



**SFCC**  
SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE, SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND SANTA FE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### [FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE](#)

**Santa Fe – December 2, 2010**

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### **Santa Fe Public School and Santa Fe Community College Boards Consolidate Elections**

For the first time, Santa Fe residents will be able to vote in Santa Fe Community College and Santa Fe Public Schools board elections on the same date. Leaders of SFCC, SFPS and Santa Fe County, who say the joint election will minimize costs, boost voter participation and place stronger focus on public education, are praising the joint election.

“By coming together on this election, Santa Fe Public Schools and Santa Fe Community College are responding to the needs of our publicly supported school communities,” said SFCC President Sheila Ortego. “This joint election will help place a stronger emphasis on the partnership between the community college and Santa Fe Public Schools.”

Santa Fe County Clerk, Valerie Espinoza, states that she is pleased with the decision to combine the Public School and College Board Elections. “The School and College Boards should be commended for this progressive approach because it represents the best election reform efforts and an excellent policy decision.”

A measure that enabled the community college and school districts to combine elections was approved by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Bill Richardson in 2008. The measure gives the option of combining the elections should both governing boards agree. The Santa Fe County Clerk's Office, School Board and College Board worked with our legislative delegation to get this measure passed. Lynn Gary of the Clerk's Office spent untold hours as the prime mover of

this legislation. SFCC Governing Board Chair, Carol Brito, who also worked hard to get this measure passed, said a Joint election will help clear up voter confusion and bring more focus to education in Santa Fe. “This legislation was passed to give us the ability to create stronger bonds between institutions,” she said. “Education has to play a stronger role in this community and what better way than working together?”

The taxpayers will benefit from the cost savings of paying for one election instead of two, and the voters will benefit because they will be able to vote for both boards on one day, rather than two separate elections. Previously the costs for these two elections were almost \$85,000; with the new decision to combine both elections, the cost will be cut in half. The Santa Fe County Clerk’s Office will coordinate common polling places, with fees shared evenly by each institution.

The Election will be held Tuesday, February 1, 2011. If you are not registered and wish to vote in this election, you must register by Tuesday, January 4, 2011. You can request an Absentee Ballot now, though, by law, the ballots cannot be mailed until Tuesday, January 4, 2011. Absentee-in-Person voting also begins Tuesday, January 4, 2011, and continues until Friday, January 28, 2011: it will occur only at the County Clerk’s Office weekdays from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Ms. Espinoza encourages everyone to vote in this election, as these Board members are responsible for directing the future of education in Santa Fe. The college’s Governing Board will fill its Position 2 seat – a six-year term. The deadline to file for candidacy is Dec. 15. Santa Fe Public Schools seats in Districts 1, 2 and 4 are up for election, come February. The deadline for filing is Dec. 21. (Information on candidate eligibility is available at <http://www.santafecounty.org/clerk>.)

Santa Fe Public Schools Superintendent Bobbie Gutierrez said local school elections tend to draw low voter turnout. “I hope holding the election on a common day will stir more participation from registered voters,” she said. “This is an opportunity for more voters to have a say in the direction and leadership of two of Santa Fe’s largest education institutions.”

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