



NEW MEXICO

Public Education Department

November 19, 2021

To the New Mexico Education Community,

During the holidays and this season of giving, *I share my gratitude* to you for being such an important part of our children's lives and for truly caring about each other. Gratitude comes from the heart and mind. I believe in the strength of New Mexico's diverse communities and in the inherent value of our multilingualism, resilience, creativity, culture, and compassion for one another. I am moved and inspired by what I see in our schools and celebrate the amazing support from our parents. Our community members are an essential part of making New Mexico schools work, and I am extremely grateful for our growing partnerships.

One of the things I am most grateful for is the power of our schools to positively change lives. While visiting schools, I hear moving stories of how school experiences prepare our graduates for success in college, work, or the military and just plain life. After living in other states, New Mexico alumni often return to our great state with a sincere message of appreciation for our schools and diverse cultures.

I believe that showing respect and helping children succeed is one of the most important things any of us can do. That is why I am so grateful to the employees in schools across New Mexico. You dedicate your lives to serving our children. You take each child's success personally. You never ever give up on a student. You spend hours before and after school doing the extra things that few people see but that make all the difference for our students. I see and feel your passion

and persistence when I visit classrooms. Often, I see excitement in the eyes of our children and I hear sincere thanks from parents.

I am also mindful that not everyone in our communities experiences these wonderful blessings. Many families and students need emotional support, mental health services, financial stability, and help for other life challenges. And this season of giving is a time to reach out and help in meaningful ways.

Each year, the people of New Mexico volunteer thousands of hours after school. They help in times of need locally and all over the world, organize food drives, participate in the Year of Literacy activities, provide tutoring, and assist through dozens of school clubs and non-profit groups. I am thankful for your volunteer service and dedication.

I also feel fortunate to have the strong support of our churches, businesses, civic organizations and community groups. They provide expertise, internships, and recognition for our teachers and students.

The strength of our schools lies in the people who serve. Our students, parents, and community members encourage us and make us proud. I am so grateful to be part of the New Mexico education family. Thank you for all that you do, and I wish you and your family a very safe and restful holiday.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt A. Steinhaus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Kurt Steinhaus, Secretary of Public Education