



Early College Academy & Career Enrichment Center

Family News

September 30, 2026



GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW PRINCIPAL!

Hello, ECA/CEC community!

I am so excited to be joining ECA/CEC as your new principal! As I prepare to make the transition from Sandia High School, I am looking forward to getting to know the students, staff, families, and traditions that make this such a special school community.



I have spent my career in Albuquerque Public Schools, and one of the things I have always loved most about education is building relationships with students and watching them discover who they are and what they want for their futures. That is one of the reasons I was so drawn to CEC/ECA. The unique opportunities available here, from rigorous academics to career pathways that allow students to explore their interests and prepare for life beyond high school, make this an incredibly exciting place to learn and lead.

A little about me outside of school: My husband and I have four sons and three grandchildren, so family is a very important part of my life. I love spending time with them as well as my extended family. I am also happiest when I am part of the energy of a school community: talking with students, celebrating their accomplishments, attending activities, and seeing all the little moments that make high school memorable.

I know that joining a new school means I have a lot to learn, and I plan to spend plenty of time listening, asking questions, and getting to know what students, staff, and families value most about ECA/CEC. I am honored to have the opportunity to become part of this community, and I can't wait to get started.

Please introduce yourself when you see me—and bear with me as I work to learn everyone's names and roles! I'm looking forward to meeting you and becoming part of the ECA/CEC community.

-- **Camille Gonzales**, Principal, ECA & CEC

COMING EVENTS:

- Oct. 5 **ECA Booster Club Meeting** (5:30 PM)
Online meeting – see link on pg. 2.
- Oct. 7 **PSAT/NMSQT for All Sophomores** and
Interested Juniors (*Asynchronous learning*
day for all other students) – see story pg. 2.
- 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, and staff bring
offerings.
- Oct. 22 **ASVAB for ECA Students** (8:30-11:30
AM)
- Oct. 22 **ECA Recruitment Open House** (5:30-7:00
PM)
- Oct. 29 **Fall Festival, Haunted House, and**
Cuentos de folklores (6:00-10:00 PM)
- Nov. 2 **ECA Booster Club Meeting** (5:30 PM)
Online meeting.
- Nov. 3 **Election Day** (NO SCHOOL)
- Nov. 11 **Veterans' Day** (NO SCHOOL)
- Nov. 23-24 **Parent Teacher Conferences** (NO
CLASSES - *Asynchronous learning day for*
students)
- Nov. 25-27 **Thanksgiving Break** (NO SCHOOL)
- Nov. 30-Dec. 4 **Winter Ball Spirit Week**
- Dec. 2 **Holiday Food Sales Day**
- Dec. 4 **Winter Ball Assembly**
- Dec. 5 **Winter Ball** (7:00-10:00 PM)
- Dec. 7 **ECA Booster Club Meeting** (5:30 PM)
Online meeting.
- Dec. 9-11 **CEC Finals**
- Dec. 16-17 **ECA Finals** - *Make-ups Dec. 18 by appt.*
- Dec. 18 **End of 2nd quarter grading period.**
- Dec. 21-Jan. 4 **Winter Break** (NO SCHOOL)

IMPORTANT INFO WHILE OUR COUNSELOR IS OUT

Our school **Counselor, Alicia Faulds**, will be on an extended medical leave until November 16, 2026. In the meantime:

- ➔ If you need immediate assistance, please contact the school's main office directly at (505) 247-3658.
- ➔ For a meeting with a **Counselor**, please contact one of the following:
 - **Roberta Leyba** at roberta.leyba@aps.edu (On ECA/CEC campus Mondays, 12:30-3:30 PM)
 - **Debra Chandler** at debra.chandler@aps.edu (On ECA/CEC campus Tuesdays, 8:00 AM-1:00 PM)
 - **Kateri Sisneros** at kateri.sisneros@aps.edu (On ECA/CEC campus Wednesdays, 8:45 AM-3:45 PM)
- ➔ For additional mental health support, contact our **School Nurse, Krista Apodaca** at krista.apodaca@aps.edu, or go to the health office.
- ➔ For CEC general and scheduling questions contact **Registrar Amanda Cortez** at amanda.cortez@aps.edu
- ➔ For ECA student assistance with grades, homework schedules, time management, organization or help with dual credit classes contact **Dean Eileen** at eileen.maddock@aps.edu
- ➔ For all other inquiries please reach out to our **Curriculum Principal Jennifer Ortiz** at jennifer.ortiz@aps.edu

STUDENTS WAITING FOR RIDES AT END OF DAY

Students taking a CEC class that ends at 4:50 PM Monday-Thursday will have direct supervision in the building until 5:00 PM, when the office closes. After 5:00 PM, custodians will be on campus. Students may remain inside the building but will be asked to move to the front area until their rides arrive.

