You, me... we are Team SISD, and we are the reason why Socorro ISD will continue to thrive.

Marta C. Carmona, M.ED.

The path to where we are and where we will go has been carved out by our forebearers in SISD, who always had faith in the community, our children, and a better future.

They established 60 years of excellence as a school district and gave us the foundation, understanding and hope to forge ahead with goals and dreams of our own.

Starting with a firm belief in equity for all children to learn and grow in school, Socorro ISD founders ensured fair access to resources and instruction for Hispanic, Anglo and all students in the community.

Managing the ever-growing community was always priority for SSD leaders to provide schools for access to education wherever constituents resided in Socorro ISD.

Beginning with a one-building school in a rural community and expanding to 49 campuses over 135 square miles while serving more than 47,000 students has established SISD as a leading school district in El Paso County.

SISD board trustees and educational administrators always wanted the best for our students and never strayed from working hard to achieve the unimaginable.

They led the way for us by accrediting the school district, establishing rigorous standards for curriculum and instruction, forging the way with new technology, and creating opportunities for innovative learning in bilingual education, career and technical education, fine arts, athletics, college and career readiness, social and emotional learning, and countless other ways to develop, grow and maximize every student’s potential for success.

While SISD is a highly recognized educational institution, it is so much more than that. It is a family full of people, that have fought for, encouraged, supported, and carried each other through good times and in bad, all for this beloved community and the hope for a beautiful life.

Read more on the History of Socorro ISD at www.sisd.net.
With a focus on students and their success, the Socorro ISD family is continuing what we do best – providing high quality education with exceptional customer service and a genuine love for our community.

Reflecting on my first 100 days as the proud interim superintendent of the Socorro Independent School District, I am proud to report that we have been accomplishing extraordinary feats to do our best for students and families.

It hasn’t always been easy, but we have kept the enthusiasm and passion that drives us as educators to keep moving forward no matter what.

As the last few months have been flying by fast and furious, I relish in the fact that time spent in Socorro ISD is truly rewarding. I know that the work we are doing together serves a higher purpose, which will develop the children we nurture in our schools to become Tomorrow’s Leaders Learning Today.

Since I took the helm as interim superintendent in May, I have witnessed remarkable teamwork among employees, parents and community partners. This has been our primary strength since we were established as a formal school district 60 years ago.

As we celebrate this notable anniversary this year, it makes me feel incredibly proud and, honestly, quite emotional when I think about all that Socorro ISD has provided for me and my family, and the numerous families, friends, neighbors, and colleagues who have thrived in our school district.

Marta C. Corriona, M.Ed.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Socorro ISD is deeply rooted in my family and upbringing. Both my parents served long, proud careers and retired in SSD, all the while teaching me and my siblings about hard work, loyalty, compassion, education, and family bonds.

My dad was a bus driver, and my mom was a cafeteria manager. Both worked selflessly for Socorro ISD, a district that gave us a solid livelihood and instilled in all of us a deep sense of pride.

That pride was sparked by the unforgettable teachers and staff who have shaped Socorro ISD into the close-knit, compassionate community that it is.

There are SSD educators in my life that I will never forget because they did more than teach me to read, write and do math. They were positive role models who shaped me as a person and were instrumental in helping me work toward a fruitful career in education. In fact, they did the same for three of my siblings who chose a career in education as well and are among the talented educators in Team SSD.

My journey in SSD started as a kindergartner at Socorro Elementary and led me to become a proud graduate of Socorro High School. I loved going to school and learning from the dedicated and compassionate educators who were always there for me and my family. My teachers always believed in me and reinforced the morals and goals established by my parents, most importantly, knowing that there is strength in unity, embracing family, and achieving academic excellence.

A child of Socorro

With a focus on students and their success, the Socorro ISD family is continuing what we do best – providing high quality education with exceptional customer service and a genuine love for our community.
Working with the entire team, my goals in the first 100 days of service as interim superintendent have been to:

**Keep safety a priority**
As we all have experienced in the last 18 months, student, staff and family health, wellness and safety is paramount. At the helm of our well-established, layered safety protocols are our leadership and district safety teams, who have done a tremendous job of establishing and communicating proactive measures to Keep SISD Safe. This work remains at the top of the list to ensure our students, faculty and staff are teaching, learning and working in a safe, healthy learning environment.

**Unify the district/solidify Socorro ISD family**
I have worked to lead our strong team to remain unified and focused on student success by providing clear communication, establishing crucial protocols for academic and overall excellence, and always emphasizing collaboration to support our schools. A trusted, close familial atmosphere is the foundation of SISD, and I have intended to reignite that tradition by reminding all SISD family members of their value, importance, and critical role in our mission. Everybody matters. YOU matter, and when you need help, you will be listened to and supported.

