

SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

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Santa Fe County Clerk's Office Brings Democracy 101 to New Mexico School for the Arts

Santa Fe County, NM – The Santa Fe County Clerk's Office continued its youth civic engagement efforts on January 27 and 28 with a Democracy 101 presentation for high school seniors at the New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA). Over the course of two days, students across three classes participated in interactive lessons designed to prepare them for voting in the upcoming 2026 Primary and General Elections.

Led by members of the Clerk's Office outreach team, the sessions focused on what students can expect as first-time voters, including how New Mexico's new semi-open primary system works, what races and issues will appear on the ballot, and the different ways voters can participate — including early voting, absentee voting by mail, and voting in person on Election Day.

Many of the students in attendance will be eligible to vote for the first time in the June primary and the November general election. Staff walked students through the voter registration process, discussed voter rights and election security measures, and answered questions about how ballots are protected and counted.

As part of the Democracy 101 program, students also took part in a mock election using official voting equipment, giving them hands-on experience with the voting process. Several students registered to vote during the event, taking an important first step toward civic participation.

“This program is about making sure young voters feel confident and informed when they walk into a polling place for the first time,” said Santa Fe County Clerk Katharine E. Clark.

“Understanding how elections work — and why they matter — helps build lifelong voting habits.”

Students also received one of the Clerk's Office's popular “I Voted” stickers, designed through a student art contest and community voting process. The stickers serve as both a keepsake and a reminder that civic participation is something to be proud of.

The Democracy 101 program is part of the Clerk's Office's broader voter education and outreach efforts aimed at increasing civic engagement among young and first-time voters.

By engaging students before their first election, the Clerk's Office hopes to reduce barriers to participation and ensure that Santa Fe County's next generation of voters feels informed, empowered, and ready to take part in the democratic process.

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