Bernalillo Public Schools
560 S. Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo, NM 87004

THE DISTRICT
Bernalillo Public Schools

2026

www.bernalillo-schools.org

June 2026

Message from School Board President
Page 3
Shoutouts
Page 4
2026 Phoenix Ceremony
Page 5
2026 Bilingual Seal
Page 6-7
Robing Ceremony
Page 8-13
2026 Graduation
Page 14-16
School Events
Page 17-23
End of Year Awards
Page 24-26

Newsletter Survey

From The Superintendent's Desk



Dear BPS community,

In my address to the class of 2026, I shared words of wisdom from their own reflections. These were captured in speeches they delivered throughout the spring.

Students shared powerful reflections about the people, lessons, and experiences that shaped them. While not every story could be included in the final graduation speech, each one remains an important part of the larger story of this class.

Below are the remaining reflections that were not shared at our graduation ceremony.

Brisa Castillo spoke about Dr. Acantilado who was "an example of working hard and keeping motivated." Her reflection reminds us that resilience is often built through consistency. It is found in the people who keep showing up, keep encouraging, and keep modeling what it means to work hard even when the path is difficult.

Joaquin Cordova shared an important lesson from Mr. Jaramillo: "Even if something is a strength, he showed me to keep growing." That message is one every graduate can carry forward. Growth does not stop when we discover what we are good at. In many ways, growth begins when we realize that our strengths still need practice, humility, and continued effort.

Carrie Naktewa offered a reminder that speaks to anyone who has faced hardship: "Even when life gets hard and you don't think you will be able to push through, just remember how far you made it." Her words capture one of the most important lessons of resilience. Sometimes the best evidence that we can keep going is remembering everything we have already overcome.

Nevaeh Sandoval reminded us that "it takes maturity to overcome challenges." Maturity is not simply about age. It is about responsibility, perspective, humility, and perseverance. It is the ability to face difficulty, learn from it, and continue moving forward with strength and purpose.

From The Superintendent's Desk



The reflections also highlighted the importance of being challenged, seen, and valued as a person.

Zachary Duran described Mr. Jaramillo as "extremely welcoming," someone who cared about the work and the grade, but more importantly, cared about the person. That is the heart of great education. Students thrive when they know they are seen not just for their performance, but for who they are.

Ryanna Mortensen shared a powerful reflection about Sensei Sanders: "I was afraid to go to his class every day. I came to know that I didn't fear him. I respected him." Her words remind us that growth often comes from being challenged by people who believe we are capable of more. True respect is built through discipline, consistency, and the kind of high expectations that help students discover their own strength.

Emily Suina shared that because of Dr. Gurule-Leyba, she became genuinely interested in what she was learning. That is education at its best. True learning is not only about completing assignments or earning grades. It is about curiosity, connection, and discovering that learning can matter personally.

Some of the most meaningful lessons also came outside the classroom.

Estrella García said, "To most, basketball is just a sport. But to me, it is a very important part of life." Her words remind us that athletics and activities are about far more than competition. They teach discipline, teamwork, sacrifice, accountability, and belonging. For many students, these experiences become places where confidence is built, friendships are formed, and life lessons take root.

Together, these reflections show the depth and heart of the Class of 2026. They remind us that students are shaped by encouragement, challenge, family, culture, mentorship, education, and the courage to keep growing.

As our graduates move forward, they carry these lessons with them. They carry the wisdom of those who believed in them, the strength built through hardship, and the pride of a community that will continue cheering them on.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026. We are proud of you, we believe in you, and we look forward to seeing all the ways you will continue to grow, lead, serve, and make the world better.

Best,

Matt



Message from School Board President, Paul Madrid



Dear BPS Community-

As we close the chapter on another school year, I find myself reflecting on how far we've traveled together as a district. In many ways, education is a lot like working a ranch. You don't always see the results of your labor overnight. You prepare the ground, mend the fences, care for what has been entrusted to you, and trust that with consistency and hard work, growth will come.

This year, growth came in many forms.

We watched students achieve at higher levels, earn diplomas, compete on athletic fields, perform on stages, and demonstrate the kind of character that makes our community proud. We saw teachers and staff continue to invest their hearts into their work, creating opportunities and opening doors for our students. We witnessed families partnering with our schools and supporting the important work of learning.

