

Happy  
New Year



January 2024

## Student Services Department Newsletter

“The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you’re not going to stay where you are.” –J.P. Morgan

Happy New Year! Welcome 2024! As teachers prepare for this new semester they work on their lesson plans, differentiated instruction, and how to best meet the needs of every student in their classroom. Phonics lessons in the lower grades is an essential part of the reading program. The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn the alphabetic principle — the idea that letters represent the sounds of spoken language — and that there is an organized, logical, and predictable relationship between written letters and spoken sounds. Decoding is when we use letter-sound relationships to translate a printed word into speech. It’s sometimes called “sounding out” a printed word. <https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading-basics/phonics> Our upper grade teachers work on comprehension. One big part of comprehension is having a sufficient vocabulary, or knowing the meanings of enough words. Readers who have strong comprehension are able to draw conclusions about what they read – what is important, what is a fact, what caused an event to happen, which characters are funny. Thus comprehension involves combining reading with thinking and reasoning. <https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/comprehension>



### Important Dates to Remember:

January 1-6-Holiday-No School  
January 8-No School-Inservice  
January 9-Students Return  
January 9-Preschool begin MOY ECOT  
January 15-Holiday-No School  
January 26-No School-Inservice  
January 26-Child Find @ LNKC



We are actively looking for Special Education Teachers, Educational Assistants, and Ancillary Staff. Apply at: <https://espanola.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx>

### Contact Us:

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## Classroom Spotlight:

Our Classroom Spotlight is with Ms. Sherra Besario, a Special Education Life Skills Teacher at Espanola Valley High School for seven years.

She says, "It's my passion to help individuals with learning or physical disabilities develop skills for independent living. Goal setting and effective communication are essential. Life skills don't just affect the way students with special needs interact with the world, but also the way they see the world, they first need a solid understanding of how to actualize positive changes. By highlighting areas such as personal care, social skills, communication, safety, and basic functional literacy and numeracy, students with special needs will be equipped with tools that will enhance their quality of life."



Life skills activities are important for Special needs students such as how to clean, wash and fold clothes, prepare basic foods at home are crucial part of their education and preparing them for the day-to-day challenges of participating in their community and workplace, and being independent at home.

To implement life skills, as a teacher she focuses on interpersonal skills that we all rely on to communicate and interact with others through verbal and non-verbal communication.



This year, she introduced Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) that she believes will help her students build the foundation for student learning. More than simply learning each of its lettered subjects, STEM instruction helps students to develop critical thinking skills and student centered learning experiences.



**THANK YOU**

Thank you Sherra  
for being an  
important part of  
our team!



**Keep up the great work Ms. Sherra!**

## Ancillary Spotlight

Our ancillary spotlight is with James J. Martinez, MS, CCC-SLP for the Espanola Public Schools. Mr. James J. Martinez provides speech and language therapy, evaluation and consultation services to students, Staff and families of the Espanola Public School District. James is a 1994 graduate of Espanola Valley High School and then went on to the University of New Mexico where he graduated with his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Speech and Hearing Sciences with a concentration in Speech-Language Pathology.



After college graduation in 2001, James returned to the Espanola Valley where he accepted a full time position as a school based Speech and Language Pathologist for the Espanola Public Schools. James has worked at various school sites around the District, including pre-schools, elementary schools, private schools, CFV Middle School and most of the time at Espanola Valley High School. For the past 23 years, James continues to provide services by supporting students in the areas of speech and language. He provides supports to students in the primary areas of communication, reading and written language, mainly within the classroom setting.

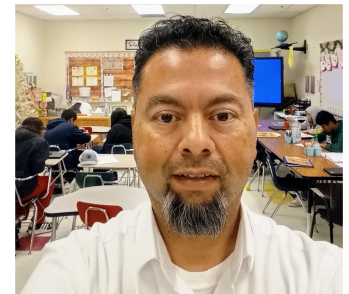


James works alongside teachers, educational assistants, administrative staff, and other school and ancillary staff to support the academic and transition needs of our students. He assists in preparing students for not only high school graduation, but also life after high school. For example, he assists students in exploring and researching job and career interests, colleges and training schools, financial aid opportunities, internships, etc.

James is married to Consuelo. They have 3 daughters, Kayla, Aleah and Julia. Aleah is married to Justin and have a new baby boy, Jacob. Kayla works as a Speech-Language Apprentice for the District and is working towards her Masters degree, also in speech-language pathology. James and his family reside in Chimayo, where he is a lifelong resident. In addition to his work as a Therapist, James serves as Pastor, on a volunteer basis, at the Rock Church in Espanola, NM. James recently completed his Doctorate degree in the area of Biblical studies.



James is thankful for the opportunity of working for the District and looks forward to continuing to provide services for the students of the Espanola Public Schools for years to come.



**THANK YOU**  
Thank you James for being an important part of our team!

**Keep up the great work Mr. James!**

## Classroom Spotlight:

Our classroom spotlight is with CK (Christine Kane) at Dixon Elementary. CK was the first special education teacher to use the Picturing Writing curriculum as an inclusion support for her students with learning differences in reading and writing. CK utilizes the program with all K-6 classes at Dixon in a co-teaching model with the regular education classroom teachers. Each student is the artist and author of a book on a different topic each nine weeks. Some examples so far this year are: Times of Day, All About Me, The Seasons, I Have Opinions! and Animal research projects.



CK also works individually or in small groups with students to support them in reading, written language and math. In addition to the intensive instruction students receive from her, she knows the close working relationships with both the teachers and parents of her students is a huge contributing factor to the progress her students make.



CK is also the Speech-Language Pathologist at Dixon Elementary, Velarde Elementary and Alcalde Elementary. In this role, she and the SLP Apprentice, Amber Chavez, that she supervises, support students who are developing their language, pragmatic or articulation skills.



Last, but certainly not least, CK drives the school bus for Dixon Elementary. This is a new role this year, but one she really enjoys. She thinks it is one of the most important jobs to welcome a student with a smile at the beginning of the day AND get to be the person who tells them to have a great night and she'll be back in the morning to pick them up again!



**THANK YOU**  
Thank you CK for  
being an  
important part of  
our team!

**Keep up the great work Ms. CK!**