

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

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JADE RIVERA – TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN ALBUQUERQUE



As the crisp autumn air ushers in another school year, we are thrilled to shine our Leadership Spotlight on Jade Rivera, Founder and Executive Director of Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School.

This special back-to-school edition celebrates Jade’s remarkable journey and the transformative impact she’s had on education in New Mexico.

From Personal Struggles to Educational Triumphs

Jade Rivera’s path to educational leadership is as inspiring as it is impactful. Raised in New Mexico by a single mother, Jade witnessed firsthand the challenges and opportunities within the state’s educational landscape. Her early experiences laid the foundation for her dedication to education—a commitment that would drive her career from the classrooms of Teach for America to the halls of policy-making at the New Mexico Public Education Department.

Jade’s passion for educational reform and policy was sharpened during her tenure as a Policy Administrator. She managed statewide professional development programs and substantial budgets, making strides toward improving educational outcomes across New Mexico. But it was the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship in 2016 that truly honed her leadership skills, preparing her to design and lead high-performing, college-preparatory charter schools.

A Vision Realized: Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School

In 2018, Jade’s vision took flight with the founding of Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School in the South Valley. The school, under her stewardship, has emerged as a beacon of hope and excellence. Ranking among the top 5% of schools in New Mexico for literacy growth and proficiency, Albuquerque Collegiate is a testament to Jade’s unwavering commitment to academic excellence and community upliftment.

Her leadership and innovative approaches have not gone unnoticed. In 2020, Jade was honored as one of Albuquerque Business First's "Top 40 Under 40," and in 2024, she received the Educator of the Year Award from the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce. These accolades reflect not only her dedication but also the tangible impact she has made on her students and the community.



Core Values and Vision for Education

At the heart of Jade's leadership are core values of academic excellence, equity, and accountability. Her approach is driven by a belief in the potential of every student, regardless of background. "My greatest

hope is that our leadership emphasizes fostering a culture of high expectations, clear communication, and continuous improvement," Jade explains. "We are unrelenting and unwavering in our belief in the power and potential of all children and our community."

Jade envisions education as a powerful tool for empowering underrepresented communities. At Albuquerque Collegiate, strategies such as a co-teacher model in lower grades and content-specific teachers in upper grades ensure targeted support and individualized instruction. By leveraging data-driven decision-making and proven strategies from top-performing schools nationwide, Jade and her team are committed to delivering exceptional educational outcomes.

Looking Ahead: Growth and Expansion

As the new school year begins, Jade is energized by the opportunity to build on the school's success. "Our students consistently perform in the top 10% of schools statewide," she notes with pride. "I am excited to further inspire our scholars and families and to demonstrate what's possible for all students in Albuquerque and beyond."

Jade's long-term vision includes expanding Albuquerque Collegiate's impact by reaching more students and moving to a newly constructed campus. This growth will enhance the school's ability to serve families and strengthen the community. A key component of this vision is investing in teachers and leaders through ongoing support and coaching, recognizing that their development is crucial to the school's overall success.

Advice for Aspiring Educators and Leaders

For those aspiring to make a meaningful impact in their communities through education, Jade offers invaluable advice: “Stay focused on the mission and surround yourself with a strong network of supporters. Lean into the hard work, knowing that the impact you’re making on students and the community is life-changing. Never lose sight of the belief that all children, regardless of background, can achieve greatness when given the right opportunities and support.”

As we embark on a new school year, Jade Rivera’s story is a powerful reminder of the transformative potential of dedicated leadership in education. Her journey from personal challenges to pioneering educational reform exemplifies the difference one person can make in shaping the future. We celebrate Jade’s achievements and look forward to the continued impact of her visionary work at Albuquerque Collegiate Charter School.



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