There's an old cowboy saying: "The best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time." Big goals are achieved through steady effort, day after day. That's exactly what I see happening across Bernalillo Public Schools. Our progress is not the result of luck. It comes from thousands of small decisions made every day by students choosing to learn, teachers choosing to inspire, leaders choosing to serve, and families choosing to stay engaged.

We have much to celebrate. Yet as any rancher knows, finishing one season means preparing for the next. Success doesn't mean we're finished; it means we're ready for the next challenge. We remain committed to creating the best possible opportunities for every student who walks through our doors. We know there is still work to do, and we embrace that responsibility with enthusiasm and determination.

One piece of cowboy logic has always stuck with me: "Never ride past a gate without closing it." In other words, take care of the details, honor your responsibilities, and leave things better than you found them. That philosophy continues to guide our Board of Education. We are committed to doing the work, making thoughtful decisions, and ensuring that our district remains focused on what matters most—our students.

To our graduates, congratulations. To our students returning next year, keep reaching higher. To our teachers, staff, administrators, and families, thank you for your dedication and partnership. Together, we have accomplished a great deal this year, and together, we will continue building a future filled with opportunity, excellence, and hope.

As the summer begins, I encourage everyone to take time to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends. Then we'll saddle up once again and continue the journey of helping every student succeed.

The trail ahead is bright, and I'm grateful to be traveling it with all of you.

With appreciation,

Paul

The Bernalillo Public Schools Board of Education Paul Madrid, President, District 5
Cordy Chavez, Vice-President, District 4
Christine Suina, Secretary, District 1
Mike Archibeque, Member, District 3
John Gurule, Member, District 2
Personal Use of Electronic Communication Devices by Students, J-3150
Adopted by the BPS School Board: 28 MARCH 2024
English
https://5il.co/2t8ej

Bernalillo Public Schools
Highlights/Shoutouts







Bella Perez State Powerlifting Champ - Signing to Missouri Valley State
Miekaylah Coriz State Runner Up -Signing to Missouri Valley State



Jacob Duran - Signing to Luna Community College for Baseball

Zach Duran - Signing to the College of the Southwest for Baseball





SkillsUSA

Congratulations to the Bernalillo Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources team on earning 3rd place at the National SkillsUSA Leadership Conference! Shoutout to Gracie McCloskey, Faith Martinez, Anthony Otero, and Theresa Gurule!

NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

BHS Scholarships - Football

Warren Cooper Signing with New Mexico Highlands

Preferred Walk on with Academic Scholarship!

Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Phoenix Ceremony





Estrella Garcia



Tyshaun Comosoma



Analicia Diaz



Neveah Sandoval



Kellynne Garcia



Kaitlyn Chavez



Kanala Macias



Carrie Naktewa





Karlet Meraz



Phoenix Sunrise



Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Bilingual Seal



Esmeralda Reyes Dominguez



Faith Martinez



Laura Dominguez





Victor Vega



Delma Benocomo



Brisa Castillo

Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Bilingual Seal



Anya V. Castro - Ramirez



Alexander Flores Riojas



Kimberly Valadez





Athena Chavez



Chentyl Rios



Mya Bailey

Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Robing Ceremony






















Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Robing Ceremony






















Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Robing Ceremony

























Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Robing Ceremony

























Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Robing Ceremony














Bernalillo Public Schools

2026 Robing Ceremony





















Bernalillo Public Schools

Caps of to the class of 2026

















Bernalillo Public Schools

Caps of to the class of 2026














Bernalillo Public Schools

Caps of to the class of 2026




















Algodones Elementary

Algodones Elementary Finishes the Year Strong!

As the 2025–2026 school year comes to a close, Algodones Elementary has much to celebrate. This year was filled with academic growth, memorable experiences, and opportunities for students and staff to shine.
One of our greatest accomplishments was the tremendous academic growth demonstrated by our students, particularly our third graders. Through hard work, dedicated instruction, and a commitment to excellence, our students showed impressive gains on the iMSSA assessment. Their success is a testament to the collaborative efforts of our teachers, support staff, families, and students themselves. We are incredibly proud of the growth mindset and perseverance that our students displayed throughout the year.