BOOSTER CLUB MEETING • October 5th

Please join us for the ECA-CEC Booster Club meeting Monday, October 5th at 5:30 PM 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!

Want to be kept in the loop? [Please use this link](#) to share your name and email with our Booster team.

PSAT/NMSQT • October 7th



The **PSAT/NMSQT** will be given on Wednesday, **October 7, 2026**, at ECA for all ECA sophomores and those juniors who signed up for it. This exam is a mandatory assessment for sophomores per the NM Public Education Department and is a requirement of graduation. Additionally, many of our students elect to take the test again in their junior year in order to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Wednesday, October 7th: only sophomores, and juniors who have elected to test, will be on campus. Freshmen, seniors, and non-testing juniors will not attend school on October 7,

2026. Asynchronous work will be provided in the Google Classrooms and work must be completed in order to be counted present on this day.

CEC students will test with their home High Schools. There are no CEC classes on October 7th.

Students who are interested in studying for this exam may preview the College Board's [PSAT/NMSQT Practice Exam and Student Guide](#) electronically.

Morning and afternoon transportation (buses) will run as usual; however, testing does conclude earlier than a normal school day, approximately 1 pm for most students. Details about testing will be communicated to students through their English classes in the coming days. Should any additional questions arise regarding the PSAT, please direct them to **Testing Coordinator Quint Seckler** at seckler@aps.edu.

ECA RECRUITMENT OPEN HOUSE • Moved to October 22nd



The poster features a blue background with a large, stylized yellow and white 'OPEN HOUSE' text. Above it, 'Early College Academy' is written in a yellow script font. To the left is the Early College Academy logo, which includes a stylized atom symbol. Below the main title, a green starburst contains the date and time: 'Thursday, Oct. 22 5:30-7:00 PM'. Below the starburst, it says 'Come learn all about one of the best high schools in NM!'. At the bottom, a yellow box contains information about the APS Transfer Portal and the Admissions Lottery. The address and contact information are at the very bottom.

Early College Academy
RECRUITMENT
OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, Oct. 22
5:30-7:00 PM
Come learn all about one of the best high schools in NM!

The APS Transfer Portal for 2027-28 will open mid-October, and ECA's Admissions Lottery will be held late-Nov/early Dec.

807 Mountain RD NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 • (505) 247-3658 • cec.aps.edu

Parents and students - interested in finding out more about one of the best high schools in New Mexico? Come to the ECA Open House on Thursday, October 22nd from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. You will have an opportunity to learn about our programs, meet our teachers and administrators, and see the campus and classrooms. Staff will be on hand to help with the APS Transfer Portal.

This event is happening earlier than in past years due to the fact that the transfer and lottery process has changed (see our [Transfer to ECA web page](#) for more information about the process).

FALL FESTIVAL, HAUNTED HOUSE, AND CUENTOS DE FOLKLORES • October 29th

Bring the whole family and join us on Thursday October 29th from 6:00 to 10:00 PM for...



Haunted House!

(\$5 to enter, cash or card)

Cuentos de folklores!

Dr. Noriega's traditional scary stories

Fall festival games!

Free planetarium show!

Free costume contest with prize!

Free trick or treating!

Sponsored by the ECA/CEC Booster Club - proceeds to benefit student activities.

ECA SENIOR NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALIST

ECA Senior **Lucia Swan** has been named a semifinalist in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program. The designation goes to the students who received the highest scores on the 2025 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Fewer than 1% of U.S. high school seniors qualify as semifinalists and are eligible to compete for nearly \$26 million in National Merit Scholarships. Congratulations Lucia, and GOOD LUCK!

