

Remember Me

Albuquerque Journal

APS lets out sigh of relief as bonds pass

By [Kim Burgess / Journal Staff Writer](#)

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The relief was palpable at the Albuquerque Public Schools news conference Wednesday to celebrate passage of a bond and mill levy worth more than half a billion dollars.



APS Board of Education President Don Duran thanked everyone who worked to pass the APS bond/mill levy and all the voters who voted “yes” during a news conference Wednesday. (Greg Sorber/Journal)

Voters backed both by a large margin Tuesday: APS’ \$375 million mill levy was supported by 65.4 percent of voters, while a \$200 million bond garnered 69.7 percent. An \$84 million bond for Central New Mexico Community College also received 65.4 percent approval.

The outcome looked less certain in the weeks leading up to the election, as critics argued that a lack of early voting locations in the northwest was an intentional effort to disenfranchise the area, something administrators strongly denied. Two additional early polling places were later added there and received heavy traffic.

Overall, voter turnout was double the average for these types of elections with more than 30,000 people casting ballots according to unofficial results from the Bernalillo County Clerk’s office.

At Wednesday’s news conference, APS Acting Superintendent Raquel Reedy said that she had thought every day about the prospect of the bond and mill levy not getting through.

“It was a nail-biting kind of time – there was a lot of discussion, a lot of questions, a lot of dialogue, but a lot of good came from that,” she said from a podium in the foyer of Albuquerque High School. “The questions should have been asked, and we answered the questions as best we could, and we will continue to answer those questions.”

To board member Peggy Muller-Aragón, representative for District 2 in the northwest, the early voting kerfuffle was a learning opportunity.

She told the **Journal** that she feels APS will not “suppress any part of the city” in future elections.

Still, Muller-Aragón stressed that voters were right not to punish children by withholding valuable capital funds.

“We have board elections in 2017, so if you are upset at the adults, you can take it out on them then,” she said.

APS Board of Education President Don Duran acknowledged that the district has a “credibility gap,” with some skeptical of its leadership.

Much of that feeling stems from back-to-back payouts to failed superintendents – this summer, Luis Valentino stepped down with an \$80,000 check, while his predecessor, Winston Brooks, received \$350,000 in August 2014.

But to Duran, the strong voter support on the bond and mill levy shows APS is on the right track.

“We at Albuquerque Public Schools will continue to keep the focus on the kids, their academics and bringing them the highest quality learning possible,” Duran said. “We are moving forward.”

With the bond and mill levy getting a green light, construction will begin on a variety of district projects, the earliest starting in August.

Among them is a \$12 million renovation of Albuquerque High School to add a new student commons and arts classrooms, as well as rebuild the kitchen and cafeteria.

Other major plans include two new schools: the \$50 million Northwest K-8 and \$8.4 million Family School West Side. Groundbreaking for a much-debated \$5 million employee health clinic is scheduled for October.



The image shows a laptop screen displaying a calendar for January. One of the calendar entries is highlighted in red and contains the text "YOUR EVENT HERE". Below the calendar, there are icons for a car and two checkered flags. At the bottom of the laptop screen, the text "Where events go to be seen." is displayed next to the "ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL" logo and the website "ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL.COM". A red button with the text "Add an event >" is located at the bottom right of the laptop screen.

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