Our Quarter 4 Awards Assembly was a wonderful celebration of student achievement and effort. Students were recognized for their academic accomplishments, positive character traits, and dedication to learning. To cap off the event, our third-grade students took on their teachers in an exciting dodgeball game that had the entire school cheering. The friendly competition created lasting memories and plenty of laughter for everyone involved.



Our music program also had a standout moment this spring with a special concert held at the Black Mesa Casino. Students showcased their musical talents and confidence while sharing their hard work with families and community members. The performance highlighted not only their artistic growth but also the dedication of our music program and teachers.



As the year drew to a close, students participated in one of the most anticipated events of the year—our Color Run! Filled with laughter, bright colors, music, and excitement, the event was the perfect way to celebrate a successful school year. More importantly, it served as a reminder of the strong sense of community that exists at Algodones Elementary.

When reflecting on the year, one comment stood out. During our end-of-year celebrations, a parent remarked, "They are going to remember this forever." That sentiment perfectly captures what makes Algodones Elementary special. While academic achievement remains our focus, we also strive to create joyful experiences, meaningful relationships, and lasting memories for every child who walks through our doors.



As we head into summer, we celebrate not only what our students learned but also who they became. We are grateful for the partnership of our families, the dedication of our staff, and the enthusiasm of our students. Together, we made this a year of growth, achievement, and unforgettable moments.

Have a wonderful summer, and we look forward to another amazing year ahead!

Cochiti Schools

Cochiti Has Got Talent!



Cochiti Elementary and Middle School recently showcased the incredible talents of our students during our annual **"Cochiti Has Got Talent!"** talent show. The event was a wonderful celebration of creativity, courage, culture, and school spirit. Students took the stage to showcase a wide range of talents, from beautiful singing performances and impressive dance routines to captivating acts filled with confidence and showmanship. The audience was treated to outstanding performances that highlighted the unique gifts, hard work, and culture of our students.

There were so many memorable moments, it would be impossible to pinpoint one. Throughout the show, students demonstrated not only their talents but also their bravery and dedication as they performed in front of family, friends, and the school community.

We are incredibly proud of every student who participated. Their performances made for an unforgettable evening and reminded us that Cochiti is filled with talented, creative, and confident learners. Thank you to our students, families, and staff for making Cochiti Has Got Talent! such a tremendous success.

3–5 Students Shine in NDI Santa Fe Performance



This past week, our 3rd-5th-grade students worked diligently alongside NDI New Mexico, engaging in an exciting and creative experience centered on learning choreography, building confidence, and developing performance skills. Throughout the week, students demonstrated enthusiasm, focus, and teamwork as they practiced and prepared for their final showcase.

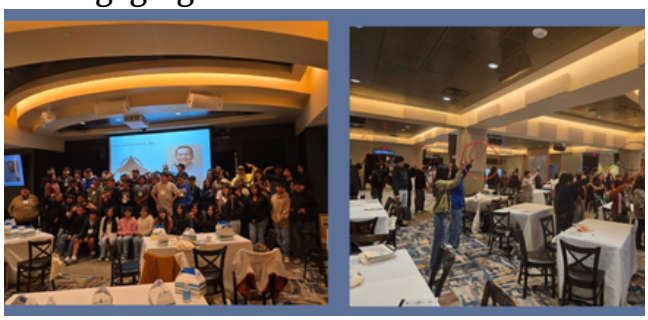
On Thursday, families were invited to attend a special performance where students proudly shared the routines they had been working so hard to master. The energy in the room was incredible, and it was clear how much effort, dedication, and joy students brought to the experience.

Beyond learning choreography, students strengthened important skills such as collaboration, perseverance, and self-expression. Their pride and excitement during the performance reflected just how meaningful this opportunity was for them.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Sharon Scarlott for her instrumental role in securing and supporting this outstanding partnership, helping to bring this enriching experience to our students. We are grateful to NDI New Mexico, our staff, and our families for supporting our students in such a memorable and inspiring week.

PoG Focus: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Our students recently attended the Pathways to Your Future Conference, where they demonstrated strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills through interactive workshops, collaborative challenges, and engaging discussions.



