

2026 New Mexico Math Meet (NM³)

The second New Mexico Math Meet (NM³) took place from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM on Saturday, September 19th, 2026 at the Science and Math Learning Center (SMLC) on the UNM campus. Exactly 100 middle school students from Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Los Alamos participated, making up 27 teams, each with 1 to 4 members. The top teams won trophies and medals, and other participants won raffle prizes.¹ During competition rounds, a pizza lunch, an awards ceremony, and the parting prize raffle, the SMLC building was abuzz with youthful energy.



PHOTO 1. All participants of the 2026 NM³.

NM³ is a in-person team-based math competition for New Mexico middle school students of all levels. Organized and helmed by New Mexico high school students, NM³ fosters a positive environment for young math enthusiasts. The 2026 competition had three rounds: Bingo, GUTS, and a Countdown round. Each unique, but all team-based, the rounds rewarded ingenuity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Every round was designed to be fun! Both Guts and Bingo consisted of 25 problems, with Guts including themed problems, Fermi problems, and logic puzzles. Guts also featured a live leaderboard tracking each team's ranking. In the final Countdown round the top eight teams competed in an elimination style tournament. The winning team of the Countdown round was crowned the winner of the entire competition.

The winning team, The WAZE, had students from Albuquerque Academy, Desert Ridge Middle School, and Eisenhower Middle School.



PHOTO 2. The WAZE, overall winners of NM³.

¹Free books, plushies, AoPS coupons, and more!

Other rankings were as follows:

Bingo Round	GUTS Round	Countdown Round (overall)
1. DA GOATS	1. Eagles	1. The WAZE
2. Yellows	2. DA GOATS	2. 21ers
3. The WAZE	3. Bosque Pi Penguins	3. Indians-1

Here are two example questions from this year's NM³:

- *Hiro the Very Hungry Caterpillar is eating a perfectly spherical orange with radius 1 meter. Unfortunately, when he peels the orange, he discovers that the volume of the peel was half of the volume of the entire orange. What is the radius, in meters, of the resulting orange without the peel? Express your answer as a common fraction with simplified radicals.*
- *Thomas Bayes challenges Jakob Bernoulli to a game of tic-tac-toe on a standard 3×3 board, with Bayes making the first move by placing an X. At the end, Bayes and Bernoulli are tied. How many different end configurations of the board could represent the game? (Rotations of the board are counted as the same game.)*

Sean Choi founded NM³, with the inaugural event in 2025. He meticulously planned the event, partnered with UNM's Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and secured outside sponsors. Sean has since graduated high school, and is spending this year studying Korean in Seoul. He will start at Johns Hopkins University in 2027. This year Euriryeon Aiden Kim, a senior at La Cueva High School, took over from Sean as the contest director. Working with Euriryeon, the other NMMT members and NM³ organizers were Grace Hsieh (Co-Director, Lead Writer and a senior at La Cueva HS), Ada Dyer (freshman at UNM), Alicia Peng (senior at La Cueva HS), Ashvita Prasankumar (freshman at La Cueva HS), Daniel Choi (Sophomore at Bosque School), Iris Huang (freshman at Albuquerque Academy), and Alex Peng (freshman at La Cueva HS). More information about the team can be found at the NMMT website: <https://contest.nmmathteam.com/team2026>.



PHOTO 3. 2026 NM³ Organizers. From left, Alex Peng, Daniel Choi, Euriryeon Kim, Grace Hsieh, Alicia Peng, Ada Dyer, Ashvita Prasankumar, Iris Huang.

Euriryeon Kim proved a skilled organizer, not only recreating the magic of Sean's inaugural event, but also making improvements and increasing the participation. He also secured outside sponsors (Art of Problem Solving, Jane Street, American Mathematical Society, and Hudson River Trading).

Most importantly, Euiryeon has passed on his experience to the younger NMMT members, who are positioned to carry on in 2027. Euiryeon made the following statement about this year's contest.

The second-ever New Mexico Math Meet was an amazing success, with 100 students participating from all over the state. It's still surprising to me how many students participated in our own little math contest. I enjoyed talking with all of the students, teachers, and parents who made this possible. Everything ran smoothly, and we faced almost no issues. Being the second year, I was a little worried about whether we could recreate the success of the previous year. However, with the help of an amazing team, we got everything set up early and even changed and added things to make this contest even better and smoother than before. I already have some new ideas I hope will be implemented next year. The best part of the contest was seeing all the kids excited about math. Our goal was to make this the math contest each student looks forward to, one without the stress or pressure of other math contests, focused instead on the conversations, fun, and laughter that math can bring to kids. It was inspiring to see so many kids in the auditorium, making friends and solving problems together. I sincerely hope this becomes an annual event that continues for years to come.

Witnessing NM³ firsthand, associate professor Stephen Lau, co-director of the UNM-PNM Math Contest, had these words for Euiryeon and his team: *Last year's NM³, directed by Sean Choi, was truly a magical event, but I did wonder if it might prove a one-off. Building upon the success of the inaugural event, Euiryeon has dispelled that notion. A capable organizer, he leaves behind a sustainable event. I recognize the New Mexico Math Team as gifted young mathematicians, but they command many talents, including the ability to work together in planning and pulling off such a complex event.*