**Maintain high-achieving student, staff performance**
SISD students, educators and staff have a long history of academic excellence that we can and will continue to achieve in our schools and departments. While due emphasis has been placed on new, vast safety measures and pandemic-specific responses, we must continue our focus and commitment to ensuring every student succeeds academically, socially and emotionally. With our collective expertise and professionalism as passionate and dedicated educators, we can guide all our students to reach their highest potential and achievement in the classroom and in life.

Goals

My journey in Socorro continued as I delved into a career in education. I was excited and eager to start my career as a bilingual teacher at Escontrias Elementary. As I have taken on this leadership role for the Socorro ISD family, I have reflected often on all that I have learned since my first days as a teacher.

I am fortunate to have had many opportunities to grow professionally, as an educator, instructional specialist, assistant principal, principal, and academic auditor. This has given me varied experiences and a unique lens to examine every aspect of this school district.

With every role I’ve served in, I’ve gained valuable skills to help SISD grow, develop and be better than ever. I’ve gained knowledge in transformational, hands-on leadership, how to achieve academic excellence, best practices in instruction, school finance and human resources, and I am a die-hard advocate for student athletic, academic and extracurricular events.

I have seen the exceptional success of students and staff, the areas where we can improve and build, the resources we need to operate efficiently and excel academically, the service that must be provided to support our families, and the roles and relationships required for smooth, effective processes.

Most of all, I recognize that if we lead with our hearts and keep our students at top of mind, we can achieve incredible success across the board.

Therefore, my focus has been to continue our thorough, decisive, and collaborative work together with our Board of Trustees, parents, volunteers, community members, and all of YOU in Team SISD.

This district is about you, me, WE. We are Team SISD, and we are in this together.
Starting the new school year strong

The summer months were extremely busy as the SISD leadership team and I, along with support from the Board of Trustees, kept up the endless work of preparing for the next school year to return better and stronger than ever and to be prepared to welcome students back to in-person instruction during these turbulent times.

We established our 2021-2022 Back-to-School plan, which we carefully crafted and presented at 65 community, employee, and stakeholder meetings that drew more than 1,000 participants.

With firm protocols and a clear plan, we were ready to start the year with confidence and enthusiasm. We started with great energy, and I witnessed everyone leading with their hearts for our students and schools.

We had a solid start to the 2021-2022 school year with committed service to our students’ and teachers’ success, following the guidance and orders set forth by authorities to Keep SISD Safe, budgeting for over 150 million dollars of ESSER funds to address the needs that arose from the pandemic, providing lump sum incentives for our invaluable SISD employees, successfully and strategically pivoting changes that have come our way, and focusing on taking care of 47,000 plus students both academically and emotionally.

Celebrating the Class of 2021

I was extremely happy to celebrate the Class of 2021 with graduation ceremonies in our beautiful Student Activities Complex full of proud and excited parents, families, and, especially, SISD graduates.

As an educator, nothing solidifies that you are in the right line of work like celebrating graduation especially after a difficult school year.

I truly believe that our work changes lives for the better. Seeing the excited faces and tears of happiness and hearing the cheers and applause, fills my heart with pride, joy, and love.

I believe that there is no better way to think about a child’s future than to begin with the end in mind. Fortunately, that is where I was able to begin my tenure as interim superintendent.

Working with amazing administrators and teachers, we successfully ended the 2020-2021 school year, which proved to be a challenging but extraordinary learning experience for all of us as we continued to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic.

YOU, Me, WE

TEAM UPDATES
Keeping SISD Safe

Safety and wellness have never wavered from our focus and efforts, and we have gone above and beyond to Keep SISD Safe as we have transitioned back to in-person instruction. We have been proactive in establishing and following safety and wellness protocols to protect our community.

We have followed the guidance and orders set forth by authorities and continue to do so. Our safety and wellness protocols are in place to assist in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in our schools, buses and within our El Paso community. In addition, we remain vigilant in working to protect our vulnerable population of students under the age of 12 who are not yet eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

We have a layered safety protocol that is followed in all campuses and facilities in Team SISD. You can find our proactive safety measures and the Easy as 1-2-3 for School Safety guide on our Back-to-School web page, www.sisd.net/backtoschool. We are actively working with multiple providers to offer and promote vaccination clinics across the district. Visit www.sisd.net/covid19vaccine to learn more about upcoming opportunities within the district.

I thank our SISD community for being flexible, open-minded, cooperative, and patient, as we continue navigating these ever-changing situations. We must continue to stick to what we know best - following protocols, communicating openly, exercising patience, and being there for each other like family. This will get us through this heavy storm of pandemic difficulties. Remember, even the heaviest storms will run out of rain!