Students collaborated to analyze ideas, communicate solutions, and apply creative thinking through real-world learning experiences aligned with the Bernalillo Public Schools Portrait of a Graduate. They also participated in inspiring presentations and hands-on activities that fostered teamwork, leadership, and creativity while exploring future career pathways. Throughout the conference, students represented our school with enthusiasm and maturity, building valuable skills that support future success.

La Escuelita Preschool

Developing Future Heroes



Our 4-Year-Old (4Y) students have officially completed their PreK journey! On May 29th, La Escuelita was filled with excitement, pride, and celebration as we hosted our annual promotion ceremonies to honor this important milestone.



The day provided a special opportunity to recognize the tremendous growth our students have made throughout the school year and to celebrate their readiness for the next step in their educational journey.









The promotion ceremonies were a joyful reflection of the hard work, dedication, and support that helped our students succeed.

Families, staff members, and members of the Bernalillo community gathered together to celebrate each child's achievements and share in this memorable occasion.

Seeing our students proudly walk across the stage, smile for photos, and celebrate with loved ones made the day truly special.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our families for their partnership, encouragement, and commitment throughout the year. Your support has played an essential role in your child's success.









Congratulations to all of our PreK graduates! We are so proud of everything you have accomplished and are excited to see all that you will achieve in kindergarten and beyond.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in making this celebration such a meaningful and memorable day for our students and their families. We look forward to watching our young learners continue to grow, learn, and thrive in the years ahead.

Placitas Elementary School

Where Classroom Learning Meets the Stage at Placitas Elementary

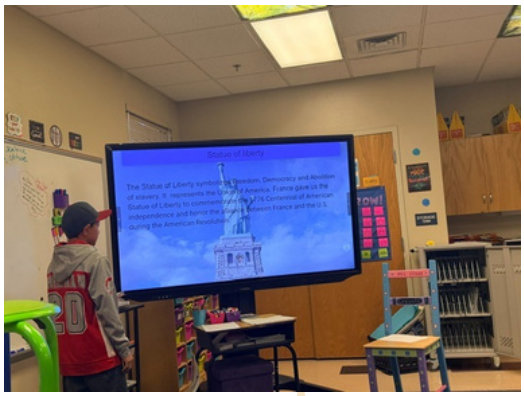


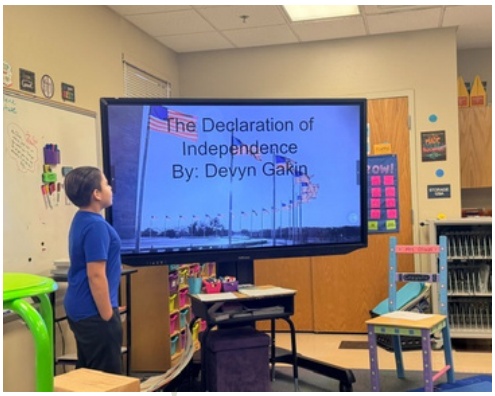
At Placitas Elementary School, learning extends far beyond the classroom walls.

As part of the SAVVAS MyView Literacy curriculum, our 5th grade students recently completed their Project-Based Inquiry for Unit 4, Week 6: "What Does Liberty or Freedom Mean to Me?" Students researched a person, historical event, or symbol in the United States that represents liberty and freedom. They then created presentations to share their learning and reflect on what freedom means to them personally.

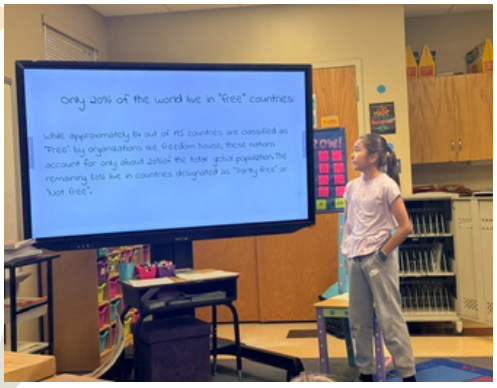


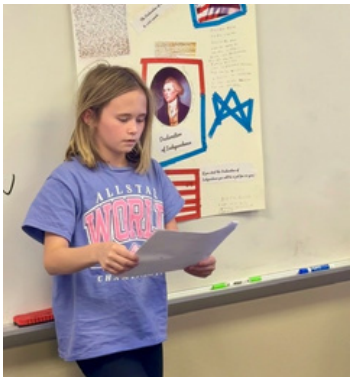
What made this project even more meaningful was its connection to our Spring Musical Showcase. Under the direction of music teacher Ms. DiMartino, students took part in a musical journey through American history, celebrating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States. This milestone marks 250 years since the Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776.