CEC CHILD DEVELOPMENT CLASS VISITS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The CEC Child Development class visited **Reginald Chavez Elementary School** on Wednesday, September 23 with the support of principal Lynda Torres. Students worked in groups in kindergarten and first grade classrooms to read this year's Jumpstart Read for the Record book and planned and lead a developmentally appropriate activity.



Each year, this amazing school opens its doors to the CEC Education Pathway students to work alongside and with their teachers, participate in observations and even to complete their fieldwork experiences as a part of their CNM dual credit courses. Big shout out to Lynda Torres and her teachers and their fierce support of our future teachers!

CEC STUDENTS' ANIMATED FILM SELECTED FOR FILM FESTIVAL

Quédate (Stay), an animated short film created by former CEC students **Alissa Vigil** and **Anabela Vigil**, has been selected for screening at the prestigious All-American High School Film Festival, one of the nation's premier showcases of student filmmaking.

Twin sisters Alissa and Anabela Vigil developed the film while participating in the Film, Animation, and Ethnic Studies programs at CEC. Their selection places them among an elite group of young filmmakers whose work will be featured before audiences of industry professionals, educators, and fellow student artists. The sisters appeared on the [KRQE FOX 505 live news feed](#) on September 11th, and on [KOAT Action7 News](#) on September 17th. [View the film on YouTube.](#)

The All-American High School Film Festival is recognized as the world's largest high school film festival, providing emerging filmmakers with opportunities to screen their work, participate in master classes, and connect with professionals from across the film and media industries. The selection of **Quédate (Stay)** highlights the strength of CEC's Film, Animation, and Ethnic Studies programs, which encourage students to develop technical skills while telling meaningful stories grounded in their own experiences and communities.



ECA SENIOR CLASS VIRTUAL MEETING AVAILABLE

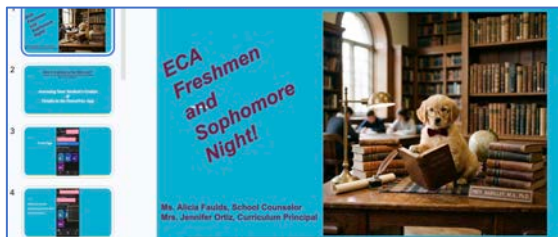


The virtual ECA Senior Class meeting on Sept. 10th covered a lot of vital information regarding your senior year, scholarships, FAFSA, and more!

Here is the link to the presentation:

[ECA Senior Class of 2027 Presentation.](#)

ICYMI - ECA FRESHMEN & SOPHOMORE VIRTUAL MEETING



If you missed the virtual meeting for ECA Freshmen and Sophomores on Sept. 15th, here is the link to the presentation:

[ECA Freshmen & Sophomore Night 26/27](#)

There's lots of important information about checking students' grades, graduation requirements, and more!

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Dear ECA Families,

I will be taking an extended medical leave starting Monday, September 21 and returning Monday, November 16th. ECA and CEC's incredible leadership team and our nurse, Krista Apodaca are all prepared for any student needs. All mental health, scheduling, college and career, personal/social and other counseling duties will all be covered in my absence. In addition, we will have three very competent veteran counselors that will be on campus for additional support during my absence:

- **Roberta Leyba** from Sandia High School will be on campus **Monday afternoons, from 12:30 to 3:30 PM.**
Contact: roberta.leyba@aps.edu
- **Debra Chandler** from La Cueva will be on campus **Tuesday mornings, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM.**
Contact: debra.chandler@aps.edu
- **Kateri Sisneros** from Rio Grande will be on campus all day **Wednesdays, from 8:45 AM to 3:45 PM.**
Contact: kateri.sisneros@aps.edu

For seniors, your college and career support will continue while I am gone. Please continue to schedule your senior meetings. The time slots have been limited to Tuesday mornings and all day Wednesday while I'm away. You will be meeting with Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Sisneros. Both counselors have access to my calendar and to the Senior Grade Level Google Classroom, so they will be in the loop when you schedule your meetings and will continue to provide college application, scholarship and financial aid support. Schedule your senior meetings with this google calendar link: <https://calendar.app.google/uJ9KTNVdqMxcS1dr5>

For seniors who need a letter of recommendation or a school report completed, please still fill out my [letter of recommendation questionnaire](#) (make your own copy, fill it out) and send it to Mrs. Leyba, Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Sisneros and request a letter from one of them. You may also list one of them as your counselor on the common app or a scholarship if needed while I am away. They are College and Career Counselors so they are very familiar with how all of these platforms work. The letter of recommendation questionnaire is also posted in the senior google classroom in an announcement.

