA counseling webpage on our website**. I have TONS of information there on everything from work permits to financial aid. Check this out here: <https://cec.aps.edu/our-school/counseling>

Advisory is a huge part of our communication with students, with many topics and presentations that support their learning and success at ECA. I do many grade level presentations on topics relative to student success and post-secondary options. We will have at least four college presentations for seniors during advisory as well from UNM,

NMSU, NM Tech, ENMU and probably CNM. It is very important that your students attend advisory at ECA. I will also be providing many advisory lessons throughout the year on relevant topics such as:

- Welcome to high school and how to read a transcript (9th)
- Preparing for PSAT/SAT, (10th and 11th)
- College Admissions and Financial Aid (12th) etc.

SENIOR NIGHT: I will be hosting a virtual SENIOR NIGHT on Tuesday, September 10th for all ECA seniors and their parents. I want to make sure you have a road map to navigate your senior year and college admissions! Seniors will get this presentation first while other grade levels are taking the NWEA test. So, I will get the ball rolling immediately with your seniors on planning for college admissions and financial aid.

Senior Night Meeting link: <https://meet.google.com/zor-pyze-goy>. Accessible to all students and families in the Class of 2027 Google Classroom.

Junior Night: I will host a virtual Junior Night in the Spring on Wednesday, February 17th, 6:15-7:15 pm to make sure our Juniors are prepared and looking forward to their senior year! Details to come.

Sophomore and Freshman Night: Ms. Ortiz and I will host a virtual meeting with parents and students on **Thursday, September 24th, 6:15-7:15 pm**. Sophomore/Freshman Night Meeting link: <https://meet.google.com/stc-xthu-iwn>

Just a note that I am the only counselor at ECA and CEC. I work with students to correct schedules, give guidance on dual credit and college admissions AND I am a licensed mental health counselor. Students are welcome to make appointments with me to talk in a private, confidential space about personal issues that may be challenging to them.

Please know that **ECA also has a Wellness Room**. This space is a conducive space for stress reduction and emotional regulation for students with soft music, bean bags and sensory materials to help calm nerves. Students may leave their classrooms with permission to go to the wellness room or come in during lunch for up to 15 minutes before returning to class. Students will be introduced to the room at some point in the beginning of the year during advisory.

We want our students to be academically successful AND we want them to be happy, well rounded young people who feel that they belong to a safe and supportive community.



Dual Credit: One of the areas that I get the most questions about is ECA's Dual Credit program. ECA students are required to complete six classes of dual credit and/or AP classes. The vast majority of our students continue to take advantage of dual credit classes at both CNM and UNM throughout their four years here. When you get a chance, please get the basics about CNM's and UNM's application process on their websites. Students must complete the college's application and registration processes for dual credit; I do not sign them up. I will hold a dual credit workshop for students and parents later this fall but you can get accepted and registered for a class by using these resources on our ECA/CEC website:

<https://cec.aps.edu/cec/cec-course-catalog>

<https://cec.aps.edu/cec/cec-course-catalog/cec-dual-credit>

Phew! I think that's everything for now. I am glad that we are all back! See you soon!)

Alicia Faulds, M.A., LMHC
ECA/CEC School Counselor
Work cell (505) 967-9525

◆ For ALL Grade Levels and Families ◆

◆ **RMACAC New Mexico College Fair @ Albuquerque Convention Center**

Free and open to the public, RMACAC fairs connects students and families with colleges and universities in one convenient location. The fair will take place on **Sunday, September 20, 2026, 12:00pm-2:30 pm at the Albuquerque Convention Center**, 401 2nd St NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102. You may park in either free street parking or in the adjacent parking garage for \$10.

Students: Register in advance with [StriveScan](#) by filling out a quick form. After you sign up, StriveScan will send a barcode via text message and email. At the college fair, present your barcode to college representatives to receive more information about that college. The next day, receive an email with a report of all of the colleges and representatives you met, along with contact information and social media profiles.



Follow our accounts on social media!

Youtube:

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