



**You Are Invited to Virtually Attend & Celebrate as New Mexico PBS (NMPBS) presents**

**The 43rd Annual Santa Fe Indian School Graduation**

**Friday, June 26, at 6 - 8 p.m.**

**&**

**The 2020 SFIS 8th Grade Promotion**

**Saturday, June 27, at 10 - 11 a.m.**

**-- on NMPBS Ch. 5.3 – FNX and Online at: <https://portal.knme.org/> --**

New Mexico PBS (NMPBS) and The Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS) are excited to announce that the **43<sup>rd</sup> Annual SFIS Graduation** and **2020 SFIS 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion** will be aired throughout Indian Country and into the homes of the graduates and their families, in a “virtual” celebration on **NMPBS Channel 5.3 (FNX), on Friday, June 26 at 6 p.m., and Saturday, June 27 at 10 a.m.** – with no internet required. Both programs will also be available to view for free, on **the New Mexico PBS video portal:** <https://portal.knme.org/> *(Additional steps to watching are at the bottom of this release.)*

As with so many things during the days of COVID-19, celebrating the Santa Fe Indian School’s Class of 2020 lead to unprecedented measures. SFIS is proud to partner with NMPBS to bring together the seniors, their grandparents, and extended families across the 19 Pueblos, Navajo Nation, and Apache Tribes of New Mexico for a community event, otherwise not possible during these times of social distancing.

With the toll of COVID-19 disproportionately affecting Native Americans, New Mexico tribes responded by closing borders and restricting off-reservation travel of tribal members to stop the spread of the virus. As of May 11, 2020, Native Americans make up 57% of COVID-19 cases in New Mexico, but represent only 11% of the N.M. population.

To protect families and communities, the 19 Pueblo Governors, who own and operate SFIS, counseled school leaders to provide a virtual on-line graduation, the caveat being that tribal lands are on the wrong side of the digital divide. A 2016 FCC broadband report notes that 41% of people living on tribal lands lack access to broadband, with the deficit jumping to 68% for those living in rural areas.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual SFIS Graduation and the 2020 SFIS 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion NMPBS-FNX broadcasts defy both the digital divide and the COVID-19 social distancing requirements, to join a community together in the celebration of student accomplishments, community resilience, and the hopes of promising futures for tribal youth.

“The SFIS graduation is one of the most beautiful events that just does not compare to other graduations,” said Ms. Faith Rosetta, SFIS High School Principal. “In any other year, the seniors enter the

Everett F. Chavez Pueblo Pavilion adorned in their finest traditional garments to a traditional drumbeat and a packed audience of 3000 family, friends, school staff and tribal leaders.”

As a preventative measure to COVID-19, SFIS students returned to their home communities on tribal lands all across the State of New Mexico and beyond on March 13, 2020 and have not returned to dcampus since.

An attempt at remote learning on school-issued devices became the focus but the greatest challenge was Internet connectivity. Students connected to classes in any way they could, often relying on the parking lot Wi-Fi of the tribal libraries, cellular data plans where there was coverage, or bought pre-paid cellular data plans as they could afford it. Others didn't connect at all and alternative means of communication were used.

As for the Class of 2020, some seniors typed up their capstone research papers on their cell phones. One hand wrote the paper and took pictures of the pages. Despite the challenges, the 107 seniors of the graduating class persevered, determined to take life's next step.

In responding to the issues of connectivity, middle school teachers created an authentic cumulating project that incorporated multiple contents that engaged students through their traditional and cultural ways of knowing. All 104, 8th grade students completed a planting project that fostered the transfer of language, farming skills and connected families during these challenging times.

Celebrate with the Class of 2020!

#### **How to watch:**

- To receive FNX, NMPBS Channel 5.3 over the air, you'll need a UHF-VHF digital antenna and a digital tuner.
- Realtime Streaming Online: Available to subscribers of the YouTubeTV streaming service.
- Available to cable subscribers in the Albuquerque/Santa Fe metro area on Comcast channel 393
- The broadcast will be archived and available streaming (during the airing time) for free at the NMPBS video portal: <https://portal.knme.org>
- This will not be broadcast on Dish or DirecTV as they do not carry FNX.

#### **Instructions for your UHF-VHF digital antenna and a digital tuner:**

Rescan your digital tuner or converter box if you are having difficulty receiving New Mexico PBS' over the air signal.

1. Unplug your television or converter box.
2. Then re-plug.
3. Rescan for channels with the menu button on your remote.

#### **Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS)**

The Santa Fe Indian School is an off-reservation boarding school that is owned and operated by the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico. We serve approximately 725 students from the 19 Pueblos, Navajo Nation, and Apache Tribes of New Mexico. SFIS was established in 1890 Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school but has been tribally-controlled since the 1977 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. SFIS is a national leader in Indian Education as is a flagship school of the Bureau of Indian Education's 183 schools nationwide. The Pueblos include: Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambé, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, Sandia, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Taos, Tesuque, Zia, and Zuni.

### **New Mexico PBS (NMPBS)**

Celebrating over 60 years of service, NMPBS (KNME & KNMD-TV) serving New Mexico and the Navajo Nation, broadcasts a wide array of nature, history, current affairs, health, performance, children's, educational and entertainment programs. NMPBS produces NEW MEXICO IN FOCUS, COLORES! and a variety of specials. NMPBS operates 5 digital broadcast channels: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 9.1, and 9.2. NMPBS is co-licensed to the University of New Mexico (UNM) and Albuquerque Public Schools (APS). [www.nmpbs.org](http://www.nmpbs.org)

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