If you are not sure who to contact for your particular question or issue, please reach out to ECA's Curriculum Principal, Mrs. Ortiz, and she can get you to the right person or get the right answer for you. All of my calls will also be directed to her.

I know that there is a LOT of change happening this year at ECA and CEC for our students, families and staff, but be assured that we are very prepared for these changes and expect this year to be super fantastic just like every year at ECA and CEC.

Thank you for your support and understanding,

Alicia Faulds, M.A., LMHC
ECA/CEC School Counselor

◆ For ALL Grade Levels ◆

If you missed Senior Night or Sophomore/Freshman Night virtual events, please check your Synergy email and your student's grade level google classroom. I have posted both presentations and the recordings for your convenience (*see previous page for links*). Junior Night will be in February.

◆ Dreaming big? 🌟 **Harvard, Princeton, UVA, Wellesley, and Yale are coming together for a joint virtual info session.** Head to this link to register! <https://admission.virginia.edu/hpuwy>. Learn about scholarships and generous need-based financial aid offerings. They are committed to making education at their schools affordable, accessible, and unforgettable.

- Sunday, September 27th, 5:00–6:15 PM MST
- Sunday, October 4th, 5:00–6:15 PM MST

◆ **Free money for college?** If you're a New Mexico high school student (**grades 9-12 welcome!**), you could win a **\$2,500 scholarship** for tuition, books, room & board, or gear. All you need is a 2.5+ GPA, a history of community involvement, and a 1-page essay sharing your goals and how you give back. [Link for more information](#)

🕒 **Deadline:** Nov 6, 2026

✉️ Send essays to: danoffmemorialscholarship@gmail.com

🏆 Winner announced live at the Isleta New Mexico Bowl on Dec 24!

◆ **Calling all New Mexico Young Artists!** 🎨🖌️🌟

In celebration of the **100th Anniversary of Route 66**, SWASFAA is inviting local young artists to show us the historic Mother Road, New Mexico, and the Southwest through your eyes! Selected artwork will be featured at the **2026 SWASFAA Super Conference** in November, and winners will walk away with a **\$150 stipend!** 💰🖼️

Here is what you need to know to enter:

🎨 **What to Submit:** Original 2D artwork (drawings, paintings, digital art, photography, etc.) inspired by Route 66, NM culture, landscapes, and communities.

🏆 **The Prize:** 3 selected winners will receive a \$150 stipend, have their work professionally reproduced and sold at the conference, and be featured with a bio & artist statement!

📅 **Deadline:** September 27, 2026

👉 **How to Apply:** [To Register go HERE](#)

Got questions? Contact Victoria Padilla at padillav@nmeaf.org.

▶ For 10th-12th Grade ◀

▶ **Sign up to take the ASVAB on Thursday, October 22nd at 8:45 AM in the lecture hall!**

Why should you take the ASVAB Career Exploration Test? The ASVAB calculates your scores for career exploration only. You can use your scores to explore careers that are suited to your interests both in and OUT of the military - you don't need to be interested in the military in order to take the ASVAB. It is one of the best interest inventories

and can help match your interest to possible careers, maybe some that you never thought of before! Your scores are not sent to a recruiter. You can choose to share with a recruiter if you intend to enter the armed forces.

If you are interested in a career in the military, this is not a test for military enlistment into just one branch of the military but into any of the branches. If you were to participate in the enlistment testing program you would have to choose a service to sponsor you to take the ASVAB. Only that service would have access to your scores and you would be limited to job choices offered by that service. One of the many benefits of participating in ASVAB is you can use your score to enlist in any service branch and we encourage you to have meaningful discussions with each service to see which one offers the job, mission and environment that fits you best. Your ASVAB scores can help you negotiate with each of the services before committing. Contact a recruiter to discuss your options.

