

## Students, Families, and Community Members,

Written by Gallupsun Staff  
Friday, 23 August 2019 03:14

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Gallup McKinley County Schools (GMCS) is excited to welcome students back to school for the 2019-2020 school year! We are eager for the many opportunities this coming year to educate and support our students while they continue to outpace the academic growth of students across the state. Our students' academic improvements in recent years demonstrates their ability to not only meet, but exceed expectations. We want to congratulate our students, families and staff for their hard work and accomplishments. We are proud of all our GMCS students.

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Over the past two years GMCS students have outpaced the largest ten school districts in New Mexico in proficiency improvements. With respect to proficiency increases across the state in 2018, GMCS students were #1 in Reading and #3 in Math. In 2019 our students outpaced the state again and became #1 in Math and #2 in Reading. Throughout the state others are taking notice of our students' rapid gains. Over the past few months we have heard the Lieutenant Governor, the New Mexico Public Education Department, and other Superintendents speak about GMCS students and their increasing academic performance. We love to celebrate our students' successes.

We are focused on setting high expectations for our students to continue this positive achievement trend by building relevance in our curriculum and cultivating positive relationships in our schools. Below are some highlights of new initiatives we are implementing in the 2019-2020 school year:

**Career Pathways** – Career exploration will be provided for all students in all grades. High schools will focus on implementation of specific career skill building coursework for students this year. In the 2020-2021 school year each high school student will enroll in a specific career pathway.

**Employability Skills** – 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will learn employability/workplace skills to prepare them for current and future employment.

**Accelerated Placement (AP) and Dual Credit courses** - AP and dual credit course participation will dramatically increase in the 2019-2020 school year. The McKinley Academy early college program, which serves students from across McKinley County, is growing rapidly and the number of students in an Associate's Degree pathway has exceeded 350 students in 1 year. McKinley Academy is the largest and best performing early college program in western New Mexico.

**Retaining and Attracting qualified staff** - GMCS has significantly increased take home pay for all staff over the last 3 years. We are focused on retaining the great staff we have, and attracting highly qualified new staff to serve our students by offering competitive salaries.

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Academic Parent Teacher Teams – All elementary schools will be implementing a program that supports students, families, and teachers collaborating together to encourage classroom skill development.

Positive Behavior training for Middle Schools - Middle schools will receive support and training in positive behavior development to support student success. Positive behavior training is a system of school supports to build upon and encourage positive student behaviors to create an ideal learning environment for all students.

Please review our 3 year strategic plan titled “ELEVATE 2022” on our website at [GMCS.org](http://GMCS.org) for additional information on our student success goals, and actions we plan to take to achieve those goals.

As a district, we are dedicated to providing a quality education to all of our students through targeted goals and actions. We strive to perfect the services we provide to our communities as we educate and prepare our students to meet their future career and life goals. We welcome your continued support in these efforts and thank you for all you do to support GMCS as we empower our future generations.

Respectfully,

Superintendent Mike Hyatt