September 2013

Dear Spelling Bee Coordinators, Teachers and Administrators:

The Albuquerque Journal and Newspapers in Education are again sponsoring the New Mexico Spelling Bee.

The New Mexico Spelling Bee is scheduled for March 22, 2014 at Sandia Preparatory School in Albuquerque. Check the web site www.spellingbee.com for updated information. A vocabulary component will be added to the bee to align with the national bee. This is an exciting new addition and is required to be incorporated into spelling bees on all levels in New Mexico. Please go to www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee to learn how to use a vocabulary test at your bee.

The winner of the New Mexico Spelling Bee goes on to participate in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. The champion and a parent's airfare, hotel, food and official tour expenses will be paid for by the Albuquerque Journal and Newspapers in Education.

Only spellers from schools registered with the Scripps National Spelling Bee are eligible to participate in the NM Spelling Bee. Register by October 15, 2013 to avoid the late fee at www.spellingbee.com. The fee is $120 and the national site does not accept POs; only checks and credit cards. After you register, you will have access to everything you need to organize and run your bee. The national site has information and forms for the Great American Spellcheck Fundraiser that is a way for schools to raise money to cover the fee and/or bee expenses.

The Albuquerque Journal and Newspapers in Education take enormous pride in sponsoring the New Mexico Spelling Bee and wish all spellers the very best.

HAPPY S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G!!!  I AM GLAD TO HELP IN ANYWAY I CAN!!!

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You MUST register your school with the Scripps National Spelling Bee at [www.spellingbee.com](http://www.spellingbee.com). The fee is $120. Scripps does not take POs. You may pay by credit card or check (there is a $7.50 processing fee for checks). Only spellers from schools that have enrolled by October 15, 2013 and no later than December 13, 2013 with the national bee are eligible to participate in the New Mexico Spelling Bee and the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The Journal and NIE do not require any payment or fees beyond what is required by Scripps.

**County bees:** Spellers should participate in at least a few of the elimination bees before moving ahead to the county bee. An example: A classroom and a school bee, followed by a district bee, then the county bee. County bees are the last bee before the NM Spelling Bee.

All school bees must be held **before your Winter Break** and the deadline for all county bees to be finished is **January 27, 2014**.

Albuquerque and Rio Rancho school district bees take the place of a county bee. Private and parochial schools, charter schools and homeschooled students in Albuquerque have separate bees and follow the same rules as county bees.
The number of schools enrolled in each county, APS and RRPS determines the number of eligible spellers for the New Mexico bee. One speller is accepted for each 10 (or portion of 10) schools enrolled with the national bee.

**Eligibility:** All students in public, private, charter, parochial and home school may compete. No student should be eliminated because of the school he/she attends. Spellers must not have reached their 15th birthday on or before August 31, 2014. Students must have completed the first grade and are 8 or older. Please go to [www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee](http://www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee) to access more information.

**New Mexico Spelling Bee registration deadline:** County, APS and RRPS bee coordinators must submit the qualifier form(s) before **Feb. 1, 2014.** *Failure to meet this deadline will disqualify your speller.*

**WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR BEE**
There is no right or wrong way to conduct classroom and school spelling bees. Tips for conducting bees can be found at [www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee](http://www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee) and [www.spellingbee.com](http://www.spellingbee.com). Suggestions are also in your pronouncer guides. The NM Spelling Bee has NO authority over local bees. Therefore, The NM Spelling Bee is **EXTREMELY** dependent on school officials to organize local bees and to communicate with teachers and students and their parents with **accurate information.** Each school organizes its own bees and sets its own dates for bees. If you need advice or training,
please contact Karen Kehe, NM Spelling Bee coordinator at kkehe@abqpubco.com or 505-823-3516. There is a wealth of knowledge out there about bees: online sites, the national site, www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee, and experts among you who have run spelling bees in the past. Please ASK!

Vocabulary Component

- All bees on all levels must contain the vocabulary component for 2013-14. The students will be better prepared for the NM Spelling Bee and the National Bee.
- Directions for incorporating oral and/or written vocabulary tests are in the classroom and school pronouncer guides.

Rules

- Rules are your safety net.
- Pronouncers and judges should be familiar and comfortable with your rules. Provide these before the bee. A copy of suggested Rules for Local Spelling Bees is available in the School Pronouncer Guide and at www.abqjournal.com/spellingbee and the national site.
- Spellers and their teachers and parents should also have access to the rules. Be prepared to answer questions at the bee to avoid potential problems. Include something that states judges are in control of the bee and their decisions are final.
- According to Scripps, their spelling bee rules apply to the competition at the national level. The national bee is much more complex with preliminaries and semi-finals. Therefore, do not use these rules on the local level.
• Going over the rules at the start of your bee is smart.