Supporting employees

Before school started, we provided extensive and engaging professional development in which we trained, encouraged, and supported teachers, aides, and support staff so that they would be prepared for the new, unprecedented year.

Knowing that it would be a difficult year for everyone – students and staff included – a focus on supporting Socorro ISD family members is more important than ever.

The board trustees, district leadership team and I recognize the true power of our district is in the hands of our team members who work with and support our students daily. Therefore, we have proudly maintained our commitment to listen, value and support everyone who is contributing to the continued success of our district, especially in these challenging times.

For these reasons, the Board of Trustees earlier this year approved a four percent salary increase for qualifying full-time employees, a $1,000 COVID relief fund, and an additional $1,000 lump sum incentive which was provided at the start of this school year.

In addition, with the federal benefit of ESSER II funds, which are designed to help us as we transition back to normalcy during the pandemic, we are fortunate to be able to further invest in our most valuable asset, our employees, and provide an additional $2,000 lump sum, which will be distributed later this school year.
Nurturing relationships

One of the most enlightening parts of my service this year has been visiting schools to talk to students and teachers to understand their feelings and thoughts about being back in the classroom. It has been encouraging to hear from them and know what they are experiencing as we delve into another unprecedented school year. Some have expressed concerns about getting back into the swing of things, but the majority have been excited and happy to be back with friends, classmates, and teachers.

I’ve also had the pleasure of meeting with numerous SISD employee and stakeholder groups. These meetings have been refreshing to hear many different perspectives about our strengths and areas that may need improvement.

Working with our incredible and fearless campus principals also has been a treasured and valuable experience. I’ve been focusing on building on our already strong leadership capacity, designing our monthly meetings to be more interactive and engaging to encourage professional growth and relationship building.

Our solid SISD leadership team has the skills, talent, and professionalism to inspire and support our school faculty and staff, which will lead to exceptional success at their campuses.

Managing federal ESSER funds

As anticipated, many of our students have experienced learning loss due to the impact of COVID-19 school closures. Our amazing teachers did a phenomenal job transitioning and providing remote instruction while our schools were shuttered; however, we know that there is no substitute for in-person instruction.

To support districts in helping students and staff in recovering learning loss and transitioning back to full time in-person learning, the federal government has provided grant funding through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding.

To ensure the use of federal funds are aligned with our community’s priorities, we solicited feedback from SISD stakeholders via an open survey and asked our campus teams for input on how the funds could best serve their specific learning communities.

The funds will support comprehensive efforts to serve and accelerate instruction for students who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and sustain a safe return and operation of schools. We will hire additional teachers, classroom aides, counselors, and other support staff. The ESSER III funds also will be used to address social/emotional well-being of students and ensure safe facilities with improvements, such as water fountain upgrades and heating/cooling systems.
For the rest of the school year, we will focus on the goals and highlights I have shared in this report. It is imperative that we concentrate on our safety, health, and wellness; solid relationships; and student and staff success. These are the items that are highly important for you, me, we – Team SISD – to lead us to success. With the support of the federal grants to accelerate our return to normal and recapture and surpass our past levels of achievement, we have all we need within our SISD family.

As we move forward, I will continue to lead with my heart to build a community of respect and trust. This includes my interaction and communication with individuals at all levels, including board trustees, campus leadership, teachers, support staff, community members, parents, volunteers, business leaders and Partners in Education. I strive to continue establishing a climate of trust, respect, clear expectations, and transparency so that we can work together with students’ best interests in mind. Socorro ISD is a united team, but let’s aim to be a stronger family as we push toward achievement. This mindset will enable us to improve processes and operations for overall efficiency and effectiveness.

The beauty of education is that all of us are constantly learning, improving, and growing both as students and educators. I applaud everyone in SISD for staying strong and determined, and, most of all, for being there for one another. Our students need us to be resilient and hopeful to show them the way, especially in uncertain times. Continue to lead with your heart for our students and schools and I guarantee successful, positive results will follow.

“Take care of yourselves so that you may take care of others.”

Marta C. Carmona, M.ED.

Refining systems

Strong systems must be in place to ensure we are operating with high standards of transparency and accountability. I chartered a needs assessment to determine the fidelity of our programs, consultants, contracts and to ensure no resources or operations are redundant or unnecessary. The assessment and follow up system will ensure that SISD is maximizing its investments by reducing redundancy and underutilization to establish operational efficiency.

To refine communication methods, I have established an enhanced digital leadership communication system to ensure we are relaying critical information accurately and efficiently. The system was designed internally by our talented technology team and makes it easy to track vital messages and access essential documents and resources.