

## **RESOLUTION OF THE CIMARRON MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Whereas, the Cimarron Municipal Schools' (CMS) calendar was approved for school to start on August 12, 2020.

Whereas, on July 15, 2020, the Board voted on a plan for reentry that was submitted to the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED).

Whereas, on multiple occasions, NMPED has provided inconsistent guidance to school districts for opening schools, including the following:

-On July 24 Governor Lujan-Grisham issued an order that mandated schools to be moved to remote learning and identified that all special education students needed to be served on site as well as students in PreK-3. CMS spent valuable time and resources to plan for that option.

-On August 4, NMPED again issued different guidance that included additional district identified students 4th-12th grade in 1:5 teacher ratio CMS again invested substantial resources bringing in teachers and administrators to develop another plan that would incorporate all of those students on campus in a safe and orderly manner.

Whereas, families in the District were contacted by teachers by phone on August 6 and 7 in order to include their wishes and address their concerns regarding their child's school attendance.

Whereas, with that action, CMS created reasonable expectations with parents, students, and the community regarding the structure for returning to school.

Whereas, at 5:10 pm on Friday August 7, 2020, as the District was preparing to host an informational Zoom meeting with the community to explain the new plan, a memorandum was received from NMPED Secretary Stewart indicating that their prior guidance was not in compliance with the Governor's Public Health Order and indicated that only PreK-3 students and students with disabilities could attend school in person. This nullified the District's previous efforts, communications with the community, and preparatory expenditures. That NMPED notice stated:

*We are very sorry for this mistake in communication, knowing that you may have put in time and effort planning and communicating based on last week's guidance, and we take full responsibility for this error. The last thing we want to do is nullify your efforts or create confusion in your community. Please note that if you have submitted written plans to PED that incorporate this guidance, you are not required to revise those plans or to resubmit them to PED.*

Whereas CMS believes that, in addition to Pre-K-3 and SPED students, other student groups who need additional support and immediate in-person attendance include the following:

- At-risk students PreK-12
- Students with no internet access at home
- English Language Learners
- Students on SAT Plans
- Economically disadvantaged students
- Families who depend on the schools for day-care

And Whereas, CMS is a small district with limited resources that has invested heavily in the plan to bring back the listed groups of students for in-person instruction at the 1:5 ratio outlined in previous NMPED guidance.

**Cimarron Municipal Schools HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

The Board will seek, through its superintendent, authorization from NMPED to continue forward with the 1:5 ratio of in-person instruction for the student groups listed in this resolution.

The Board will seek, through its superintendent, authorization from NMPED to recognize the importance of immediate in-person instruction at the 1:5 ratio for the student groups listed in this resolution.

The Board will seek, through its superintendent, recognition from NMPED that the school return plans should not be a “one size fits all” approach and that small districts like Cimarron should have some flexibility, based on low community infection numbers, to institute in-person instruction for more groups of students.

The Board will seek, through its superintendent, recognition from NMPED that the lack of flexibility creates substantial hardship for school districts that are trying to plan with staff, families, and students for reasonable return to in-person instruction.

The Board will communicate, through its superintendent, with community stakeholders and families that it is seeking increased flexibility but is subject to the limitations put in place by the State.

The Board will provide NMPED with a copy of this Resolution and request a written response from NMPED within one week.