
2026 Committee Endorsed Legislative Proposals

Suspension of Individual School Board Members (.232641.1). The bill would add a new section to existing state law (Section 22-2-14.1 NMSA 1978), authorizing the Public Education Department (PED) secretary to suspend individual local school board members. The change would provide a more targeted and proportional tool for addressing misconduct, legal violations, or disruptive behavior without destabilizing an entire school board. The bill would aim to support effective governance, maintain stability and public trust, and reduce disruptions to students, staff, and school operations. It would also mirror the existing statutory framework for suspending entire boards, superintendents, and principals (Section 22-2-2 NMSA 1978 and Section 22-2-14 NMSA 1978), clearly establish the grounds under which the secretary may take this action, and ensure school boards can continue functioning and performing their duties.

- The bill would require written notice when there are reasonable grounds to believe a board member is willfully failing to perform required duties, with described failures, proposed remedial actions, and a corrective deadline.
- The bill would require suspension only if the member does not complete required remedial actions within the specified timeframe.
- The bill would maintain due process, including written notice of suspension, grounds for action, hearing rights under existing law in the Administrative Procedures Act (Sections 12-8-1 through 12-8-25 NMSA 1978, and further appeal under existing law in Section 39-3-1.1 NMSA 1978.
- The bill would limit the PED secretary's role during suspension, permitting the secretary or a designee to act in the member's place only for the purpose of voting in the event of a deadlock.

Increasing the Employer Share of Health Insurance Premiums (.232653.1). This bill would amend Section 12-7-4 NMSA 1978 to require all school districts and charter schools to pay at least 80 percent of group insurance premiums for all public school employees, beginning in fiscal year 2027 (FY27). School districts and charter schools would have the option to pay more than this minimum contribution if they chose to do so.

- Higher education institutions would not be required to raise their employer contributions to at least 80 percent.
- The bill would require an appropriation of approximately \$73.2 million to the state equalization guarantee in FY27.
- LESC staff would be required to collaboratively study the sustainability of insurance programs for public school employees during the 2026 interim.

Attendance Provisions for Students with Severe Medical Conditions (.232639.1). The bill would amend the state's Attendance for Success Act (Section 22, Article 12A NMSA 1978) to allow for greater consideration in excusing absences and directing attendance interventions by school districts and charter schools for students with disabilities who are absent from school as provided in students' individualized education program (IEP).

- The bill would also ensure students with disabilities who are absent to receive services as specified in their IEP would not be considered excessively absent for the purpose of enforcement.
- The bill would also direct PED to develop and publish written guidance for school districts on how to implement the Attendance for Success Act, including guidance on allowable absences, such as for students with disabilities receiving care as outlined in their IEP.

Strengthening Teacher Preparation and Residencies (.232670.1). The bill would amend the Teacher Residency Act to adjust residency program components and update stipend structures. It would tie teaching resident stipends to a percentage of the statutory minimum salary for Level 1 teachers, with undergraduate residents receiving at least 65 percent of the minimum and residents with a bachelor's degree receiving at least 80 percent.

- The bill would remove the requirement that residents work in the sponsoring district after completing the residency and instead, would allow them to serve in any public school in New Mexico while still maintaining a three-year service commitment.
- It also would clarify that partner school districts and charter schools are expected, but not required, to offer employment to teaching residents based on staffing needs and resident performance.
- Additional technical changes would include updating references from “area school district” to “partner school district.”

Comprehensive Approach to Math Instruction (.232678.1). This bill would amend existing law (Section 22-10A-6 NMSA 1978), which provides for educational requirements for teachers to be licensed, to require individuals seeking a standard or alternative elementary license or a standard or alternative secondary license *with* an endorsement in mathematics to take six hours of mathematics methods courses. The bill would also amend the existing Math and Science Education Act (Chapter 22, Article 15E NMSA 1978) to establish statewide structures for improving mathematics instruction. It would direct PED to develop a mathematics instructional leadership framework, require school districts and charter schools to adopt aligned mathematics professional learning plans, and create new statewide processes for early math screening, individual student support plans (including family engagement), and evidence-based interventions. The bill is intended to strengthen instructional quality and ensure earlier identification and support for students with mathematics difficulty.

- PED would be required to define roles, competencies, and standards for high-quality mathematics instruction, coaching, and continuous improvement.
- Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, each district and charter school would be required to implement mathematics professional learning plans aligned to the state framework.
- Schools would be required to administer K-2 mathematics screening assessments within the first 30 days of school and issue individualized support plans for identified students.
- PED would be required to adopt rules by December 31, 2026, and submit annual reports beginning July 1, 2028, on implementation, student identification rates, interventions used, and recommendations for improvement.

Allowable Responses to Student Behavior (.232587.1). This bill would amend existing law to clearly define restraint and seclusion practices in public schools, specifying which actions are permitted and which are prohibited. It would introduce and define terms such as elopement and physical escort, and prohibit chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint, and seclusion without continuous line-of-sight supervision. The bill would also clarify the use of timeouts and add specificity to training and reporting requirements within school safety plans.

- The bill would only allow physical restraint or seclusion with continuous line-of-sight supervision if a student's behavior presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm and less restrictive interventions are not sufficient to mitigate the imminent danger of serious physical harm.
- The bill would clarify existing training requirements on the use of physical restraint, including specific training requirements for administrators and at least one designated school employee.

Literacy Instruction and Supports (.232640.1). This bill would create the High-Quality Literacy Instruction Act to expand evidence-based reading supports to build upon New Mexico's structured literacy framework. It would also introduce additional support for students and schools struggling with reading proficiency.

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- The bill would require all literacy instruction for prekindergarten through third-grade students and all literacy interventions for prekindergarten through 12th-grade students to use high-quality instructional materials grounded in the science of reading.
 - The bill would establish a reading assessment system task force to adopt a reading assessment system for measuring student progress, and supports for students identified as having a reading difficulty, including parent notification and a “read-at-home” plan.
 - The bill would also establish a system for PED to provide instructional coaches to elementary schools that have an average reading proficiency in the bottom quartile of the state as measured by the reading assessment system.

Office of Special Education (.232661.1). This bill would codify the Office of Special Education within PED in state law and create a Special Education Act. The proposed act would assign the office responsibilities such as enforcing state and federal law regarding the education of students with disabilities; ensuring stability and consistency of service for students with disabilities from birth through transition to college and career; and providing for the study, development, and implementation of systems and policies that positively affect the educational success of students with disabilities.

- The bill would create the position of the deputy secretary of special education in law and require the deputy secretary to report directly to the secretary of education.
- The bill would require the Office of Special Education to submit an annual prekindergarten through postsecondary statewide special education status report in collaboration with the New Mexico State Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Advisory Panel, Early Childhood Education and Care Department, and the Higher Education Department.
- The bill would also remove gifted education from the Office of Special Education to align law with practice.