MEXICO SCHOOL DISTRICT #59

SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORT

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JULIE (LOWER) WELCH, ASST SUPERINTENDENT

November 2026

Community Engagement

On November 11, the high school hosted the annual Veteran's Day assembly. Many veterans from the community were in attendance. Thursday, November 12, the Superintendents and lead building principals met with the A+ for Education committee at Central Office. On Wednesday, November 18, the district is hosting a community conversation to engage stakeholders regarding the shortfalls we are experiencing in state and federal revenues.

Facilities

Work at the high school office continues. The elevator inspection is scheduled for early December. A representative from Facilities Solution Group will be in attendance in the December board meeting to discuss the settling issue present at the tennis court. Next Level Construction will likely be submitting the final pay request for the project in December. Work is being done to determine an estimate for correcting the settling, repairing the drain, and replacing the portion of sidewalk which was removed to investigate the problem. A recently installed rooftop unit at McMillan has been determined to be too large for the space. Peters is swapping the 8 ton unit with a 4 ton unit at no expense to the district. Peters is willing to sell the 8 ton unit to the district at cost. An 8 ton rooftop unit at Hart Career Center is failing, and the building could be served by the unit currently at McMillan; however, replacing the unit is not in any current scope of work. Jason Benjamin, district facilities director, will provide additional details.

Financial details of the bond work are presented below:

PROJECT	BUILDING	STATUS	Bid	PAY APPS
HVAC	EF, MHS, MMS	Project Complete	$2,785,828.00	$2,885,611.80
Roof	MHS, EF	Project Complete	$1,311,620.00	$1,281,210.00
Playground	MELC, EF, HAW	Project Complete	$1,138,958.00	$1,144,838.00
Upgrades	MHS	In Progress	$2,259,707.00	$1,214,200.06
Softball	MHS	Project Complete	$796,700.00	$870,461.00

Tennis	MHS	In Progress	$2,375,829.00	$2,252,287.55
Upgrades	MMS	Project Complete	$3,442,334.00	$3,418,253.26
Upgrades	HCC	Not Started	$0.00	$0.00
Fire alarm	CO	Project Complete	$77,592.00	$60,439.66
HVAC	MELC, HCC, CO	In Progress	$1,951,445.00	$1,642,391.43
ELEVATOR A	MHS	In Progress	$203,741.78	$152,806.34
ELEVATOR B	MHS	Not Started	$0.00	$0.00
GYM FLOOR	MHS	In Progress	$493,700.00	$447,250.00
EMMONS WORK	MHS	In Progress	$129,538.00	$123,061.10
SUBTOTAL			$16,966,992.78	$15,492,810.20

Finance

At the close of September, state receipts to the district were $25,562 below last year's total over the same period of time. After the October transmittal, the district is now $54,379 behind last year's rate. The district is also seeing sharp declines in federal revenues related to food service.

At this time revenues for the 27-28 school year are projected to be $30,900,000. Assuming the district operates the current salary schedule and continues to provide the same level of support for health insurance, next year's deficit will be $1,500,000. The district's reserves allow for deficit spending and we are still above the 30% fund balance threshold outlined in board policy, but expenditure reductions are being explored.

The following adjustments are being considered: elimination of tuition reimbursement, reduction in part time and temporary summer positions, after school tutoring, reducing positions through attrition, and participation in the community eligibility provision for school lunches. On November 6th, I visited with Hawthorne and Eugene Field teachers about the advantages and disadvantages of restructuring to grade level centers. Grade level organization may allow the district to maintain balanced class sizes and reduce staffing costs through attrition.

If the state foundation formula was fully funded at the SAT of $7,145 revenues would increase by $900,000.

Stakeholder input on district finances is being solicited and community members are invited to the November 18th meeting.

DESE

DESE intends to release the A-F report card based on 24-25 academic data in December. The APR, based on 25-26 data will be released at the same time.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results

MELC recently completed the Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF), with 61% of students demonstrating overall readiness. Language and Literacy was the lowest area at 59%, with only 19% of students demonstrating proficiency in letter recognition. These results highlight the need to continue emphasizing foundational literacy skills. Moving forward, we will focus on strengthening preschool-to-kindergarten instructional alignment, increasing parent education and readiness activities, and partnering with local preschool providers to better prepare students for kindergarten success.

A+ for Mexico Education Grant Awards

A+ for Mexico Education has approved 44 grant applications in the total amount of $31,021.94 for our teachers to support a variety of instructional needs across the district. At McMillan, funds will provide hands-on literacy and math activities, dramatic play materials, and social-emotional learning resources. Hawthorne will receive decodable books, classroom libraries, phonics intervention materials, math games, STEM manipulatives, and sensory supports. Eugene Field grants will support phonics and reading intervention programs, hands-on math materials, STEM and agricultural learning activities, and classroom instructional technology. Mexico Middle School will receive interactive science resources, classroom globes, reading materials, and photography editing software. We are very thankful to the members of A+ for Mexico Education for supporting the district for many years.

District Professional Development

Each building hosted a day of professional development for teachers on November 6, engaging teachers in a variety of activities focused on strengthening instruction and student support. Some highlights include:

- McMillan: Active shooter training, vocabulary instructional strategies, and development of instructional units.
- Hawthorne: The Writing Revolution curriculum training and math intervention training.
- Eugene Field: Supporting students with IEPs through accommodations and modifications, along with hands-on practice using content-area curriculum resources.
- Mexico Middle School: Enhancing lesson quality, supporting students with IEPs and English learners, vocabulary instruction across content areas, and literacy development strategies.
- Mexico High School: Attendance intervention efforts and Ed Camp sessions covering critical thinking, social-emotional learning, classroom procedures, alternative assessments, IEP support, vocabulary, and curriculum mapping.

- Hart Career Center: Advisory committee work, CCOIs, SkillsUSA, and syllabus development.
- Mexico Education Center: JAG service learning and reviewing student progress toward graduation.

Federal Programs – Budget Revisions

Revisions to the 2026–2027 Federal Programs budget applications are being submitted to reflect slight changes in funding allocations, including additional funding for nonpublic schools. The updated allocations and planned expenditures are outlined below.

Federal Program	Allocation	Planned Expenditures
Title I.A	$606,162.00	5 reading intervention teachers; 20% of an instructional coach; part-time reading teacher at St. Brendan; parent educational resources; 2 Pre-K teachers and 2 Pre-K classroom aides
Title II.A	$86,314.33	1 instructional coach, 12.7% to nonpublics ($10,998.40)
Title III – ELL	$12,025.00	13% of an ELL teacher's salary, 29% to nonpublics ($3,478.31)
Total	$482,109.51	

Note: The Title I.A allocation includes $41,218.39 transferred from Title IV.A