



Office of the Governor

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

State of the State Guests of the Governor

Sondra Adams is the Superintendent of Pojoaque Valley School District. Adams has served Pojoaque schools since 2015 and been in education in New Mexico for 35 years. Under Adams leadership, Pojoaque schools had made meaningful improvements in English and Language Arts through implementation of Structured Literacy. Additionally, Adams has a commitment to community partnership, ensuring that all students are challenged and supported to explore their gifts.

Sonia Brito was shot 12 times when she was 16 years old following an argument at a slumber party in 2020. The shooting left her blind in her right eye with injuries to her right leg, right ribcage, and both arms. On top of her extensive physical injuries, she will continue to need lifelong treatment for the psychological trauma caused by that night. Thanks to the care she received at UNMH, she is now studying to be a nurse to provide quality care for others. Sonia believes action must be taken to prevent more New Mexicans from becoming victims of gun violence.

Crescencio Cardona has dedicated 46 years of his life to the field of public education. As principal of Loma Linda Elementary, Cardona's passion for academic excellence has contributed to Gadsden School District's growth and development. In addition to administrative duties, he actively works to create a school environment conducive to student learning, innovation, and holistic development.

Bella Chandler has taught Kindergarten at S.Y. Jackson Elementary School in Albuquerque since 2007. In 2019, she was recognized as a Golden Apple Teacher of Distinction. In addition to her daily duties, she also supports Kindergarten teachers across New Mexico by helping classrooms as a structured literacy coach with Project Echo through the University of New Mexico. Bella has been a National Board Certified teacher since 2017 as an Early Childhood Generalist.

Sonya Chavez is a respected law enforcement leader with more than two decades of public service under her belt. A native New Mexican, after a distinguished 27-year career in both the FBI and as the United States Marshall for New Mexico, she was appointed Director of the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy. In this role, she leads the training and certification of over 6,000 New Mexico police and public safety telecommunicators statewide.

Steven Chavez is a business owner, developer, and entrepreneur. He is a native New Mexican and proud member of the New Mexico business community. As Chair of the Governor's Business Advisory Council for Crime Reduction, Chavez has focused his efforts on finding solutions to help reduce crime and its impacts on New Mexican families and businesses. The Business Advisory Council has developed and championed several successful legislative initiatives and continues its work in this session.

Michael Foust provides vital behavioral health services in Lea County and serves as CEO of the Guidance Center. The Guidance Center was awarded \$2.16 million in grants from the Rural Health Care Fund, allowing the Center to expand and integrate a diagnostic and treatment clinic into its behavioral health service delivery to benefit patients with poor access and lengthy wait times for care. As a result,

southeastern New Mexicans will have access to an integrated care system that efficiently collaborates to treat the whole person through prevention and treatment of behavioral and physical health conditions.

Mary Garwood is a new Carlsbad City Councilor who has championed litter reduction, recycling, and beautification efforts in Carlsbad. Previously, she was the executive director of Keep Carlsbad Beautiful for eight years. She currently serves on the New Mexico Clean and Beautiful Committee where she supports other cities and counties struggling with the harmful, unsightly blight of litter and roadside waste. Garwood believes when state and local government officials, community members, and elected leaders come together to reduce litter and beautify communities, it positively affects the health and safety of both residents and visitors alike.

Stephanie Males is the mother of a kindergartner at Berrendo Elementary and a sixth grader at Sierra Middle School in Roswell. Her kindergartner has come a long way since starting school earlier this year. Her daughter can now sound out words much easier and faster than her older brother did because of the instruction she's received through Structured Literacy. The structure of the Science of Reading curriculum is a much more effective way to teach reading and helps kids break down sounds better than other methods.

Adan Mendoza, a Santa Fe native and career law enforcement leader, Santa Fe County Sheriff Mendoza has been elected Sheriff of Santa Fe County twice during his 25-years of law enforcement service. Sheriff Mendoza was a tenured member of the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy Board and now serves on its successor, the Law Enforcement Certification Board adjudicating allegations of law enforcement misconduct.

Ms. Leonides Montoya, aged 100, is a lifelong New Mexican who successfully raised six children. She attributes her longevity to the North Valley 4th St. Senior Center, her local senior center, where she enjoys quilting every Monday. She is joined by her son, Nazario.

Felipe Rael is the executive director of the Greater Albuquerque Housing Partnership, a 30-year-old nonprofit affordable housing developer. Born and raised in Taos, he has worked for affordable housing throughout the state. This dramatic increase in state funding will fill in construction gaps created by volatile interest rates and escalated construction costs, allowing our organization to serve hundreds of families through the new construction of beautifully designed, energy efficient, affordable homes for seniors, individuals and families. These funds will allow low-income households to afford needed items like food, healthcare, and some extras, reducing the burden of paying more than 30% of their income on rent.

Roberto Salas has been with the Gadsden School District for 26 years, starting as an instructional coach and now serving as an Elementary math specialist for the district. His students have made huge gains in math achievement thanks to the district's Gadsden Math Initiative. Gadsden continues to be a model in the state for their implementation of Structured Literacy. Three of 25 schools saw double digit improvement in ELA from 2022-2023, with an overall district improvement of 5.9%. In the past two years, we have seen Gadsden add an average of 14 days to the school year. Gadsden is demonstrating what full implementation of the tools available to our schools can deliver in terms of student success.

Miguel Tittmann, a 20-year veteran of the Albuquerque Fire Rescue, is the current Union President for the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 244 which represents approximately 1000

firefighters in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. He also serves as the Vice President of the New Mexico Professional Firefighters Association's (NMPFFA) 1st District representing all New Mexico firefighters.

Erin Toadlena-Pablo, chief of the Gallup New Mexico Police Department, is the first woman police chief in the city's history. Chief Toadlena-Pablo has served for the state for 24 years as a public safety professional. In 2023, she was appointed to the newly created Law Enforcement Certification Board which regulates and investigates allegations of misconduct involving police and dispatch licensees in New Mexico.