By connecting literacy instruction with music and performance, students were able to see how concepts learned in the classroom are reflected across different subjects and experiences. These purposeful connections help deepen understanding, strengthen engagement, and make learning more relevant and memorable.

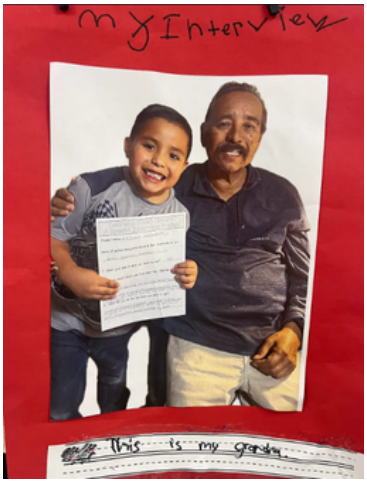
At Placitas Elementary, we are committed to creating meaningful opportunities for students to connect their learning across the curriculum—and to shine both in and out of the classroom.

Santo Domingo Schools

Interim New Mexico Student Success Assessment results are in!

This assessment measures student growth from fall to spring, and we are proud to share that we exceeded our goal of a 10% increase in student proficiency from the previous school year in the following areas:

3rd grade reading (45% proficiency) and math (33% proficiency), 4th grade reading (42% proficiency), and 8th grade reading (65% proficiency) and math (47% proficiency).
How did we achieve this success? We did it through the use of High-Quality Instructional Materials, bell-to-bell instruction, honoring the Kewa culture and language, creating joyful learning experiences, and—most importantly—believing in our students and teachers.





8th-grade student Kamaya Laiwaaete

Between What was and What Comes
Betwixt the hallway noise and fading bell,
I move like a thought I can't quite tell.
The words I mean don't come out right,
They twist like shadows just out of sight.

In yore's old corners of younger days,
Everything felt like simpler ways.
Now even memories feel half gone,
Like pages written but left
Too long.

Methinks I'm changing,
Though I can't see how, like I'm not then,
And I'm not quite now.
People talk, but I drift away,
Caught in moments that won't stay.

I smile
Like I know what's going on
But I'm still figuring where I belong.
Betwixt what ends and what begins.
I'm just a story still written in.

At SD, our theme is "Roots and Wings." We believe in strengthening and celebrating each student's cultural identity.

By doing so, we help students build strong roots that foster confidence, resilience, and a love of learning. From there, they are able to spread their wings, pursue their dreams, and ultimately return to give back to their community.

Our kindergarten classes recently demonstrated this Roots and Wings philosophy through a meaningful writing project. Each kindergarten student strengthened their reading, writing, and listening skills by interviewing their grandparents.

This assignment was part of their reading curriculum focused on learning about history through family stories and experiences. Student interviews and photographs are now proudly displayed throughout our hallways. Pictured below is Landen Rosetta with his grandfather and interview project.

Our middle school students were also challenged to write poetry using Old English vernacular. This piece was written by Kamaya Laiwakete.

Click here to visit our website.

Spartan Learning Academy

Spartans Splash into Summer



Bernalillo Fire Department dousing SLA students

Spartan Learning Academy students celebrated the end of the school year with a lively field water day on June 3. The event featured water slides, an inflatable obstacle course and volleyball, giving students plenty of chances to cool off and have fun with friends.

The Bernalillo Fire Department joined the festivities and helped douse participants with water hoses, adding excitement and community spirit to the day. The Bernalillo Public Schools (BPS) nutrition department provided lunch for everyone in attendance.

To close the celebration, SLA held a raffle and awarded three bicycles to students who attended the event. The day was a festive, community-centered way for Spartans to splash into summer.