[Complete the google form if you plan to take the ASVAB.](#) You will be excused from your classes and don't forget to bring your Chromebook for the testing in the lecture hall! **This ASVAB testing is for ECA students only.**

► **Wreck your expectations at Texas Tech Preview!** 🤖

If you are thinking about your college future, you won't want to miss this unforgettable day on campus!

📍 Texas Tech University (United Supermarkets Arena)

📅 Monday, October 12, 2026 • 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM CST

Here is a quick look at what they have planned for you 📌

🎉 Spirit Rally & Resource Fair: Kick off the morning with major Red Raider energy and meet campus organizations.

🏠 Academic Open Houses: Deep dive into your intended major, explore facilities, and chat with college recruiters.

🚌 Hop-On / Hop-Off Bus Tours: Check out the residence halls, libraries, and dining spots at your own pace.

💬 Breakout Sessions: Get all your questions answered by Admissions, Housing, and Financial Aid experts.

🍔 Plus, lunch on campus is provided!

Ready to see what life in Raiderland is all about? [Secure your spot today!](#)

► Looking for Scholarships? The [APS College and Career Webpage](#) is a GREAT place to start!

Make sure you also look at the [APS spreadsheet of scholarships](#). It makes it so easy to organize your scholarship search!

✳ For Seniors ✳

✳ Here's a link to an additional [scholarship list](#) with deadlines and live links!

✳ OCTOBER 1 IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER! This is the day that **the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens** for your first college year of 2027-28.

What exactly is financial aid and how do you get it for college? Federal student financial aid is the best place to start seeking money for college or career training. Federal student aid comes from the federal government – specifically, the U.S. Department of Education. It's money that helps pay for higher education expenses (i.e. college, career school, or graduate school expenses). Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. The FAFSA is the most important application for getting federal assistance and the only way to get access to federal student loans, grants and work-study programs. Submit your FAFSA application as early as possible (after October 1st); some aid is awarded on a first come, first served basis.

You and at least one parent will be filling out the FAFSA for the 2027-28 college school year. **This application will open on the federal website starting October 1st. Do not try to fill out an application earlier as you will be filling out the wrong year!**

✱ The [New Mexico Assistance Foundation \(NMEAF\)](#) is an organization that works with APS seniors and families for guidance on filling out the FAFSA. Please go to their website after October 1st. They make it very easy to follow the two steps needed:

1. Creating an FSA ID (must be done BEFORE filling out the FAFSA)
2. Filling out the FAFSA form

I recommend that all families review the information on the NMEAF site BEFORE going to the government website to complete their FAFSA. If you need 1:1 help with the FAFSA, the NMEAF folks are happy to help! You can easily make an appointment with them for a virtual meeting with you and your parents/guardians.

NMEAF also offers a \$500 Scholarship. It's a "No Brainer" scholarship that you should all apply for. It's simple. Check this out on their [website](#) after October 1st as well.

✱ **Get ready for an action-packed day at New Mexico Tech!** Exploration Day gives prospective students a first-hand look at our academic programs, vibrant campus life, and hands-on research opportunities. Highlights include:

- Experimental STEM demonstrations hosted by world-class faculty
- Student-created Combat Robotics Tournaments
- Department tours & admissions presentations
- NMT Rugby home games

Don't miss out on this unique look at life at NMT! [Sign up to reserve your spot today.](#)

✱ Want to go to college out-of-state without paying full out-of-state prices? ✈️ Meet the [Western Undergraduate Exchange](#) (WUE, pronounced woo-wee)! 🎓

Here is the quick breakdown of how it works:

- 💰 The Discount: If you live in a participating Western state (like New Mexico, California, or Colorado), you can attend a public college in another Western state and pay no more than 150% of their in-state tuition.
- 💰 The Savings: Students save an average of \$12,500+ every single year.
- 🏠 The Network: Over 170 public colleges and universities participate.
- ⚠️ The Catch: It isn't automatically given just because you get accepted! Many schools have limited spots, strict GPA requirements, or exclude certain high-demand majors. Please download the [list of participating colleges and universities](#) from their website.

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