Officials
• The New Mexico Bee recommends an odd number of judges.
• Parents and teachers of students eligible to participate in the competition should not be judges or pronouncers.
• Pick pronouncers and judges who have excellent listening skills and understanding of diacritical markings. They should have confidence in interacting with students. The pronouncer should have a clear speaking voice and should not be a judge.

Study words for students
• *Spell It!* is a good source for students to begin studying. It is available for free at [www.myspellit.com](http://www.myspellit.com) and the national site. The national website also has a list of study words by grade level for spellers.

Word lists for pronouncers and judges
• Pronouncers and judges should study the word list before school and county bees. School Pronouncer Guides are available to schools enrolled with the national bee. These lists contain the word with diacritical markings, the origin, definition and a sentence. You may use this list or one of your own.
• The pronouncer word lists in the Classroom, School and County/District guides are not to be given to students, parents, and teachers.
Appeals

- Should be under the officials’ control at all times.
- Consider a rule saying that appeals are only accepted to reinstate a speller and the appeal can only be filed by a teacher, parent, or legal guardian representing the speller.
- Also consider a rule that an appeal made seeking to remove a speller from the competition may not be allowed.
- Go over the appeals process before you begin your bee.

Suggestions for after you register your school

- Write down your log-in ID and password in a safe place where you can find it.
- Print your materials from the national website. Before you plan your bee, thoroughly read the pronouncer guides and student materials carefully. *Pronouncer guides are NOT to be shared. Please keep them secure.*
- Plan the date, organization, vocabulary test, and word selection for your bee. Use your pronouncer guides to plan your bee.
- Distribute bee information and study materials. Inform teachers, students, and parents about procedures, study materials, rules, deadlines, and dates for your school bee. Make sure the level of study words you give students matches the level of words you use at your bee.
- Make sure to include a **vocabulary test** in your bee and that everyone involved knows about it and how it will be administered (e.g. orally or written; as rounds in the bee).
• Tell the students that the bee is not like a spelling test. Only the officials know which words are to be used. Progress from easy to more difficult words and do not backtrack. Do not change the difficulty level of the words during rounds.

• It is highly recommended that you have a microphone and that you have someone competent to audio record the bee. Having a judge keep a hand written record allows is a good idea especially if a speller wants to start over and the letters spoken are retraced.

• Have students in rows facing the judges not the audience. Judges can then see the speller’s lips to check for correct pronunciation.

• It is not required, but have contestants say the word before and after spelling it. This will help the judges to make sure the speller is saying the word correctly.

• Take bathroom breaks every 3 rounds or when you feel appropriate.

• Conduct a practice round so students feel more comfortable about the procedure and how to adjust the microphone.

• Spellers should know their role and what questions they may ask the pronouncer.

• Spellers may start over before the spelling of the word is completed, but they must not change letters or the order of letters they have already uttered.

• Recognition is important! Make a BIG DEAL out of your bee. Decorate, have ribbons, certificates, and trophies. Invite the principal, superintendent, and news media.

• Find out who your county coordinator is and all information on the county bee. School bee coordinators need to report their
champion(s) to their county coordinators. The number of spellers per school is up to the county coordinator.

**County Bees**

These are the intermediate level bees after school bees, but before the NM Spelling Bee.

- Words are from the District Pronouncer Guide (not to be shared with teachers, students, and parents). There are 350 words made up of 75 words from grade-level study lists, 100 from the 2014 *Spell It!*, and 100 additional words from Webster's Third New International Dictionary and its addenda section, copyright 2002, Merriam-Webster, Inc. *It is imperative that students and parents are well aware of this!* A meeting with parents before the bee will help with that and you can address questions. A printed guideline on behavior of parents and guests at your bee is recommended.

- District Pronouncer Guides will be sent to County Coordinators sometime in November 2013.

- County coordinators will contact all school coordinators with information about the county bee. *Please remember to add a vocabulary component to your bee.*
IMPORTANT DATES

October 15, 2013: School enrollment ends.
Fall: Students prepare, school bees held.
End of fall, by Winter Break: School spelling bees completed.
December 13, 2013: Late enrollment ends.
January 27, 2014: County/district bees completed.
February 1, 2014: Registration for the NM Spelling Bee deadline.
March 22, 2014: New Mexico Spelling Bee