

B i t e s i z e

 School districts should be getting federal impact aid payments faster but the amounts may be lower. Districts have been receiving prior-year impact payments, intended to offset the loss of property taxes in school districts with tax-exempt federal property, but the federal government has mostly caught up and adopted policies that should keep the payments on track.

 Hobbs High School ranked first in the state for advanced placement course participation, with Rio Rancho High School second and Cleveland High School in Rio Rancho third. New Mexico recently ranked second nationally for the increase in the number of students taking AP courses and fourth for the number of low-income students with access to the classes.

 A greater proportion of Albuquerque Public Schools students attend D and F schools than in other New Mexico school districts, LESC analysis finds. A little over half of Albuquerque students attend low-ranking schools, compared with a statewide figure of 36 percent. Of the 153 Albuquerque public schools, including charter schools, 41 percent have received a D or F grade for three consecutive years.



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From the Chairman

Looking Back, Looking Forward

As the committee holds its final meeting just prior to the start of the legislative session, my term as chairman will also come to an end. It is a fitting time to reflect on the good work the committee has done over the last two years, while simultaneously looking to the future trusting that the committee's good work will continue.

Over the last two years, the committee has established a collaborative relationship with the Legislative Finance Committee, even jointly-sponsoring several pieces of legislation. Similarly, the committee has strengthened its relationship with the Public Education Department and is working closely with the executive on implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

Furthermore, over the last two years, the committee has hired a new staff director, as well as created and filled two new program evaluator positions. These new team members have already been instrumental in exploring the idiosyncrasies of virtual charter schools and will soon begin measuring the success of other educational programs. Such evaluations are critical if New Mexico is truly committed to improving its education system.

It is important to remember that all New Mexico policymakers – indeed, all New Mexicans – have a stake in the success of the public schools. While we might not always agree on how to approach every issue, we all sincerely believe in the value of a public education.

I am therefore proud of the progress we have made during my term as chairman, and I'm gratified to know that the committee will continue building on these successes.

Representative Dennis J. Roch

Administrative Reports Eat Up School Staff Time

New Mexico school districts and charter schools typically spend up to 15,000 staff hours complying with state reporting requirements, but could cut the time with better data systems, a new report finds.

Efficiency Evaluation: A Review of Public Education Reporting, conducted by Martin Consulting Group and funded by the Thornburg Foundation at the request of the Public Education Department, says the department requires school districts and charter schools to submit about 140 reports each year, about 20 of which are required under federal rules.

The count does not include financial reports required by the state budget office, teacher data required for the NM Teach evaluation system, or other surveys, according to the report scheduled to be discussed by the committee at 3 p.m. on January 16.

The reporting burden is "exacerbated" by a data validation process that requires districts and charter schools to address irregularities identified through STARS, the Student Teacher Accountability

Reporting System, and tweak the data for more than a dozen department program offices for their specific reports.

While the report finds the scope of reporting is not extraordinary compared with other states, New Mexico's school data collection is made more difficult by inadequate data collection systems. Further, New Mexico has a disproportionate share of small school districts, which do not have the administrators needed to compile reports.

Based on a small sample of school districts and charter schools, the report concludes New Mexico spends about \$212 per student meeting reporting requirements, while Nevada schools spend a third of that.

The data suggests "it may be possible for local reporting costs in New Mexico to be reduced up to two-thirds if the state further modernized and coordinated data collection and validation," the report says.

The report recommends the state consider reducing the number of reports required by eliminating some and consolidating others.

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Committee Endorses 2017 Legislation

The LESC has endorsed more than a dozen proposals scheduled to be introduced during the 60-day legislative session that starts January 17, covering topics ranging from the use of teacher absences in teacher evaluations to high school graduation requirements.

Among the proposals receiving endorsements at November and December meetings:

- A bill to increase the statutory minimum annual salary for teachers from \$30,000 to \$34,000 for level one, from \$40,000 to \$42,000 for level two, and from \$50,000 to \$52,000 for level three, consistent with the General Appropriation Act;
- A bill to eliminate the requirement

that high school students take at least one advanced placement, dual credit, online or honors course;

- A bill to increase the statutory school bus replacement cycle from 12 years to 15 years;
- A bill to change the funding formula to reflect the teacher cost index, increase the at-risk multiplier, and decrease the small school multiplier for charter schools;
- A bill to permit all students in a K-3 Plus feeder pattern to participate in the program as long as one school in the feeder pattern is eligible and participating, with funding to be prioritized for school districts and charter schools that maintain the same teacher and cohort of stu-

dents for the regular school year;

- A bill to expand the definition of “instructional material” to include original source material from primary sources and electronic media and content resources, provide schools flexibility in spending instructional material funds, and make private schools ineligible for instructional material funds;
- A bill creating a separate transportation funding formula for state-chartered charter schools;
- A bill prohibiting the use of restraint and seclusion as planned disciplinary interventions in public schools;
- A bill requiring the Public Education Department to take credit for any federal or local operational revenue received by a charter school just as it would for a school district; and
- A bill permitting teachers to use personal and sick days without it affecting their annual evaluations under certain conditions.

The committee is scheduled to review additional proposals during its last interim meeting on January 16.

Data Collection Burdens Schools

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It also recommends the state look for ways to streamline data collection, finding “a lack of state-level coordination in automation in data collection is perhaps even more problematic than specific reports.”

Nevada, for example, has leveraged federal funds to build technology systems that make the collection and coordination of data more efficient, and indirectly can improve instruction.

New Mexico, the report says, has access to some \$10 million in federal funds it could use to cover the costs of new systems.

While the Public Education Department has launched an initiative to improve its data system, the report

notes the effort will fail if the state does not invest in the system long term and make the organizational changes needed for the new system to be effective.

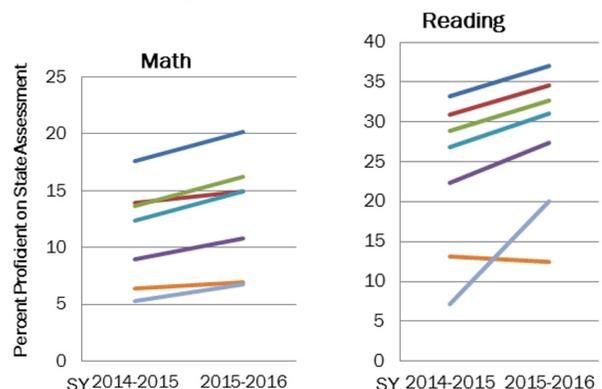
Proficiency Improves but Gap Persists

For the 2015-2016 school year, New Mexico student performance on both the PARCC math and English tests improved over the previous school year. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in math increased to 20 percent from 17 percent and the share meeting or exceeding expectations in English language arts increased a more modest 1 percent to 28 percent from 27 percent.

Most subpopulations also saw growth in proficiency; however, the achievement gap persists, especially for students with disabilities and English learners.

New Mexico saw improved statewide proficiency on 19 of 21 subject tests, with the average scores increasing by 5 percentage points on the third-, fourth- and fifth-grade math assessments.

Standardized Testing Achievement Gap



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