



Press Release

Albuquerque Journal, KOAT TV and 96.3 News Radio KKOB

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Albuquerque Journal, KOAT TV and KKOB Radio join forces to tackle Literacy Project

A recent study from the National Center for Education Statistics showed that New Mexico ranks 49th in literacy nationwide. Even more alarming, literacy rates in NM appear to not have made any significant improvements in the last twenty years.

This is what has motivated New Mexico's leading news organizations to decide that it is time for action, and have formed a news collaborative dedicated to jointly igniting tangible solutions.

The Albuquerque Journal, KOAT TV and News Radio KKOB have decided to unite in a concentrated, year-long effort to accomplish true Impact Journalism via THE LITERACY PROJECT.

KOAT TV President and General Manager Lori Waldon said, "We are proud to unite in this powerful way to shine a light on a very critical issue. Literacy is the gateway to increasing educational opportunity for many New Mexicans.

Literacy is empowering and it is transformative. It lifts children and adults out of poverty. And it's an important building block to raising New Mexico's level of education."

Albuquerque Journal Publisher William Lang agrees: "Literacy is one of the most crucial, liberating and illuminating tools a person can acquire. The ability to read elevates an individual personally, economically and socially. Despite New Mexico's devastatingly low literacy rates, we believe they can be improved with strategic effort – thus improving the lives of many New Mexicans."

The three newsrooms have pledged twelve months or more of layered, in-depth coverage to identify the gaps, resources and opportunities to create positive, workable solutions. The special coverage kicks off this weekend.

Jeff Berry, Cumulus Radio Group Regional Manager, feels this multimedia, multiplatform approach is the perfect way to inspire tangible progress and improvements. "I believe we can do this together," he said. "As news leaders, we know how to be catalysts for change. We know how to get the attention of government and industry. We know how to rally public opinion and support. We want to use our joint strength and training to serve the state in a way that can truly enhance and assist public and private educational efforts."

Each organization has assigned some of its top reporters to this complex issue. KOAT TV News Director Jess O'Neill is working with Anchor Shelly Ribando; Assistant City Editor Mike Murphy and veteran reporter Rick Nathanson will spearhead the Journal effort; and 96.3 News Radio KKOB Operations Manager Jared Hart has assigned Haylee Gonzales, and enlisted the talk show hosts in planning featured experts.

The trio of media organizations has been meeting for several months leading up to this. The decision to make Literacy a keystone project came after joint reviews of several reports and ongoing dialog. It was unanimous among the

leadership that Literacy was a paramount social and educational challenge; this was the right time; theirs were the right teams; and the need was compelling. “Our hope,” Waldon said, “is that our in-depth reporting and storytelling will educate and enlighten our viewers, readers and listeners. We also hope that ‘The Literacy Project’ will spark all New Mexicans to take action in their own communities. Raising our literacy level will lift our entire state.”