Llianna Barrientos and Naomi Perea Ramirez racing down the water slide

8th-Grade Science and Computer Science Classes Team Up for Drone Project

Eighth-grade science and computer science students at SLA teamed up this week to learn about drones and to fly them during a hands-on session in the auxiliary gym. The drones, purchased by the BPS School Board, are part of a new classroom initiative to introduce students to Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).

Teachers coordinated to combine classroom lessons with practical experience. In science class, students explored the principles that make flight possible, including lift, thrust, drag, and weight. Computer science lessons focused on the software side of UAS operation—basic programming, remote-control interfaces, and responsible data handling. Together, the units gave students a rounded view of both the physical and digital systems that power modern drones.

During the gym session, students practiced pre-flight checks, safety procedures, and controlled maneuvers under teacher supervision. Instructors emphasized safety, local airspace rules, and ethical considerations such as privacy and appropriate use. The activity was designed to build technical skills, teamwork, and problem-solving as students adjusted flight plans and debugged control inputs.









WD Carroll Elementary



On Friday, May 15, 2026, W.D. Carroll Elementary proudly celebrated Cultural Day, a special event that brought our entire school community together. It was a joy to celebrate alongside our students, staff, families, and community members.

W.D. Carroll Elementary is a truly unique school because of the rich diversity represented within our student population.

In preparation for Cultural Day, students explored different countries and learned about their traditions, cultures, and customs. They also practiced cultural dances, which they proudly performed during the celebration.

The event featured a variety of outstanding performances by our students and La Escuelita pre-k students, including hula dancing, flamenco dancing, Butterfly/Flag dancing, and many other cultural dances that showcased the beauty and diversity of traditions from around the world.

The celebration also included performances by Alma de Albuquerque Mariachi, Brightburn Irish Dancers, Lion Dragon dancers, and the Bernalillo High School Ballet Folklórico.

We were also honored with a special live performance by Al Hurricane Jr. and Gonzalo, whose music highlighted the rich cultural heritage and traditions of New Mexico.

Cultural Day was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate diversity, strengthen community connections, and showcase the many cultures that make W.D. Carroll Elementary such a vibrant and welcoming school.







Click here to visit our website

Bernalillo Public Schools
End of Year Awards - Students



Summer Lovato



Anya Castro-Ramirez



Nathan Calabaza



Angelina Garcia



Sofia Garcia



Isaiah Aguilar



Mario Molinar
Athlete



Dusty DeBeers
Athlete



Mariah Sedillo, 12th
Athlete

Bernalillo Public Schools
End of Year Awards

Angelina Garcia
10th Grade BHS
BPS Student of the Year



Rosangela Montoya
BHS Principal
Administrator of the Year



Melba Acantilado
Teacher BHS
Secondary Teacher of the Year



Alma Sisneros
Teacher, Santo Domingo Schools
BPS Teacher of the Year



Obdulia "Julie" Uhl
Teacher, Algodones Elementary
Elementary Teacher of the Year



Erma Sandoval Payroll Specialist
Operational Support



Carlo Durand, EA SLA
Instructional Support



Luciana Welch, Registrar SLA
Operational Support

Bernalillo Public Schools
End of Year Awards



Melba Acantilado,
Science Teacher BHS



Alma Sisneros Teacher,
Santo Domingo Schools



Alicia Duran,
Teacher BES



Dorella Tenorio,
Keres Cochiti



The BHS Admin Team,
Richard Harrid, and
Benito Levario.



Sarah Armstrong,
Principal
WD Carroll Elementary



Gena Sosa,
Principal
Cochiti Schools



Amber Bright
Principal
Algodones
Elementary



Jennifer Jaramillo,
Cheer Coach BHS



Catalina Plancarte,
Bernalillo
Elementary



Brenda Montoya
Counselor, Spartan
Learning Academy



Krystal Candelaria,
Medicaid Specialist
District Office

As of October 1st 2025 THE DISTRICT of Bernalillo Public Schools requires that

ALL EVENTS hosted on Bernalillo Public Schools property- including but not limited to sporting events, festivals, performances, and concerts- follow the clear bag policy.

ALL bags and backpacks MUST BE CLEAR to enter the event. Failure to comply may result in denied entry.

We appreciate your cooperation.